

Dear Premier Ford:

We are writing as representative organizations of the leadership of London's Muslim community. We are writing because although we heard the commitment from Minister Calandra to bring back a version of the Our London Family this fall, we are incredibly disappointed that your government did not pass Bill 86, Our London Family Act, this session. We are also writing to share our request to you to publicly in your election platform, commit to passing the Our London Family Act within the first 100 days of their term, should you form government after the spring election. We share the same request to all other parties in Ontario.

On June 6, 2021, London, Ontario, was irrevocably changed – and along with it, the sense of safety for so many in Ontario was shattered.

On that night, three generations of one family were killed in an Islamophobic terror attack. In the aftermath of this unspeakable loss, you were there at the London Muslim Mosque, standing in solidarity with our community, and pledging change.

This was not the first time that violence had struck our communities. Only a few months before, on September 12, 2020, Mohamed Aslim-Zafis was slain at the IMO Mosque in your home riding by a man with connections to a white supremacist group.

That is why our communities came together. Even while suffering through our grief, organizations representing the vast majority of the Muslim community in Ontario came together and, through consultation, built a model piece of legislation called the Our London Family Act. We viewed the pillars and principles of the bill – changes to our education system, reviewing how hate crimes units worked, commitments to challenging Islamophobia – to be uncontroversial and bipartisan.

That is why we first came to your government with a proposal to introduce this legislation as a government bill. We were pleased to see the Ontario NDP work with the National Council of Canadian Muslims and introduce the Our London Family Act with us and introduce Bill 86, Our London Family Act. The Ontario Liberal Party and the Ontario Green Party all publicly supported the Our London Family Act from Day 1 as well and pledged to do whatever they could to ensure that this would not be a partisan issue.

And we were further pleased to see positive signals of support for the Our London Family Act from many members of your government, including Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism Parm Gill and Associate Minister Kaleed Rasheed.

Last week, when Minister Calandra stood in Queen's Park to note that while the government was supportive of passing the Our London Family Act, it would not be passing before the election, and that the government would bring it back if elected, we were frankly heartbroken.

On one hand, we were pleased to see your government commit to bringing back a version of the Our London Family Act. On the other hand, we were deeply saddened that the government did not prioritize challenging Islamophobia through comprehensive reform before the spring election, as we felt we had heard in promise from members of your government.

And thus, while we do not feel that the promise you made on the steps of the London Muslim Mosque for change has been broken, we also feel this promise has not been fulfilled.

We share our sincere thanks to all members of Queen’s Park – those in your party, the Ontario Liberals and Ontario Greens for supporting this legislation. And we thank Andrea Horwath and the Ontario NDP for tabling the bill and trying to make the swift passage of the Our London Family Act a reality.

Finally, we are asking you – as well as all parties – to commit to putting into your platforms a promise to work in a thoroughly bipartisan fashion to see the passage of a version of the Our London Family Act within the first 100 days of your term, should you form government.

If we do not see this promise, any words or sentiments about solidarity against Islamophobia, while appreciated, are of minimal persuasive value to our communities.

We cannot allow more people to die to the scourge of Islamophobia.

Regards,



The National Council of Canadian Muslims



Hikma Public Affairs Council



Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration



London Council of Imams



London Muslim Mosque



Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario



Muslim Wellness Network



Hyatt Mosque



Al-Ghazali Centre



Youth Coalition Combating Islamophobia



North London Islamic Centre

Cc:

Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Ontario NDP

Steven Del Duca, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party

Mark Schrenier, Leader of the Ontario Green Party