

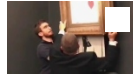
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**Westmount High teachers protest CAQ's proposed ban on religious symbols**

CTV Montreal

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Teachers at Westmount High School staged a protest against the CAQ's plan for a secular charter.

They say they don't want a law banning religious symbols worn in the classroom or elsewhere.

The CAQ was elected as a majority government Oct. 1 and have promised to bring in a charter that would ban civil servants, including teachers in positions of authority, from wearing religious symbols.

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One teacher at Westmount High wears a hijab, though she is on maternity leave. Teachers say many other teachers are now wearing religious symbols as a sign of solidarity.

Teacher Sabrina Jafraie was raised in a Muslim-Christian family, and though she does not wear a hijab, she said she is contemplating wearing one as a result of the proposed legislation.

"We are not in the profession of limiting the options of our students and we're not in the profession of being dictated that what we wear affects our professionalism and how we teach. I think that's absolutely ludicrous," she said.

The CAQ has hinted that it could be open to being flexible and establishing a grandfather clause that would allow teachers already hired before they came into power to continue to wear religious symbols – making only new hires subject to a ban.

Teachers at Westmount High disagree with that proposal, saying that is still limiting to young people entering professions. They say it affects their students, who come from diverse multicultural backgrounds, effectively making them second-class citizens.

"Would Francois Legault want to come into my classroom and look these intelligent young women in the eye and tell them, 'You should not dream of becoming a judge'? It's wrong and it should be opposed by anyone who believed in the values of a free and democratic society," said teacher Robert Green.

**PHOTOS**



Westmount High teachers Robert Green and Sabrina Jafraie protest against ban on religious symbols in the classroom.

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