

For immediate release

English-speaking community disagrees profoundly with government on secularism bill

Montreal – May 23, 2019 – A clear majority of English-speaking Quebecers do not support restrictions on religious symbols worn by public officials. That conclusion stood out in a recent poll that surveyed Quebecers' attitudes towards the Coalition Avenir Québec government's proposed secularism bill.

An oversample of English-speaking Quebecers taken from an Association for Canadian Studies-Léger Marketing poll shows that a significant majority of Anglophones believes Bill 21 contravenes the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that the courts are the proper forum to determine whether it violates Quebecers' basic civil rights.

"These numbers certainly shatter the government's claim that many English-speaking Quebecers support the bill," commented Geoffrey Chambers, president of the Quebec Community Groups Network. "We are asking the government to reconsider adopting legislation that will create deep divisions in Quebec."

Relatively few of those sampled believe that teachers wearing religious signs are proselytizing, and more than two-thirds are opposed to a ban on religious symbols worn by public school teachers. More than 60 per cent agree that elected officials at the federal, provincial or municipal levels should be allowed to wear religious signs such as hijabs, kippahs, crucifixes and turbans.

Nearly 80 per cent of English-speaking Quebecers say they enjoy living in a multicultural society with a diversity of cultural and religious groups, and almost 60 per cent reply that our society is tolerant and accepting of religious minority customs and traditions. Fewer than one-third of respondents say that Quebecers' way of life is threatened by immigrants from religious minorities. Three-quarters said that hatred directed at the province's religious minorities has increased.

The poll is the most detailed survey to date on Bill 21 and the issues that lie behind support for the proposed legislation. The Association for Canadian Studies contracted the survey to the firm Léger Marketing. The QCGN commissioned an oversample of 379 English-speaking Quebecers to obtain a breakdown of opinion on the basis of language identification.

See results [here](#).

Survey results were collected between May 3-May 7, 2019 via a web panel of 1,212 Quebecers, 18 years of age or older. Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted to ensure a sample representative of the entire population under review. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of 1,000 respondents would have a margin of error of ± 3.09 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 60 English-language community organizations across Quebec. Its mission is to identify, explore and address strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of English-speaking Quebec and to encourage dialogue and collaboration.

For further information:

Rita Legault, Director of Communications | rita.legault@qcgn.ca

Telephone: 514-868-9044, ext. 223, cellular: 514-912-6555