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Québec.**

## Network News



**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**  
From QCGN President Eva Ludvig

Friday May 2, 2025

In the wee small hours of Tuesday morning, we ended up, from our community's point of view, with a pretty good federal election result. While the next government will be a minority, it won't be razor-thin, the Liberals under Mark Carney will not be beholden to the Bloc Québécois for support because they can find a slim majority from the NDP's seven MPs and the lone Green Party MP, Elizabeth May.



For the foreseeable future, that is beside the point. Precisely NONE of the opposition parties wants a quick election, especially the Conservatives, who first must get their leader a seat after Pierre Poilievre placed second to Liberal Bruce Fanjoy in the Ottawa-area riding of Carleton. The NDP needs to find a new leader after Jagmeet Singh announced his intent to resign as soon as an interim successor can be installed, and the party has major wounds to lick after being reduced from 24 seats to seven, five short of what's needed for Official Party status in the House.

We can also feel a little relieved that the Liberals won enough seats in Quebec that they won't have to look over their shoulders all the time to appease nationalist forces – an unhappy circumstance in which we often found ourselves tossed under the bus of political expediency.

That doesn't mean all will be sweetness and light. Potential flashpoints between Ottawa and Quebec remain when it comes to tussles over federal intrusion into Quebec's jealously guarded jurisdictions, not to mention Carney's promise to intervene over the pre-emptive use of the Notwithstanding Clause in cases where Quebec legislation like Bills 21 or 96 get to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Quebec government's determination to fashion a proposed Constitution and citizenship for Quebec ahead of the 2026 provincial election is something else to keep an eye on. In fact, the very morning after the election (and I have my suspicions the timing was anything but accidental) the Legault government announced the appointment of constitutional expert Patrick Taillon as a special advisor to assist in drafting a Quebec constitution.

Bienvenue au Québec, M. le Premier Ministre ...

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### Where two parties stand on the issues

In the middle of March, we asked the five major political parties competing in the April 28 federal election where they stood on six issues we considered priorities for the English-speaking community, which we had confirmed after surveying our community. Of the five, only the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals, responded to us directly. Here's a synopsis of the questions and their answers:

*Recognize and confirm that the English-speaking Community of Quebec constitutes an Official Minority-Language Community within Canada:*

**Liberals:** We recognize that Quebec's English-speaking community is an Official Language Minority Community (OLMC), and we are fully committed to enhancing the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking communities. There are as many Canadians living in the linguistic-minority communities of Quebec as in the linguistic-minority communities of all the other provinces and territories combined, and each faces its own subtle regional, demographic and economic realities that require attention. We will introduce the necessary measures to protect the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking minority communities.

**Bloc Québécois:** The English-speaking community's needs are different because only one of the two official languages is threatened - French. Money sent to support the ESCQ should be redirected to supporting French, and the Charte de la langue française takes precedence over the federal Official Languages Act in Quebec.

*Establish that the use of the Charter's Notwithstanding Clause be made consistent with the original intent of its inclusion in the Charter - as a last-resort override by governments in unusual circumstances, and not as pre-emptive permission to disrupt the execution of fundamental Charter principles:*

**Liberals:** We must be absolutely clear on this matter: a right is a right is a right. We have deep concerns about any government and any party that would use the Notwithstanding Clause to contravene the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and we will always defend the Charter.

**Bloc:** The clause is an essential tool in the maintenance and protection of a Quebec culture and the French language.

*Federal political parties should commit to a policy of increased transparency in the transfer of federal funds to Official Minority-Language Communities and their associated groups and organizations and bring representatives of the OLMCs to the table in order to improve the oversight:*

**Bloc:** No other government can grant language rights beyond what is in the Constitution, and no federal financial contribution should be made without the express agreement of the Quebec government. In addition, all funds associated with the federal Action Plan on Official Languages should be used exclusively to support French, the only official language that is under threat.

**Liberals:** The federal government must be a leader when it comes to advancing Canada's official languages and supporting OLMCs in Canada. We will demonstrate this leadership by working to empower OLMCs through an approach that emphasizes action "by and for" those communities, an approach that makes stakeholder consultation and collaboration one of its guiding principles.

*State and recognize the importance of the CBC to the English-speaking community of Quebec in framing their policies with respect to the importance of public broadcasting in this country*

**Bloc:** We are in favour of full funding for the CBC and Radio-Canada.

**Liberals:** The CBC plays a critical role in defending and defining the Canadian identity, a key part of which are our OLMCs. We are committed to increasing our investment in CBC by \$150 million, which will help strengthen its mandate to promote and support Canadian identity and cultures from coast to coast to coast.

*Maintain the tradition of alternating between bilingual French- and English-speaking Commissioners of Official Languages to serve a seven-year term and appoint a bilingual English-speaker in 2025*

**Liberals:** We will carry out consultations with all recognized parties in the House of Commons and the Senate to find a bilingual Commissioner who understands the linguistic realities of all Canadians, and particularly those from OLMCs. As we move forward in appointing a new Commissioner, we will be mindful of the historic alternance between bilingual Anglophones and Francophones in the role.

**Bloc:** it doesn't matter what the next Commissioner's mother tongue is because the individual should be fluently bilingual and bicultural in the first place.

*Develop policies to combat growing language-based income inequality in Quebec and make a clear pledge to work cooperatively with the government of Quebec to find solutions to address the problem.*

**Bloc:** The problem doesn't really exist, but if it does, no federal authority exists to alleviate it; it can only be dealt with by the government of Quebec.

