

Quebec's Anglican and Lutheran bishops fear impact of Bill 62 on vulnerable minorities

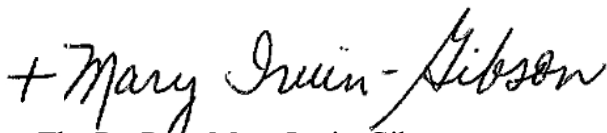
Sunday 29 October 2017 – As leaders of minority faith communities in Quebec we feel compelled to express our deep distress at the manner in which the religious neutrality law passed by the National Assembly implicitly targets another minority religious group in this province.

Although veiled as a question of identification and security, Bill 62's provisions regarding face coverings will most directly impact a small minority of Muslim women in Quebec, whose freedom to express their religious beliefs is enshrined in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For Christians, these human rights are grounded in the dignity accorded each human being by virtue of having been made in the image and likeness of their Creator.

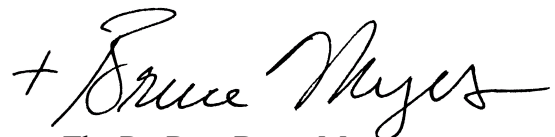
The January 29 shooting massacre at Quebec City's Grand Mosque—and other acts of violence before and since—demonstrate that our Muslim neighbours live in a climate of suspicion and fear that threatens their safety. Bill 62 helps foster that climate at a time when we are turning to our governments and public institutions to protect vulnerable minorities in our midst.

We recognize and support the desire for Quebec to be a secular society. However, to be secular means to be pluralistic, allowing freedom of belief both in one's private and public life. The provisions of Bill 62, however they are applied, unnecessarily put that fundamental freedom—and potentially people's security—at risk.

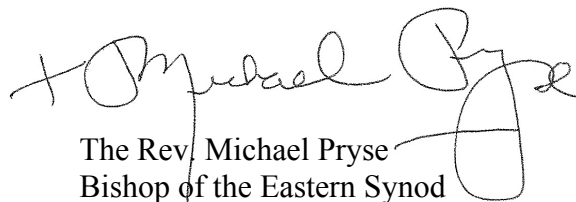
We invite our elected leaders, and all Quebecers, to join us in trying to foster a safe and welcoming environment for all who make Quebec their home, whatever their culture or religion.



The Rt. Rev. Mary Irwin-Gibson
Bishop of Montreal
Anglican Church of Canada



The Rt. Rev. Bruce Myers
Bishop of Quebec
Anglican Church of Canada



The Rev. Michael Pryse
Bishop of the Eastern Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada