

Opposition Grows to Premier's Pigeonholing of 'Historic Anglos'

MONTREAL, November 5, 2021 – Community leaders from many regions and political leaders from all levels of government continue to endorse an open letter from English-speaking Quebecers to Premier François Legault that rejects his plan to limit government services in English to his restrictive definition of “historic anglophones” – that is those eligible to attend school in English in Quebec.

More than 3,300 English-speaking Quebecers have already signed the [open letter](#) informing the Premier in no uncertain terms that English-speaking Quebecers are not a folkloric ‘historic’ group. “Quebec’s English-speaking community is an integral part of Quebec with full rights to participate in Quebec society and to receive government services. We are full-fledged Quebecers, who are committed to building an inclusive Quebec where French is the common language,” says the letter, published on the website of the Quebec Community Groups Network.

“Over the past week, emails from people wishing to sign the letter have been coming in faster than we can process them,” QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge says: “We hope the Premier, Language Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette, and the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) leadership team are getting the message loud and clear that they are moving in the wrong direction.”

Leading up to this weekend’s municipal elections across the province, many municipal politicians have either signed the letter or indicated that they support its goal.

On Monday, Montreal mayoral candidate Denis Coderre indicated that he agrees with the open letter. He pledged that, if he is elected, the city will continue to provide essential services to people who need them, regardless of the language they speak. Balarama Holness has gone much further, repeatedly stating his opposition to Bill 96 and committing to a public consultation and possible referendum on the use of English and French in Montreal. Incumbent Mayor Valérie Plante says she does not want Montreal to become a bilingual city, adding that she fully supports the CAQ government’s Bill 96 overhauling the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101).

Municipal leaders who have signed the open letter include Matthew Aronson, Dida Berku, Mitchell Brownstein, Steven Erdelyi, Mary Gallery, Jonathan Lang, Sue Montgomery, Joe Ortona, Jeff Shamie, and Christina Smith.

Earlier this week the Liberal Party of Quebec quietly released a communiqué that states the official opposition deplores the Premier’s dismissive definition of ‘historic anglophones.’ “It is unacceptable that the Premier of all Quebecers should qualify as ‘historic’ a vibrant English-speaking community that has helped and will continue to help build our modern Quebec, one that contributes to the flourishing of our common French language, one that has unalienable rights of access to services in its language.”

Several federal MPs have also signed the open letter to Premier Legault. They include Anthony Housefather, Annie Koutrakis, Emmanuella Lambropoulos, Patricia Lattanzio, Alexandra Mendes, Francis

Scarpaleggia, Brenda Shanahan, Sherry Romanado, Peter Schiefke, and Sameer Zuberi. Also on the list are Senators Leo Housakos and Judith Seidman and retired Senator Joan Fraser.

The QCGN encourages all English-speaking Quebecers who agree and want to help send a strong and unmistakable message to Premier Legault to [join the list](#) of Quebecers who have already signed this letter by sending their names to fullfledgedquebecers@qcgnc.ca. Read the [full text](#) and consult the list of signatories on the QCGN website.

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgnc.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 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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