

Legislative Update, Bill C-13 An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts

The Government of Canada's Bill C-13 continues to progress slowly through the legislative process in Ottawa. Introduced in March 2022, C-13 now sits with the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, which began its first of eight meetings for clause-by-clause consideration of the legislation on December 13th. Barring anything extraordinary, the Committee is unlikely to send its report on C-13 to the House before mid-March 2023. If C-13 is subsequently adopted after third reading in the House, it will be sent for consideration by the Senate. All this means is that it is unlikely that C-13 will pass into law until late spring at the earliest.

This is good news for English-speaking Quebecers. The QCGN, many other organizations, and legal experts have grave concerns about C-13, which will change federal law to acquiesce to the *Charter of the French Language* that as amended by Bill 96 now uses the notwithstanding clause to deny the fundamental rights and freedoms of our minority community. Inclusion of the *Charter of the French Language* within the quasi-constitutional *Official Languages Act* and other proposal within C-13 will seriously impact the judicial interpretation of the language rights of 1.3 million English-speaking Quebecers.

Bill C-13 will also create a new federal law, *the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act*, which will extend French speakers new rights as both employees and consumers with respect to their private communications with enterprises like Canada's chartered banks and telecommunication companies. 1.3 million English-speaking Quebecers will not have these same rights.

This legislation proposes to abandon half a century of official language policy, which has been based on the principle that both official languages and official language minority communities have equal rights in law.

It is critical that English-speaking Quebec continue to voice its concerns about C-13 to Members of Parliament and Senators. Liberal MPs like Anthony Housefather, Patricia Lattanzio, Marc Garneau, and Senator Judith Seidman need our support, as they work with their Parliamentary colleagues to protect the rights of English-speaking Quebecers in Ottawa. Urge the people in your personal networks [to sign the QCGN's open letter to Minister David Lametti](#) that demands that C-13 must safeguard the minority language rights of English-speaking Quebecers. And take the time to talk to your MP when they are back in their constituency offices. You can also express your support by liking and sharing the posts of our #OuiBelong social media campaign on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) and follow the progression of the Bill on our [Language Rights](#) page.

The QCGN will continue to monitor C-13's progress through Parliament, and we will also continue to aggressively advocate at the federal and provincial level to protect and defend the language rights of English-speaking Quebecers.

Thank you for your continued support.
Happy Holidays!