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The Honourable Peter Gordon MacKay
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I write to voice my strong objection to the planned passage of Bill C-51, the proposed anti-terror law, as it is currently written.

No evidence has been shown that the authorities need the expanded powers called for in this bill, or even that they have called for it. Additionally, it is undemocratic, as it impacts the freedoms of conscience and expression. It confuses political dissent with criminal behaviour, and creates restrictions of the right to freedom of speech.

The Bill covers everything from what people in Canada are permitted to write and say, to who can board a plane, to the sharing of tax information, and the detainment of citizens without charge. The Bill does not have a clear definition of what constitutes terrorism, thus giving too broad a scope for the constitution government to define as terrorism whatever political, social, economic or even religious ideology those in power disagree with. The Bill also fails to define “promoting” or “advocating” terrorism, thereby again giving the government arbitrary authority to pick and choose which individuals and groups to target for further scrutiny based on vague criteria.

As a person of faith I am very concerned that the passage of this Bill will enable the targeting of moral activists who seek to advocate for, or stand in solidarity with, the poor and oppressed, and those who seek to end injustice of various kinds. In particular, leaders of Canada's first nations have already stated that the bill violates their rights under the constitution to prior consultation on legislative changes that affect first nations communities. This Bill will only enable those who practice Islamophobia and other ideological hatreds to act on suspicion, hearsay, or personal vindictiveness to offer shady “evidence” against someone who is simply different from them, in an effort to silence opposing voices. This is not how a government in a democracy should be exercising its authority. I urge you to withdraw this Bill, and not introduce a replacement except with the broadest possible consultation with all affected communities in Canada.

Yours sincerely,