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## Press Release

### Think for Actions, A National Think Tank Supports the Honourable David Eggen and His Efforts to Combat Racism in Alberta

Calgary, AB, June 27, 2018 - **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Think for Actions strongly supports the steps taken by the Honorable Minister of Education, David Eggen, to combat increasing discrimination rates in Alberta and his team has worked with Think for Actions (TFA) over the years to learn about racial and religious intolerance within Alberta.

Hate crimes against Muslims in Canada have increased by 60% from 2014 to 2015, and 253% over the past four years. This is a jump from 45 incidents in 2012 to 159 in 2015. This attitude of hate and violence was one of the major factors that led Quebec Masjid Massacre in 2017 by Alexandre Bissonnette. A 2018 **Canadian Community Engagement Study 2018** concludes that 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of Canadians believe that the atmosphere towards Muslims in Canada is negative and want the government to invest resources towards reducing and eventually eliminating systemic racism and discrimination on religious grounds. The same study also shares that 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of Muslims have personally experienced discrimination due to their race or ethnicity in the last 5 years; almost 1/2 of the incidences were verbal abuse or attack; and 82% Muslims believe that discrimination against Canadian Muslims has increased in the last 5 years. Chairperson for the national think tank, Think for Actions, Dr. Mukarram Zaidi says, *"Sound research, open dialog and discussion will challenge ignorance by addressing fear"*.

Hon. Minister David spoke to over 100 organizations to discuss tactics to combat racism within the community. A survey was also conducted by the administration, with submissions from close to two thousand residents to get the perspectives of Albertans and how to help reduce this negative trend. David Eggen's efforts to combat racism in Canada are commendable and Think for Actions supports his cause. As said by Hon. Minister David Eggen *"To those who took the time to share their stories, we have heard you and we will keep listening. I want to thank everyone who took the time to share their difficult stories with our government to guide this important work. I look forward to continuing the conversation with you this summer to ensure we are on the right path. Together we will make Alberta safe and respectful for everyone. Albertans expect nothing less."*

Assistant Director Communications for Think for Actions, Abdul Rafay Samad, says *"The only way to defeat ignorance and bigotry is through open dialogue and understanding each other's differences"* In an effort to also improve the increasing trend of racism in Canada, Think for Actions will be conducting a national study to determine Canadian's Cultural Sensitivities towards Minorities. The results from this study will help address the issues faced by minorities and offer new solutions to combat them.

*"The first step to solving a problem is education, which in turn, leads to generating solutions. The research and solutions coming from Hon. Minister David Eggen and Think for Actions are what I believe Canada needs in order to thrive."* Says the Director of Finance for TFA, Dura Shawar. In the end, with the help of Hon. Minister David Eggen, we hope to create a safer and more inclusive Canada, and we place our confidence in him and his team.

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**Think for Actions** is a Calgary based national non-profit think tank, focused on the professional development of youth with a long-term goal of establishing a research institute on community affairs. The organization is focused on effectively engaging communities through research, collaborations and partnerships poised to solve grand societal challenges.

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