



Atheist Freethinkers

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

**The AFT Petition Against the Religious Exception in
Canada's Hate Propaganda Law is Presented to Parliament**

Montreal, 6th March 2018 – *Atheist Freethinkers* (LPA-AFT), an association which promotes secularism and supports the rights of atheists, announces that its parliamentary petition e-763, calling for repeal of the religious exception in the Hate Propaganda law, i.e. line 319(3)b) of the Criminal Code of Canada, has recently been presented to the House of Commons. The petition having received 1536 signatures, i.e. over three times the minimum number required for certification, the M.P. Marwan Tabbara (Liberal, Kitchener South-Hespeler), who sponsored it, presented it to the House on the first of March. Mr. Tabbara also presented another petition, e-1264, which requests that “systemic discrimination against non-believers in Canadian laws and regulations” be investigated.

According to the rules regulating parliamentary electronic petitions, the government is required to respond to each petition within 45 calendar days of its presentation. Thus, the organization LPA-AFT asks all signers of e-763, as well as all other persons who oppose the religious privilege expressed in line 319(3)b), to write to the MP of their riding to explain the importance of repealing this religious exception.

Recall that the part of this exception which stipulates that an individual may not be found guilty if he or she expressed “an opinion based on a belief in a religious text,” i.e. which grants impunity to believers, was adopted by the House on 17th September 2003, as part of Bill C-250, at the same time that sexual orientation was added to the list of identifiable groups, in order to calm the religious concerns of several homophobic members of parliament. Thus, the original purpose of this exception is perfectly clear: to grant impunity to homophobic hateful speech if it is religiously motivated, but to criminalize such speech in the absence of any religious motive.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Petition: <https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-763>