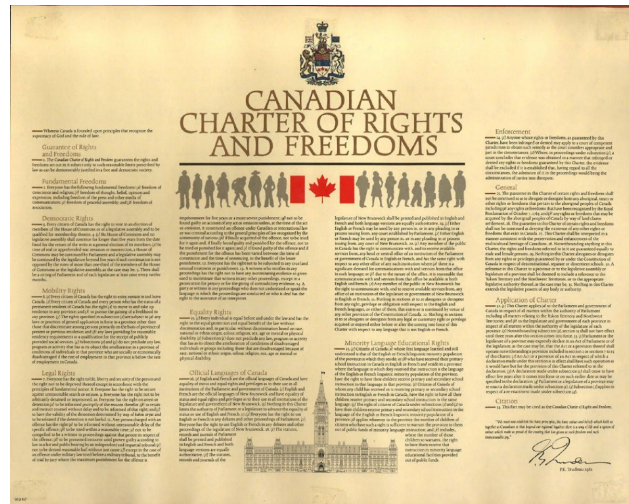


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Artifact Evaluation

10/02/2019

Link: <https://globalnews.ca/news/5935635/bill-21-quebec-federal-government-options/>



### Quebec Bill 21

A law was passed earlier this year in Quebec which bans certain public service employees from wearing religious symbols and attire. For example, a male Jewish teacher would not be allowed to wear a kippah at work. The law seems to be intended to keep religious influences out of Quebec's government. However, as this restricts the rights of the people to follow the laws of their faiths and is a clear infringement of the rights expressed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, civil rights groups are fighting the law. Quebec's defense against the claims of the law's unconstitutionality is that there is a notwithstanding clause that

allows provinces to make certain laws that contradict the rights and freedoms listed in Canada's Constitution. Many people say the federal government should step in and fight this law. Others may see that as governmental overreach. Personally, as an American with very little knowledge of Canadian constitutional law, I feel that the federal government's role in the affairs of the states (or provinces in Canada's case) should be very limited, however I also feel that state governments should not be allowed to restrict the freedoms listed in the Bill of Rights (or Charter of Rights and Freedoms for Canada). The whole reason why the early colonists fled Britain to the New World back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was to escape tyranny and religious persecution. Then, the monarchy commanded all to worship the faith regulated by the king. People were not allowed to follow other faiths or even Christian doctrine that was different than that regulated by the monarchy. The whole idea of the separation of church and state is meant to keep the government from intruding in people's personal lives and faiths. I feel that Quebec's Bill 21 takes this idea too far as it restricts the freedom of religious expression of people working in the government. It will be interesting to see how this issue will influence Canada's upcoming federal election.