



Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc.

A Response to Bill 60

Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests

Submitted by: The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc.
To: The Committee on Institutions

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The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is dedicated to promote the involvement of parents, students, educators and the community at large in the advancement of learning. It acts as a voice for parents.

QUEBEC FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

A RESPONSE TO BILL 60:

Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. (QFHSA) would like to thank the Committee on Institutions for the opportunity to respond to Bill 60. This Bill was studied in detail by the Rights Committee and the response of the Federation was passed by the Board of Directors on behalf of the membership.

QFHSA is opposed, in its entirety, to Bill 60, a Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is confident that both the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms* already adequately safeguard and protect the principles of equality between men and women and the freedom of religion.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is confident in the secular nature of the Federal and Provincial Governments as they are now and deem no further modifications of the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms as necessary.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is opposed to the insertion of the Primacy of the French Language into the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms as it in no way affects state neutrality, equality of women and men nor does it address a framework for accommodation requests. Language legislation should stay within the Charter of the French Language.

When a Charter of Rights and Freedoms is frequently amended, in response to current situations, it should strive to improve on rights, not diminish them. To diminish rights takes away the inalienability of all rights and weakens a Charter. Bill 60 proposes to diminish the right of freedom of expression when it restricts the personal choice of wearing religious symbols.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. cannot be party to a proposed legislation, which if passed, runs contrary to what we teach our children insofar as tolerance, respect of individual rights and religious freedoms are concerned. Bill 60 undermines the Moral and Religious Education curriculum first implemented in 1997 by the Minister of Education at the time and later modified in 2008 to become the Ethics and Religious Culture program.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc. calls for the withdrawal of Bill 60.

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The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. established in 1944, is an independent, not-for-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to enhancing the education and general well-being of children and youth. It promotes the involvement of parents, students, educators and the community at large and acts as a voice for parents.

Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Inc. is organized on a local school basis, with associations extending from the Gaspè in the east, Gatineau in the west, Baie Comeau in the north and North Hatley in the south. We represent 4500 families in 81 local associations and our combined activities support 10,000 students. In a wide variety of ways, our parent volunteers enrich the educational, social and cultural experience of all children. Our members assist teachers in the classroom and resource centers; they staff libraries, help supervise field trips, organize after-school extracurricular activities and, through various fundraising activities, provide schools with improved libraries, technology services, music, art and sports programs.