

CITIZENS' STATEMENT FOR A HARMONIOUS LIFE TOGETHER

We are at home here: citizens and permanent residents, born of families established for generations, or come to build our lives in a land of peace and open doors.

We practice all trades; you will find us in every profession, in factories, universities, and businesses.

We hold the highest esteem for Québec's democratic tradition, its deep respect for fundamental freedoms and equality between all citizens, its struggle for the preservation, enrichment and strengthening of the French language, its right to its unique nature, its distinct character.

We identify with its historical rejection of war and with its pacifist tradition, with its rejection of oppression, and with its dedication to social solidarity.

We remember, when we think of the Québec that is home to us, the great personalities – men and women from all political affiliations – who helped shape this territory.



We salute the Québec tradition of social solidarity, which extends from the right to organize trade unions to universal suffrage, from the creation of a universal public health-care system to the establishment of a public education system, and the position of state neutrality with regard to citizens' opinions, practices and beliefs, be they secular or spiritual.

We believe that the identity issue that has come to the fore is a result of the recognition of Québec's historical milestones and a reflection on our future. Québeckers themselves will be building that future together, and defining our common good. It is a future and a common good that we continue to enrich with through our multiple contributions.



These are the values and principles we hold dear, that we commit ourselves to defend and promote. Gained through constant toil and effort, they embody the work of generations. These are – we proudly proclaim – values and principles that cannot be diminished, or restricted.

This is why we are disappointed and concerned by the increasing levels of intolerant, even discriminatory, comments and acts since the beginning of the "Reasonable Accommodation" debate in fall of 2006.

This is why we note with growing concern the voice of individuals who seek to limit the exercise of democracy, who attempt to redefine the rights and liberties enjoyed by citizens, who seek to set up categories of citizenship based upon opinion or belief. Even more, we are concerned by those who seek to profit from international tensions, conflicts and wars, to turn citizens against one another for the most dubious of motives.

The society of tomorrow that we hope to bequeath to our children will not restrict citizens' aspirations to express freely their opinions, or to give voice to their spiritual or secular heritage. The society of tomorrow can only be built on a foundation of mutual respect and shared responsibility, which are the bedrocks of democracy and peaceful coexistence.



We therefore affirm that:

- It would be prejudicial in the name of equality of the sexes, that the clothing expressing a woman's beliefs becomes a source of discrimination against her, against her right to work, her free-will. That it be an obstacle to her full participation into social life, in the work force, in her recreational pursuits. That in the name of such equality, there be less equality. We reject demands for "equality" that make a mockery of its very founding principle.
- It would be prejudicial in the name of secularism – the neutrality of the state, with regard to the opinions, beliefs and practices of its citizens – that harsh, insulting and demeaning language, often tinged with racism, is used to denigrate some citizens. We reject the attempts to pervert public debate, and to impose, in the pretext of solving a problem, radical measures that could lead to social instability, by amending our laws or the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.
- It would be tragic in the name of free speech, media discourse leads to the disappearance of social ethics and mutual respect. We disapprove of reporting that results in hurt, strategies designed to divide citizens, and even mislead by repeating a lie that eventually becomes "truth".
- It would be prejudicial in the name of democracy, democracy be weakened. We reject any limitation of rights, any suspension of fundamental freedoms. They must be strengthened, broadened.



Just as the values and principles dear to Québeckers are not for sale at any price, neither are equally universal values and principles of other cultural horizons that enrich Québec. The two are not in opposition, rather they enhance one another, with the same quiet resolve and the same far-reaching commitment to justice, sharing, and equality that we believe motivate us all.

We therefore call for a true debate, an unhurried debate carried in an atmosphere of peace of mind and unflinching respect for the rights of all, men and women, who live in Québec.

Signatories of the “Citizens’ Declaration”

Initiators (23)

Association - École Al-arabiya
Association Musulmane de Montréal Nord (AMMN)
Association Musulmane Québécoise (AMQ)
Astrolabe Québec
Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relation (CAIR-CAN)
Centre Communautaire Musulmans de Montréal (CCMM,
Mosquée Al-Oummah)
Centre Culturel Musulman de Montréal (CCMM, Al-Hidaya)
Centre Islamique BADR
Centre Kawtar de Laval
Comité de Femmes Musulmanes Canadienne (CFMC)
Congrès Islamique Canadien (CIC-Montréal)
Forum Musulman Canadien (FMC-CMF)
Mosquée Assunna Annabawiyah
Mosquée de Montréal (MM)
Mosquée Khadijah
Mosquée Khaled Ibn Alwaleed
Muslim Association of Canada (MAC)
Muslim Community of Québec (MCQ)
Muslim Council of Montreal MCM
Présence Musulmane Montréal (PMM)
Regard Alternatif Média (APM-RAM)
Regroupement des Algériens du Canada (RAC)
Regroupement des Marocains du Canada (RMC)

Organisations (25)

Artistes pour la Paix
Association Alhijrah
Association Bel Agir
Association Canadienne des Nation Uni (ACNU)
Association des Jeunes Libanais Musulmans
Association des Jeunes Professionnels Marocains
Association des Universitaires Musulmans de L'UQAM
Canadian Egyptian for Democracy (CEFD)
Canadian Islamic Centre – Al- Jamieh (CIC)
Centre Communautaire Islamique Rive-Sud
Centre Islamique Libanais
Centre Justice et Foi
Centre St-Pierre
Cercle des Familles Algériennes
D'abord Solidaires
Fédération Canado-Arabe (CAF)
Fondation du message de l'islam (FMI)
Institut Al-Reda
MAC-Scout
Mission Communautaire de Montréal, un ministère
communautaire de l'Église Unie du Canada
Mosquée Abou Bakr Assidiq
Mosquée Al-Rawdah
Palestinienne et Juif Uni (PAJU)
Parole Arabe (PA)
Shalom Salaam Montreal (SSM)

Individuals (58)

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Samia Bouzourene
Samira Laouni
Sameer Zuberi
Samer Mazjoub
Shaheen Ashraf
Sofian Omar
Souad Bounakhla
Toofik Boukhnifer
Unal Uckun
Yasmine Alloul
Zakia Cherif