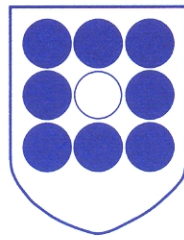


# CANADIAN CIVIL LIBERTIES ASSOCIATION

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August 26, 2009

Principal Kevin McGuire  
St. Edmund Campion Secondary School  
275 Brisdale Drive  
Brampton, Ontario  
L7A 3C7  
Fax: (905) 846-1527

Dear Principal McGuire:

### Re: Ban on *To Kill a Mockingbird*

This is to express the concern of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) regarding the reported removal of the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* from the Grade 10 curriculum of your secondary school. Heralded by many as a literary classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is currently approved by the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board for use as part of the Grade 10 English curriculum. According to recent media reports however, a parent's concern over the use of language prompted you to remove the novel.

Although concerns of parents should not be ignored, CCLA is troubled by your response to this matter. Many classic works contain material that some find objectionable. Over the past ten years, parents have objected to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, John Ball's *In the Heat of the Night* and Barbara Smucker's *Underground to Canada*. The simple fact that these, and other literary classics, have faced some controversy over their language or content does not mean that they should not be taught and discussed. Indeed, while such community objections should be dealt with in a sensitive manner, controversial materials often provide invaluable tools to discuss relevant and important societal issues. Literary and artistic works are often studied *because* of their controversial language and themes; examining the controversy provokes thought and introduces new perspectives and ideas. Critical thought on issues such as race, gender, sexuality and religion are essential building blocks of educational development.

