Atheist Freethinkers
PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Atheist Freethinkers Welcomes the Supreme Court of Canada Decision Validating Bill 21

Montreal, 28th November 2026 – *Atheist Freethinkers* (LPA-AFT), an atheist association which supports secularism, welcomes favourably the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, announced yesterday, confirming the validity of Quebec's *Act respecting the laicity of the State* ("Bill 21").

A single exception to this validation: the Court renewed (as did the Quebec Court of Appeal on 29th February 2024) the repeal of the ban on face-coverings worn by Quebec MNAs (Members of National Assembly). Although it seems highly bizarre to us that an MNA would sit in the legislature with his or her face covered—and extremely unlikely that voters would tolerate such an aberration—this situation could be resolved by the Assembly itself through an amendment to its own rules of procedure.

Thus, the Court confirms the validity of almost the entire *Act respecting the laicity of the State*. It also validates Bill 21's use of the notwithstanding clauses of the Canadian and Quebec Charters.

However, the Court ruled that it may declare whether a law is constitutional or not, if that legislation had not invoked the notwithstanding clauses. Four judges (including Chief Justice Wagner) of the seven who heard this case, decided to make no such declaration. But the other three expressed mixed opinions about Bill 21.

The opponents of secularism are already exhibiting their tremendous disappointment very noisily. We can expect more legal challenges to other Quebec laws, in particular the *Act respecting the reinforcement of laicity in Québec* (Bill 9, 2026). Major efforts in public education on the subject of secularism will be essential. We must remain vigilant and prepared to work, again and again, to preserve and expand upon the secular measures which Quebec has succeeded in achieving.

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