

**One law for all Ontarians!**

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women, along with the coalition of over 50 sister organizations, commends the Premier of Ontario for his announcement today that no religious laws will be allowed in private legally binding arbitration for family matters. This is a clear message that all Ontarians will be under one law, regardless of ethnicity, religion or race as is stated in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, “every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion...”

We are believing women and value both multiculturalism and religious freedom but that is not what this issue is about. Some people and some media have unnecessarily confused the issue by citing multiculturalism and religious freedom, but neither of these has any bearing on the simple but vital issue that laws should not allow any discrimination based on ethnicity, race or religion.

Sadly, this issue was allowed to drag on for far too long and has resulted in some anti Muslim rhetoric which harms all of us as Canadian Muslims trying to live a harmonious life with our fellow citizens. We are relieved that this intrusive permission to use different religious laws in family matters will now be put to rest.

We know that the Premier’s commitment to change the legislation is an excellent first step in the process of working towards a bill in the legislature, and CCMW looks forward to working with our partners and with the government to ensure that the laws are just and fair and that the public justice system is accessible and sensitive to all cultural groups.

We would like to thank the innumerable individuals and organizations who have been so overwhelmingly and actively supportive in the defense of women’s equality rights and in the belief that the same law must be for all of us, regardless of ethnicity, race or religion.

Contact: Alia Hogben, Executive Director.  
613 382 2847 or [hogben@kingston.net](mailto:hogben@kingston.net)