

## ALLIANCE CALLS ON QUEBEC GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW APPEAL

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**Montreal, Thursday, May 13, 1999** - Alliance Quebec deplores the fact that the Quebec Government has gone before the Supreme Court to appeal a ruling of the Quebec Court of Appeals that guarantees an accused's right to a trial in the official language of their choice and to hear the prosecution's arguments in that language.

"The fact that the Quebec Government is considering appealing such a decision is reprehensible. It means that our government believes that the right of a prosecutor to work in French overrides the right of the accused to understand the prosecutor. This shows the contempt our government has for minority language communities not only in Quebec but across Canada. If the position of the PQ Government is upheld, the rights of francophones outside Quebec will also be threatened," stated Anthony Housefather, Vice President of Alliance Quebec.

"This is the very same government that has consistently stalled in adopting English-language Health and Social Services Access Plans because they believe the right of health care professionals to work in French outweighs the right of English speaking people to receive services in English," Housefather continued.

"Clearly this is a government that plays fast and loose with issues of rights when it suits their political purposes rather than looking after the general interests of the people it governs", stated Alliance Quebec Chairman Mary Anne Thomson.

Housefather and Thomson called upon the Quebec Government to withdraw the appeal and stated that Alliance Quebec would consider intervening at the Supreme Court level to protect minority language rights across Canada should the appeal go forward.