



**Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers**

**L'Association provinciale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec**

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**QPAT's position on bill 21: Banning public servant workers (teachers) from wearing religious symbols**

The Quebec Provincial Teachers Association (QPAT) is unequivocally opposed to any bill that discriminates against current or future teachers based upon their religious belief, and QPAT will stand by its members and support them in protecting their fundamental rights. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Canadian Charter and it is up to each individual to decide whether or not they wish to wear a religious symbol.

Wearing a religious symbol has no bearing on the quality of teaching. There have been no complaints from QPAT member organizations around the wearing of religious symbols in public schools, and therefore QPAT considers this a non-issue. QPAT thinks that the diversity of society should be reflected in our schools as they exist in our larger communities.

Instead of moving ahead with a bill that divides, the CAQ government should show leadership and educate society about diversity and tolerance. Historically, teaching has been a path for the integration of many members of minority communities into the larger society. The government's bill would remove such a path for many individuals.

"The CAQ government is sending a harmful message in a time where we need to stand together and fight hate. It is truly disheartening when there are actual issues in education that need to be addressed," said Heidi Yetman, President of QPAT.

QPAT has expressed its opposition to proposals regarding wearing religious symbols in the past and will continue to do so with respect to the current bill. QPAT is prepared to follow appropriate legal measures to protect the rights of its current and future members, if necessary.

QPAT represents the 8,000 teachers of Quebec's English public schools.

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