

The Premier of Ontario

Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1



La première ministre de l'Ontario

Édifice de l'Assemblée législative, Queen's Park
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1A1

December 16, 2014

Mr. Joseph Hickey
Executive Director
Ontario Civil Liberties Association
204-180 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 1P5

Dear Mr. Hickey:

Thank you for your letter in which you refer to the Province of Ontario's participation in the Council of the Federation's mission to China — and to our government's commitment to supporting people in their desire to express themselves freely in a peaceful setting. I have also noted your comments on preserving freedom of speech within our province. I appreciate being made aware of views of the Ontario Civil Liberties Association on these issues.

Our government recognizes the importance of maintaining an open dialogue with our trading partners — not only from the standpoint of prospective trade and investment, but also from the standpoint of the opportunity it affords us to convey the values which are fundamental to our province and its people. Among these values are freedom of speech and basic human rights.

We have made a commitment to integrating human rights and civil liberties-based analysis into our work as a government. This commitment is outlined in the mandate letter I recently presented to the Honourable Yasir Naqvi, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services — and which appears on the ministry's website. Specifically, I have instructed Minister Naqvi to engage stakeholders and ministry partners in reviewing issues that intersect between policing and civil liberties, and to bring forward change. I have asked the minister to turn his attention to a number of issues, including a review of police-record checks, the current bail and remand system and the use of body-worn police cameras.

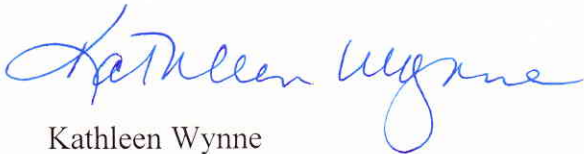
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While I recognize that governments must remain vigilant in protecting freedom of speech and human rights, I am proud of our province's achievements in ensuring that all Ontarians live free from discrimination, inequality and hatred. As I am sure you know, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, enacted in 1962, was the first of its kind in Canada — and has been considerably strengthened since its creation. And, through the province's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, a law passed in 2005, Ontario became one of the first jurisdictions in the world to move to a modern regulatory regime that mandates accessibility through standards with enforcement provisions, and to mandate training under the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. My colleagues in government and I look forward to building on our record of human rights protection.

Thank you again for sharing with me the perspectives of the Ontario Civil Liberties Association. Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

c: The Honourable Yasir Naqvi