



# HUMANIST CANADA

---



January 23, 2020

Greetings!

Happy New Year to all of you!

What an incredible turn into a new year and a new decade, the 2020s. We hope that you've had a lovely and pleasant start to the new decade and will look into some of our great offerings here at Humanist Canada.

This month we launched a four-part series on Bill 21 that has had a great response. While you still have time to catch the last two webinars, the recordings will be available on our website shortly. So make sure to spread the word on our upcoming events and activities!

Warmest regards,

Scott Jacobsen,  
Newsletter Co-Editor

---

## MAID Consultation



### Medical Assistance in Dying

Share your views online on medical assistance in dying (MAID) eligibility criteria and request process.

Medical assistance in dying (MAID) became legal in Canada in June 2016. Canada's Criminal Code now exempts doctors and nurse practitioners who provide, or help to offer, medical assistance in dying.

On September 11, 2019, the Superior Court of Québec found *Truchon v. Attorney General of Canada* that it was unconstitutional to limit access to MAID to people nearing the end of life. The Court declared the "reasonable foreseeability of natural death" criterion in the federal Criminal Code, as well as the "end-of-life" criterion in Québec's provincial law on medical assistance in dying, to be unconstitutional.

In response to the court decision, the Department of Justice is providing an opportunity for Canadians to share their views with the Government of Canada on this deeply personal and fundamental issue. [Read more...](#)

**Deadline for responding is Monday, January 27, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. (PST).**

[Complete the questionnaire](#)



## Webinar Series on Bill 21

### Join us for Part 3 on Sunday February 2 at 3 pm, EST

In March of 2019, the government of Quebec premier François Legault, the founding leader of the centre-right Coalition Action Démocratique (CAQ), passed "An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State," also known as Bill 21.

This controversial law has polarized public opinion. The detractors of Bill 21 claim that it fuels anti-religious sentiment, disproportionately affects Muslim women, and restricts the freedom of conscience and is, therefore, unconstitutional. The supporters of Bill 21 argue that it enforces the healthy separation of state and religion, prevents passive proselytism, and enhances gender equality by "freeing women from the constraints of oppressive religions."

Our goal for this webinar series is to create dialogue and understanding of this critical issue.

[Register for the next Webinar on February 2nd](#)

**Sunday February 2 at 3 pm, EST**

**The implications of Bill 21 on Muslim  
accommodation in Quebec's public  
education system**



The accommodation of Muslims in Quebec's public education system has been a site of contention for decades. This talk will focus on how Muslims have been accommodated in this sphere before Bill 21, and the implications that Bill 21 has now for Muslims in the public education sector. In particular, the discussion will center on the position of Muslim women employed within the public education system who are impacted by Bill 21.

Dr. Beesan Sarrouh is a Senior Research Analyst at the Centre of Wellness, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Treasury Board Secretariat in Ottawa. She has published work on inclusion, diversity, and belonging in the sphere of education in both academic and policy forums. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Studies from Queen's University.

Part 4 of our Bill 21 series will be on February 9, 2020 at 3 pm

Our presenter will be **David Rand**, President of Libres penseurs athées (Atheist Freethinkers), Montréal (Québec), <https://www.atheology.ca>.



## Humanist Canada takes a neutral position on Bill 21

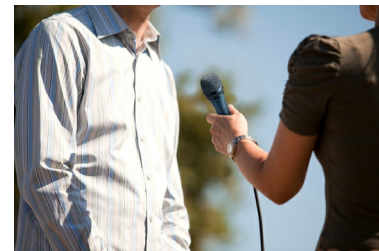
A fundamental principle of modern Humanism is that "Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents." This principle is codified in the Amsterdam Declaration (1952/2002), which is a statement of the fundamental principles of modern Humanism.

In a poll of our membership on July 23, 2019, asking the question: "Given your understanding of Bill 21, do you support the legislation?" 36.4% responded, Yes; 47.3% responded, No, and 16.4% indicated they were Undecided, and the board was similarly divided.

Therefore, Humanist Canada will not take a single unified position either for or against Bill 21 and impose it on our membership. [Read our Position Statement](#)

## Humanism in Canada Collected Interviews

Several prominent humanists sat down with Scott Jacobsen, newsletter co-editor, for the beginning of an extended conversation on Humanism on January 1, 2020. Dying With Dignity Canada, Center for Inquiry-Canada, Secular Connexion Séculière, Canadian Secular Alliance, Association humaniste du Québec, and Humanist Canada were featured in In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal. [Read More...](#)



## Upcoming Events

### Human Rights In Israel & the Occupied Palestinian Territories

**Sunday, April 26, 2020, at 1 pm**  
Artscape Youngplace, Toronto



You are invited to an exclusive opportunity to learn from a United Nations (UN) authority, Mr. Michael Lynk, on the issue of human rights in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories,

Mr. Michael Lynk is an Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, at Western University and the UN Special Rapporteur responsible for assessing & reporting on human rights issues in Israel, the West Bank & Gaza Strip. He has worked with governments and others to foster international cooperation in this crisis.

This is a SAVE THE DATE notice only and registration will be forthcoming. This event is organized by the Ontario Humanist Society.

---

### **Conference July 24 & 25, 2020**

in Sarnia, Ontario organized by Bluewater Atheists, Humanists, Agnostics

They have a super lineup of speakers already confirmed: **Dan Barker, Annie Laurie Gaylor, Dave Warnock, Hemant Mehta, Bob Ripley, Gretta Vosper & Marie LaPage.**

Registration details will be available in the spring so save the date if you'd like to attend.

---

### **Humanist Canada's 2020 AGM will be held in Winnipeg on the May 2-3 weekend.**

Plans are underway for the HC's Annual General Meeting with a Conference Day to bring together Canadian Humanists. The Annual General meeting will be available for remote attendance though stay tuned for updates in the coming months.

---



### **World Humanist Congress August 6-9, 2020**

**Register before January 15th for  
Early-Bird Prices**

It is the largest humanist gathering in the world and happens once per year. Given it is being held in North America this year, it's an exceptional opportunity to gather with our International Community.

---

### **Tell us what you'd like to see in the Newsletter.**

To ensure the newsletter is relevant we invite your response to a few short questions. Having feedback from across the country is our goal. [Click here!](#)



### *Why membership in Humanist Canada is important!*

We simply can't do it without you. We are entirely funded through memberships and donations. Your involvement is incredibly significant and goes a long way to support lasting change for a better society and a tolerant world where rational thinking and kindness prevail.

Your membership status/expiry date is on **you\'re currently not a member, so please consider joining Humanist Canada today** (M/D/Y). If it's time for you to renew, just click on your personal link below, confirm your information and make your payment today.

Click here: [http://weblink.donorperfect.com/humanistcanada\\_join](http://weblink.donorperfect.com/humanistcanada_join)

If you have any questions about renewing, please contact the National Office at [members@humanistcanada.ca](mailto:members@humanistcanada.ca) or 1-877-486-2671.