Atheist Freethinkers
PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

LPA Again Challenges CFIC to Public Debate about Quebec Bill 21

Montreal, Quebec, 29th October 2025 – *Libres penseurs athées* (LPA, *Atheist Freethinkers*), an association which promotes secularism and works to defend the rights of atheists, challenges *Centre for Inquiry Canada* (CFIC) to a public debate on the issue of Quebec Bill 21 which bans the wearing of religious symbols by civil servants in positions of authority. CFIC is an organization, based in Toronto, which claims to support secularism but opposes it in the one place in North America—Quebec—which is currently making the most progress in a secular direction.

When Bill 21 was contested before Quebec Superior Court in late 2020, LPA intervened, along with several other secularist organizations, in favour of the Bill. Currently, as the law is contested before the Supreme Court of Canada, CFIC is intervening ***against*** Bill 21, along with two partner groups.

For clarity, LPA suggests that the specific question under debate be, "May the State legitimately prohibit its employees from wearing religious symbols while they are on duty?" LPA will of course argue for an affirmative answer to that question. LPA also proposes that the debate be conducted virtually (via internet), in English, within the next few weeks or months and that it be moderated by a person or persons approved by both sides.

This is not the first debate challenge issued by LPA to CFIC. In 2021, LPA issued a similar challenge, which CFIC rejected, giving no reason.

This time, will CFIC have the intellectual honesty to expose its self-contradictory position to public scrutiny and debate? Or will it continue to hide behind its tactic of redefining "secularism" so as to exclude the principle of religion-State separation, thus reducing secularism to mere religious neutrality, allowing all religions to interfere in State affairs? Will CFIC explain why it opposes legislation which protects the freedom of conscience of civil service users and school children, and yet hypocritically continues to call itself "secularist"? Will it explain why it has allied itself with religious obscurantists who rank religious beliefs as essentially superior to political and other convictions and opinions, thus elevating religion to such an importance that the State must allow its civil servants to indulge in religious practice and to impose their religion on service users (i.e. to proselytize) while on the job?

Finally, will CFIC recognize that Canadian multiculturalism is nothing more than a euphemism for multitribalism, an ideology which fragments society into rigidly defined cultural "communities," each with its own priorities, thus compromising universal human rights and impeding social evolution?

We await CFIC's response.

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