

media statement

MONTREAL, April 11, 2003 – The Quebec government is using the extraordinary powers of its controversial language law to attack small businesses and impose an artificial tax on bilingualism, Alliance Quebec President Brent Tyler said at a news conference Friday.

Mr. Tyler was speaking in support of the Servello family of NDG who have been repeatedly harassed by the language police at their Sherbrooke Street West store, the Café Boutique Rock.

The Servello's told reporters about a language inspector who was asked to leave the store two weeks ago because she was interfering with customer service. She was escorted back into the building by Montreal police officers who said they were legally obliged by the Quebec government to accompany her on private property.

They said she seemed to be upset about spelling mistakes and the appearance of words like "t-shirts" on temporary signs inside the store.

They also said that since the store opened two years ago, they have had no complaints from their many French-speaking customers about their language or service and had gone to considerable expense to comply with the language law.

Mr. Tyler said the government focus appeared to be the harassment of small, immigrant-owned businesses like the Café Boutique Rock which are the backbone of the economy. He described the incident as an abuse of power and a waste of the public's time and resources.

"Chez Mes Amis, a community restaurant in NDG, serves food to people for \$2.50 a meal," Mr Tyler said. "The budget of the Office de la Langue Francaise is \$18 million and that could feed a lot of hungry people."

Alliance Quebec invited all candidates for political office in provincial ridings where both English and French are used in public to address this issue.

Two candidates from Notre-Dame-de-Grace in the current election campaign attended the news conference. They were Mr. Peter Sauve of the Equality Party and Mr. Allan Patrick of the ADQ. Liberal candidate Russell Copeman, who has represented NDG for the last eight years was personally invited, but did not attend.

For more information, call Alliance Quebec at (514) 932-3292, local 327 and ask for Rob Bull, Brent Tyler at (514) 808-6634 or the Café Boutique Rock at (514) 481-6227.