

**For immediate release**

## **QCGN Invites Meilleur to Become Acquainted with English-speaking Quebec**

**Montreal – May 16, 2017** – The Quebec Community Groups Network extends its congratulations to Madeleine Meilleur, who has been nominated to be the next Commissioner of Official Languages by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. She is slated to replace Graham Fraser who retired at the end of last year after more than a decade a yeoman service.

Recognized for having participated in the battle to save Ottawa’s Montfort Hospital in the late 1990s, Meilleur was Ontario’s Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs between 2003 and 2016. As Minister, she oversaw the expansion of Montfort Hospital; the creation of Ontario’s Commissioner for French Language Services and the establishment of a provincial Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs; as well as an increased number of provincial institutions and regions designated to provide French language service. She also oversaw the designation of September 25 as Franco-Ontarian Day.

“As Commissioner of Official Languages, Mme. Meilleur will be our foremost federal advocate for English- and French-speaking minority communities all across Canada,” commented QCGN President James Shea, noting that an important part of her job will be to have an equal understanding and commitment to both of Canada’s official language minority communities. “We count on her to come and visit our communities and get to know us.”

Traditionally held alternately by a French-speaking and an English-speaking Canadian, Meilleur is the third Francophone and second woman to be appointed to the post since it was created in 1970 to ensure the application of language laws and to promote bilingualism and linguistic duality. The Commissioner of Official Languages, which reports directly to Parliament, is responsible for the full recognition and widespread use of English and French within Canadian society, as well as within federal institutions and other organizations subject to the Official Languages Act. The Commissioner of Official Languages is appointed for a seven-year mandate.

Under the Official Languages Act, Meilleur’s appointment must be approved by the House of Commons and the Senate. The Standing Committee will have 30 days to examine the nomination and report back to the House of Commons which will vote on the appointment. The Government will also table a motion in the Senate seeking its approval.

“Sadly, official language minority communities do not have any input into the nomination or appointment process,” said Shea. “Going forward, this is something we would like the government to consider.”

“After six-months the QCGN is pleased the government is moving ahead with a nomination and we look forward to working with the new commissioner. In the meantime, the QCGN extends its thanks to Deputy commissioner Ghislaine Saikaley, who will continue to serve in an acting role until June, and her remarkable team,” Shea added, noting the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages contains a sizeable group of public servants committed to the vitality of our official language communities.

The Quebec Community Groups Network ([www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca)) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 53 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

**For further information:**

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