

For immediate release

Coalition Avenir Quebec's outrageous tuition policy hurts all Quebecers

The Quebec Community Groups Network is alarmed that a recent move by the government of Premier François Legault to hike tuition fees for out-of-province students will spur young English-speaking Quebecers to leave the province. And it will stop talented young people in other provinces and beyond from coming here.

“Premier Legault says he is trying to preserve and promote the French language in Quebec, and that is a goal we support,” said Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General of the QCGN. “But it is now clear this government has concluded that the most effective way to support French is to curtail English and English-language institutions to the greatest extent possible.”

“This assault on English universities – effectively doubling regular tuition for students from outside Quebec who want to study at McGill, Concordia, or Bishop’s – is only the latest and most blatant expression of the government’s efforts,” Martin-Laforge said, noting young English-speaking Quebecers are telling the media that they do not feel welcome in their own province.

“Over and over again, Quebec ministers complain, sometimes bitterly, about how much English is spoken in our multilingual metropolis,” Martin-Laforge continued. “We believe there is strength in Quebec’s diversity.”

“While the CAQ’s measures in general, including the hurtful Bill 96, may be aimed at the Montreal region, they also bring collateral damage to the nearly 250,000 English-speaking Quebecers who live outside the metropolis. We all pay a heavy price for the CAQ’s obsession with hearing “Bonjour/Hi” in downtown Montreal.”

Since it was elected in 2018, the CAQ government has paid little more than lip service to the English-speaking community, Martin-Laforge said. “How else can one explain Finance Minister Eric Girard – who is responsible for relations with English-speaking Quebecers – standing by in silence while his cabinet colleagues deny English rights and access to services, penalize English institutions like universities and CEGEPs, and publicly denigrate the very sound, the very presence of English in a cosmopolitan, world-class city?”

“We ask Minister Girard to tell us what he intends to do on behalf of the community of Quebecers, for which he has ministerial responsibility.”

“Kneecapping English universities in Quebec, which include some of the best in the world, will only work against attracting the talent, energy, brains and perspectives Quebec needs to build and grow in an increasingly globalized economy,” Martin-Laforge concludes. “Make no mistake: Quebec’s loss will be someone else’s gain.”

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.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.

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