



MOTION REGARDING A STATEMENT ON PROPOSED QUEBEC LEGISLATION RESTRICTING PRAYER AND FAITH-BASED SPACES IN POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

2026-03-26

Submitted for: 2026-03-26

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| Submitted to: | SSMU Legislative Council | Document no.: | LEG-PUB-MOT-2026-03-26-001 (to be assigned by Steering) |
| Moved by: | Seraphina Crema Black <i>Vice President External</i> | Current Status: | <input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED |
| Seconded by: | Meghan Lai <i>Senate Caucus Representative</i> | | |

Issue

The Quebec government has proposed legislation to prohibit prayer and faith-based spaces in postsecondary institutions. This raises concerns about student rights, religious freedom, and inclusion on campus, particularly for students who rely on such spaces for daily religious practice.

Background and Rationale

The proposed Quebec legislation, Bill 9, seeks to prohibit prayer and faith-based spaces within postsecondary institutions. These spaces have long existed on campuses, including at McGill University, as quiet and

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SSMU Office of the Speaker

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speaker@ssmu.ca | ssmu.ca | 3501 rue Peel, Montréal, QC, H3A 1W7



respectful environments where students can practice their beliefs, reflect, and maintain personal well-being.

This issue primarily affects students who rely on structured spaces for religious practice, particularly Muslim students who require designated areas for daily prayer. It also impacts broader student communities by shaping the inclusivity and accessibility of campus environments. The proposal builds on the broader context of provincial policies regulating religious expression, including restrictions on religious symbols for certain public-sector roles.

As the representative body for undergraduate students at McGill, SSMU has a responsibility to advocate for student rights, equity, and inclusion. The Legislative Council must address this issue to ensure that student voices are represented in public discourse and that policies affecting campus life are critically examined.

This motion proposes that SSMU adopt a formal position by publishing a public statement opposing the legislation and affirming its commitment to protecting freedom of religion and inclusive campus spaces.

Alignment with Mission

This motion aligns with SSMU's mission of representation and advocacy by advocating for student rights and inclusivity. It is also supported by Section 9 of the SSMU Positions Book, which supports freedom of religion.

Consultations Completed

Consultations were conducted with the Vice-President (University Affairs) and the Vice-President (Clubs and Services). The Policy and Advocacy Coordinator reviewed the motion for formatting and structure and approved it for submission. The General Manager and Internal Counsel & Corporate Secretary were consulted.

Additional consultation was conducted with the President of the Muslim Students Association and the President of Newman's Society (McGill)

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Chapter). These representatives of religious student groups strongly supported the motion and emphasized the importance of maintaining accessible prayer spaces on campus.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

The risk factors for this motion primarily relate to public perception and political sensitivity. Taking a stance on provincial legislation may attract criticism from stakeholders who support the proposed measures. But given the lack of rationale for the proposed legislation, the harm it poses to our religious community, and our commitment to defending the freedom of religion, a charter right, we should approve this motion.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If approved, the SSMU will publish the public statement through its official communication channels, including its website and social media platforms.

The SSMU may also share the statement with relevant student associations, advocacy groups, and media outlets to amplify its reach.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the SSMU will publish the following public statement on Proposed Quebec Legislation Restricting Prayer and Faith-Based Spaces in Postsecondary Institutions.

Results of the Vote

- In favour (24)
- Opposed (0)
- Abstain (0)

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Appendix A : Relevant Appendix

[2026-03 Public Statement Regarding Bill 9](#)

APPROVED