



ywcatoronto.org

Premier Dalton McGuinty
Rm. 28, Main Legislative Building
Toronto Ontario
M7A 1A5
Tel/ Tel: 416-325-9092

Sept 12/05.

Dear Premier:

We are writing to you to thank you for the difficult and courageous decision you have made with regard to religious arbitration in Ontario. We know it has not come easily or, at times, clearly.

The nearly 100 women's groups, labour organizations, faith groups and community organizations that have come together under the banner of the No Religious Arbitration Coalition, have always maintained that the issue at stake was not Islam, or Muslims, but religious arbitration in all family matters. It is heartening indeed that our message came through clearly in the end.

We realize that it has been a struggle for members of your Party, for the Cabinet, and indeed for all Ontarians. Steering the discussion to the heart of the democratic principles and away from prejudice, or anti-religious sentiment is the responsibility of us all. We know that in some important ways, the work has only just begun. We intend to stay connected to the issue in a way that will bring creativity and constructive engagement from women and men of all faiths, and those of none.

I believe you are aware that our group was supported by some prominent Canadians who hold the principles of anti-racism and religious freedom as dear as those of women's rights. Together, we wish to offer our expertise for the development of amendments to Ontario's *Arbitration Act* that keep to the spirit of your announcement of yesterday.

Sincerely,

Pamela Cross
416-392-3148

Alia Hogben
613 382 2847.

No Religious Arbitration Coalition Steering Committee Co-Chairs.

Homa Arjomand, Steering Committee
Anu Bose, Steering Committee
Amanda Dale, Steering Committee
Bonnie Diamond, Steering Committee
Tarek Fatah, Steering Committee.