CCMW letter to Premier Dalton McGuinty regarding Boyd Report on Religious Arbitration

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Buildings  
Queen’s Park  
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Mr. McGuinty:

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) is extremely disappointed in the recommendations made in Marion Boyd’s report of her review of the Arbitration Act. While we welcomed the opportunity to participate in the consultations during the course of the review, we feel that our views and input have been completely ignored. Ms. Boyd dismissed outright our concerns with respect to the impact of application of religious laws on the rights of Muslim women and children in the name of religious freedom. As believing Muslim women, we are in complete support of religious accommodation but accommodation has a limit when it affects the lives of women and children. We know our communities and have represented the interests of Muslim women to Ms. Boyd on two separate occasions. We took the review process very seriously, engaged our members across the country, and commissioned research to support our position at great expense to our organization, only to learn that Ms. Boyd’s recommendations give carte blanche to the application of laws that have proven to be detrimental and disadvantageous to women around the world. We find it unconscionable that in a liberal democracy like Canada we are allowing the application of complex and disputed religious laws that discriminate against women.

Mr. Premier, we anxiously await your government’s response to Ms. Boyd’s report and urge you to consider seriously the negative impacts of applying religious arbitration on Muslim women. By this letter we are requesting an immediate meeting with you, Attorney General Michael Bryant and Minister Sandra Pupatello. We will be following up with your office to schedule this meeting early in January.

We wish you the best for the holiday season and look forward to meeting with you in the new year.

Yours sincerely,

Alia Hogben  
For the Board
cc The Honourable Michael Bryant
   The Honourable Sandra Pupatello
   Mr. Howard Hampton, Leader of the NDP of Ontario
   Mr. John Tory, Leader of the PC Party of Ontario