Minute No. 155
Report – Executive Policy Committee – January 19, 2022

Item No. 8 Support for Legal Challenge Against the Province of Quebec Bill 21

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee and adopted the following:

1. That Council reiterate its support for the current legal challenge against the discrimination of freedom of religion in Quebec's Bill 21 - An Act respecting the laicity of the State.

2. That Council acknowledge that respective members of Council may provide support to the joint legal challenges of Bill 21 by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM, the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) in various ways including, but not limited to, public condemnation of Bill 21 and/or contributing financially through discretionary funds as they may deem appropriate

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by His Worship Mayor Bowman,

That the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee be adopted.

Councillor Nason called for the yeas and nays, which were as follows:

Yea: His Worship Mayor Bowman, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Chambers, Eadie, Gillingham, Gilroy, Klein, Lukes, Mayes, Nason, Orlikow, Rollins, Santos, Schreyer and Sharma 16

Nay: 0

and the item was declared carried.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 19, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the Council Motion of December 16, 2021, with the following amendment:

- Delete the second resolve and replace it with the following:

  "That Council acknowledge that respective members of Council may provide support to the joint legal challenges of Bill 21 by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM, the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) in various ways including, but not limited to, public condemnation of Bill 21 and/or contributing financially through discretionary funds as they may deem appropriate."

and submitted the matter to Council.

David Grant submitted a communication dated January 18, 2022, in opposition to the matter.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION:

On December 16, 2021, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by His Worship Mayor Bowman,
Seconded by Councillor Nason,

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg Council has demonstrated their commitment to the protection of human rights with the creation of the Human Rights Committee of Council, and their ongoing efforts to protect the rights of all individuals and improve on equity, diversity and inclusion;

AND WHEREAS Bill 21 and the restricting of citizens from wearing religious symbols is not consistent with the protections afforded to all Canadian with respect to human rights, diversity, equity, peace and inclusion;

AND WHEREAS on October 24, 2019 City of Winnipeg Council unanimously passed a resolution opposing Quebec's Bill 21, and supporting in principle, the constitutional challenge to Bill 21;

AND WHEREAS Canada's big cities are aligning their efforts to fund the joint legal challenges of Bill 21 by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council reiterate its support for the current legal challenge against the discrimination of freedom of religion in Quebec's Bill 21 - An Act respecting the laicity of the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Winnipeg provide a one-time 2021 contribution of up to $100,000 to the joint legal challenges of Bill 21 by the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM, the World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA).