

# ADATH

Judaism for the next generation

CI – 085M  
C.P. – P.L. 21  
Laïcité de l'État

May 13, 2019

I write to oppose Bill 21 and request its reconsideration.

The immediate consequence of tabling this bill has been, and the inevitable consequence of its passage will be to create division and animosity in our society. It has made, and will make visible minorities feel unwelcome and distrusted.

Notwithstanding the limited application of this bill, it sends a message to society that it is acceptable to distrust and feel uncomfortable with those who are different from me.

The role of government should be to facilitate a harmonious society, not to pander to the unfounded fears and discrimination of the majority, as those fears have no basis in fact.

Bill 21 will inhibit the integration into society, and job opportunities and advancement for those who need it most, in defiance of our Charter.

Lastly, Bill 21 is unworkable. To use the example of the kippa worn by Jewish men - there is no inherent holiness or sanctity to this garment. There are no rules about its colour, shape, size, or material. A Jewish man fulfills this obligation when wearing a tuque, baseball cap, hockey helmet, or even the hat worn as part of the uniform of a police officer or soldier.

How will anyone be able to tell if a man is violating this law when he may simply be shading his eyes or covering his bald spot?

For these reasons and more, this bill will not settle anything. It will only entrench and extend divisiveness in our society. I urge its reconsideration. Thank you very much.

*Rabbi Michael Whitman*

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