

## Policy Matters Blog – Bill 96

### BILL 96 - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE DEBATES “HISTORIC ANGLO” CLAUSE

**February 3, 2022** – The [Committee on Culture and Education](#) continued its clause-by-clause consideration of [Bill 96, An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec](#) on Wednesday. Consult the [transcript](#) or view the [video](#) of the session. Also consult [proposed amendments not adopted](#) and [amendments that were adopted](#). These documents are updated as the study progresses.

The Committee began by continuing its consideration of article 12, which would require agencies of the civil administration to file an annual report shall stating the number of positions within its organization that require knowledge of a language other than French. Liberal Committee members questioned the universal application of this section and proposed that agencies of the civil administration required or designated to communicate in English be exempted. The government explained that government-wide statistics are required, but that it did not want to impose obligations on existing entities that are not required to produce annual reports. The article was adopted without further amendment.

The committee then moved on to article 15 of the Bill, which generally lays out the exceptions permitting an agency of the civil administration to communicate in a language other than French. This is the article that contains the controversial provision that an agency of the civil administration may communicate with a person in English only in cases where that person has been declared eligible to receive instruction in English, labelled ‘historic anglos’ by the government. Section 15 also contains a grandfather clause permitting government agencies to continue communicating with individuals in English on a specific file opened before Bill 96 was tabled. Among the exemptions, English services can be made available to immigrants for a period of six months following their arrival in Québec

Liberal members argued that this article would take away choice for new immigrants to receive ongoing communication in English from the government, but the Minister stated that this was the entire point of the provision; to integrate newcomers in French. The Parti Québécois proposed an amendment that would have gone a step further and allowed English communications solely to ‘historic anglos’. This amendment was rejected, and the Committee adjourned without adopting article 15.