

# Islamic Supreme Council of Canada



Date: May 24, 2020

To your worship and to city council,

My name is Imam Syed Soharwardy. I am the founder and chairman of Islamic Supreme Council of Canada (ISCC) which represents thousands of Calgary Muslims. I have been serving the Muslim community here for over 25 years. We are glad that Calgary is a place where people of many faiths, beliefs and backgrounds can live together as friends and neighbours, even when we don't always agree with each other.

We are disappointed that you are considering a by-law on "conversion therapy" without adequate consultation with the faith communities in this city, including my own. Very few Muslim groups were consulted about this by-law. Consultation consisted of an e-mail with three questions asking us if we understand the wording of the Edmonton by-law. This is not adequate consultation for a something that would regulate teachings, counseling and conversations at our mosques and schools.

As a community, we respect LGBT people, but we also have differences in how we practice our faith and live our lives. Disagreement does not mean hate, and it does not justify the municipal government deciding which faith teachings are "non-judgmental." We are concerned that this bylaw appears to regulate the counsel and teaching our community can engage in.

For example, would councillors be able to tell us if these passages from the Quran, are considered judgmental: Sura 7: 80-81: "And Lut said to his people: Will you commit a horror that none of the world's inhabitants have committed for you?" 7: 81-82: "You approach men with lust instead of women. No, you are a people who go beyond the limits." (also translated as: "You are excessive people") 7:84: "And we (Allah) let rain fall on them. Look how that was the end of the wrongdoers"? Would your by-law officers be qualified to understand Muslim teachings and decide which parts of our Holy text we can teach or use to support the people in our community? These questions have not been properly discussed with, or fully explained to, our community.

We urge you to ban torture and harm to LGBT people, but supporting a ban on conversion therapy does not mean you have to support this specific by-law, which is too broad, was not based on adequate consultation and will adversely affect my community and many others. Please amend this bylaw to reflect the diversity of the Calgary community or vote against it.

Sincerely,

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