



Motion to Oppose the Implementation of Bill 62

Submitted to the General Assembly, December 5th, 2017.

Whereas, the MSS Policy on Equity and Diversity states that “the MSS will neither sustain or condone acts of sexism, racism, ableism, classism, transphobia, homophobia and other experiences of oppression.”¹;

Whereas, the MSS Policy on Equity and Diversity states that “the MSS is committed to advocating for social and economic justice for oppressed people, focusing on ongoing struggles of communities served by McGill Medical School.”²;

Whereas, as future health care professionals, we are socially accountable and expected to practice in a culturally sensitive way;

Whereas, the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms states that “no one may, through discrimination, inhibit the access of another to public transportation or a public place, [...], or his obtaining the goods and services available there.”³;

Whereas, the Muslim population makes up 9,6% of the Montréal population⁴;

Whereas, Bill 62 is introduced within a context of systemic islamophobia;

Be it resolved, that the MSS oppose the implementation of Bill 62;

Be it further resolved, that the MSS endorse the Open Letter found in Appendix 1;

Be it further resolved, that the members of the MSS refuse to implement the insensitive measures prescribed by Bill 62 while exercising our functions as medical students.

Moved by Safina Adatia (M1)

Seconded by Juliette Lemieux-Forget (M2)

Appendix I

¹ *The MSS Policy on Equity and Diversity*, 3.1

² *Ibid.*, 3.8

³ *Charte des droits et libertés de la personne*, L.R.Q. c. C-12, art. 15

⁴ *Statistique Canada*. 2013. « *Profil de l'Enquête nationale auprès des ménages. - Enquête nationale auprès des ménages de 2011* ». Calculs: Montréal en statistiques.

[http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/MTL_STATS_FR/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/POPULATION_ET_D%C9MOGRAPHIE_RELIGION.PDF]



Statement Opposing Bill 62

As future doctors in Quebec, we feel a need to speak out against Bill 62, *An Act to foster adherence to State religious neutrality and, in particular, to provide a framework for religious accommodation requests in certain bodies*. We are very concerned about this Bill. We believe it is Islamophobic and discriminates against Muslim women who wear niqabs and burqas.

Bill 62, which bans the provision or use of public services, including health care services, by anyone who covers their face, is an attack on Muslim women who wear a niqab or burqa. This bill sends a strong message: Muslim women who wear a niqab or burqa do not belong in Quebec. As the Bill cites security concerns as a justification, it contributes to a societal belief that women who wear niqabs are a security threat, and by extension, all Muslim people are a threat to security. This is a deeply harmful societal belief that encourages and enables violence and discrimination against Muslims. It contributes to the growing anti-Muslim sentiment, which has led to violence and hate crimes committed against Muslim people in Quebec, including the shooting at a Quebec City mosque in January 2017 which killed six people.

Quebec has accepted the responsibility to its citizens to provide healthcare, and is taking dangerous and limiting steps by segregating citizens. We believe this law clearly contradicts the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. In particular, we consider that it violates Article 10 which states, *inter alia*, that every person has a right to full and equal recognition and exercise of his human rights and freedoms without distinction, exclusion or preference based on religion. Furthermore, we consider that it clearly contradicts Article 15, which states that no one may, through discrimination, inhibit the access of another to public transportation or a public place.

We commit to creating hospitals and clinics that are welcoming and supportive places for all patients, regardless of religious belief. We support a woman's right to wear what she chooses, including a burqa and niqab. We will do everything we can to ensure this bill is not enforced at the MUHC, the Montreal General Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, The Jewish General Hospital, and any other McGill teaching site.

Bill 62 is Islamophobic, discriminates against Muslim women who wear niqabs and burqas, and is in clear contradiction with the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Laws like this one run directly counter to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and safe society for all. As such, we will work towards challenging Bill 62. Furthermore, we implore other professionals and members of the community to challenge Islamophobia and work to create a society where religious freedom is respected.