

English-speaking community massively opposed to Charter of Values

For Immediate Release

Montreal, November 7, 2013 – Following consultations with its members and a number of like-minded groups, the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) has as many objections to the Charter of Quebec Values as the *Charter Affirming The Values Of Secularism And The Religious Neutrality Of The State, As Well As The Equality Of Men And Women, And The Framing Of Accommodation Requests* has words in its title.

“As citizens, and as a minority community, we must continue to guard and protect existing human rights legislation,” said QCGN President Dan Lamoureux, noting that like its proposed language legislation Bill 14, Bill 60 is yet another attempt by the Parti Québécois government to limit individual rights and freedoms in the interests of a state-defined collective identity. “This runs counter to our interests as individual citizens, and to our collective interests as a minority community.”

Backed by a large number of its members and many stakeholders the Board of the QCGN [passed a resolution](#) opposed to the Charter, noting that it is a direct attack on members of our community. The resolution notes that Quebec’s English-speaking community, which has been an integral part of Quebec for more than two centuries, is a diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious community that is and has always been inclusive.

“We proudly take a stand against the Charter in solidarity with those members of our English-speaking community whose religions and cultures are being targeted,” said Lamoureux, noting the deep diversity of Quebec’s English speaking community of communities. Seventy-six per cent of the Jewish community and 85 per cent of Quebec Sikhs are English-speaking Quebecers. Muslims make up six per cent of Quebec’s English-speaking minority community compared to only 2.6 per cent of the French-speaking majority.

The QCGN, which plans to take part in parliamentary hearings on the bill, also opposes the Charter because of the immediate and long-term economic impact it will have on Quebec’s ability to attract and retain people, noted QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge. “Our society relies upon diverse religious and cultural communities to ensure Quebec’s collective renewal. These individuals come to Quebec to build businesses, carry out research, heal our sick, and teach in our universities. Discourage this diversity and it will drain our collective vitality.”

“We condemn government actions that divide Quebecers and urge our government to respect and recognize the enormous beneficial role linguistic, religious and cultural diversity plays in Quebec’s success,” insists Lamoureux. “We urge opposition parties to defeat this bill and demand that Quebec be governed in a manner that protects, defends, and advances the individual rights and freedoms of all Quebecers.”

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 41 English-language community organizations across Quebec. Its mission is to identify, explore and address strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of English-speaking Quebec and to encourage dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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