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## “Bill 94 Will Sustain Violence against Women”, states No Bill 94 Coalition



The *No Bill 94 Coalition* believes that women should live free from all forms of violence.

On December 3, 2010 the Coalition is holding a Day of Action which includes a Rally at the Bureau du Quebec at 20 Queen Street West as well as social media letter writing campaign voicing their concern over this discriminatory proposed bill.

If approved by the National Assembly of Quebec, Quebec Premier Jean Charest's proposed law would deny essential government services, public employment, educational opportunities, and health care to people who wear facial coverings. Bill 94 specifically targets Muslim women who wear the niqab (face veil), violating the basic principles of non-discrimination and gender equality, as well as increasing barriers and risk to Muslim women experiencing violence.

Amanda Dale, Executive Director of the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, which has signed on to the Coalition, shares that “Violence against women is a problem facing all women. Access to services for women who are experiencing violence can mean the difference between life and death. If Muslim women who wear the niqab are essentially banned from accessing services, they will not be able to seek the services they might desperately need. In addition, their rate of unemployment will rise; they will likely remain below the poverty line, and consequently become more vulnerable to violence, both in the home and in public.”

According to the Coalition, although touted as a step toward gender equality, Bill 94 will perpetuate gender inequality by legislating control over women's bodies and sanctioning discrimination against Muslim women who wear the niqab. Gender inequality is not appropriately addressed by controlling women's bodies, but rather by focusing on poverty alleviation programs and educational initiatives to enhance women's choices and understanding of their rights. Both the federal Conservative and Liberal parties have expressed support for Bill 94, which raises the very real possibility that similar legislation will be proposed across Canada. We demand that Bill 94 be withdrawn immediately, as it has no place in a democratic state that values autonomy, liberty and justice.

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