**Liberals:** A strong economy in Canada depends on ensuring all workers have access to the supports they need to help them find good jobs and that includes workers in OLMCs across the country. In March, we announced we would increase investments through the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities by \$20.5 million over five years (2023 to 2028). This is in addition to the \$74.5 million already renewed for 2023 to 2028 to enable organizations working with OLMCs to help remove language barriers so Canadians in official language minority communities can find and keep jobs.

QCGN will hold the Prime Minister and his government to these promises. We will continue to make strong representation on the English-speaking community's behalf.

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**You are cordially invited!**

It is with great pleasure that we invite you to join us for a special evening as we kick off the 30th anniversary of the Quebec Community Groups Network!

**Tuesday, June 4, 6 – 8 p.m.**

**Maison Alcan**

**1188 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, QC H3A 1H6.**

This event will launch an exciting new chapter for the organization as we celebrate the vitality of the community we have built together.

Enjoy a slice of cake, raise a glass with our signature cocktail, and be part of a milestone moment in our story! It will also be a wonderful opportunity to connect with friends, partners, and supporters who have been part of this 30-year journey.

To confirm your attendance, [please register here](#).

If you are unable to attend, you are welcome to designate a colleague or friend to attend in your place; all are welcome.

We sincerely hope to have the pleasure of your presence.

– *Eva Ludvig & Sylvia Martin-Laforge*



### **Note of Thanks to Commissioner Th  berge**

I would like to offer a special note of thanks to Raymond Th  berge as he concludes his mandate as Commissioner of Official Languages. Throughout his seven-year term, Commissioner Th  berge has been a consistent and constructive presence, supporting the English-speaking Community of Quebec and working to strengthen our credibility within broader provincial and national conversations. His accessibility, openness, and willingness to listen have helped build bridges among communities.

Notably, a study released by his office in the fall of 2024 played an important role in dispelling persistent myths about our community, including the enduring misconception that English- and French-speaking Quebecers live at odds.

*– Eva Ludvig*



### **Courts deliver much good news**

The Quebec Court of Appeal has unanimously upheld a lower court decision declaring key provisions of Bill 40 – the legislation that replaced elected school boards with government-organized service centres – as inapplicable to English-language school boards.

This is a clear, decisive affirmation of the English-speaking community's constitutional right to manage and control our own educational institutions. It's also a powerful reminder that community-led institutions are more than administrative bodies. They are civic spaces, places of belonging, and central to the cultural life of our community.

When we stand together, when we challenge overreach, we can secure the rights that sustain our presence in Quebec. We were intervenors in the appeal, and our argument in favour of a broader definition of our community

and its right to participate in the election of school boards even if they can't send their children to English school by virtue of the Chartre de la langue française, was accepted and even expanded upon in this ruling.

And just last week, Quebec Superior Court Judge Éric Dufour ruled the government's imposition of a 30-per-cent (\$3,000) tuition increase for out-of-province undergraduates at McGill and Concordia universities was unjustified, as was the imposition on the English-speaking universities to ensure 80 per cent of undergraduates achieved an intermediate level of French proficiency by the time they graduate.

Higher Education Minister Pascale Déry said the government is considering an appeal, but it is worth noting that in his blunt and forceful ruling, the judge observed "an absence of data on which the minister claims to base her decision ... At the very least, what she had on hand in no way substantiates the reasonableness of the outcome." Dufour added: "With respect to the retention rate of students from outside Quebec and their ability to integrate into Quebec society - whether international or out-of-province students - the evidence shows that the minister had no data on the matter, beyond tenuous information."



#### A torrent of provincial legislation: Bills 84 and 94

While national events tend to capture the headlines, it's provincial legislation that often reshapes our daily life at QCGN. And in Quebec, that legislative tempo hasn't slowed for a moment.

The introduction of Bill 84, the "National Integration Act," has generated deep concern within our community. The bill seeks to redefine Quebec citizenship and integration but fails - conspicuously - to acknowledge the English-speaking community's existence, contributions, or obligations under this new civic framework. Our omission is not just oversight. It's an exclusion.

The QCGN responded forcefully, submitting a brief and presenting before the National Assembly Committee on Citizen Relations. We stated clearly that any policy redefining Quebec's civic structure must include all Quebecers. Encouragingly, numerous Francophone civil society groups shared our concern, and in some cases, joined us in advocating for change. This moment of solidarity marks a welcome shift in what has often been a polarized debate. It's not just a shared challenge- it's an opening.

QCGN President [Eva Ludvig's oped](#) on how broad the opposition to Bill 84 is, was published on Le Devoir's website on April 17.

Soon after Bill 84 was introduced, the provincial government brought in Bill 94, building on the secularism principles of Bill 21. The proposed law would extend the ban on religious symbols at work to all school personnel and volunteers, and place

new limits on religious accommodations in schools. The Bill is running into fierce opposition from unions and other groups.

### Budget cuts and community fallout

Because we expected Quebec's most recent budget to be an austerity document in everything but name, we asked for funding levels to remain unchanged, rather than seek unrealistic increases. We advocated strongly for the preservation of essential community supports. While in some cases we were heard, in others – particularly in the areas of youth employment and entrepreneurship – we've seen unexpected reductions that pose significant risks to programming and long-term sustainability. It's clear some of those cuts will disproportionately affect organizations serving minority communities. We will work with member organizations to advocate not just for resources, but for fairness.

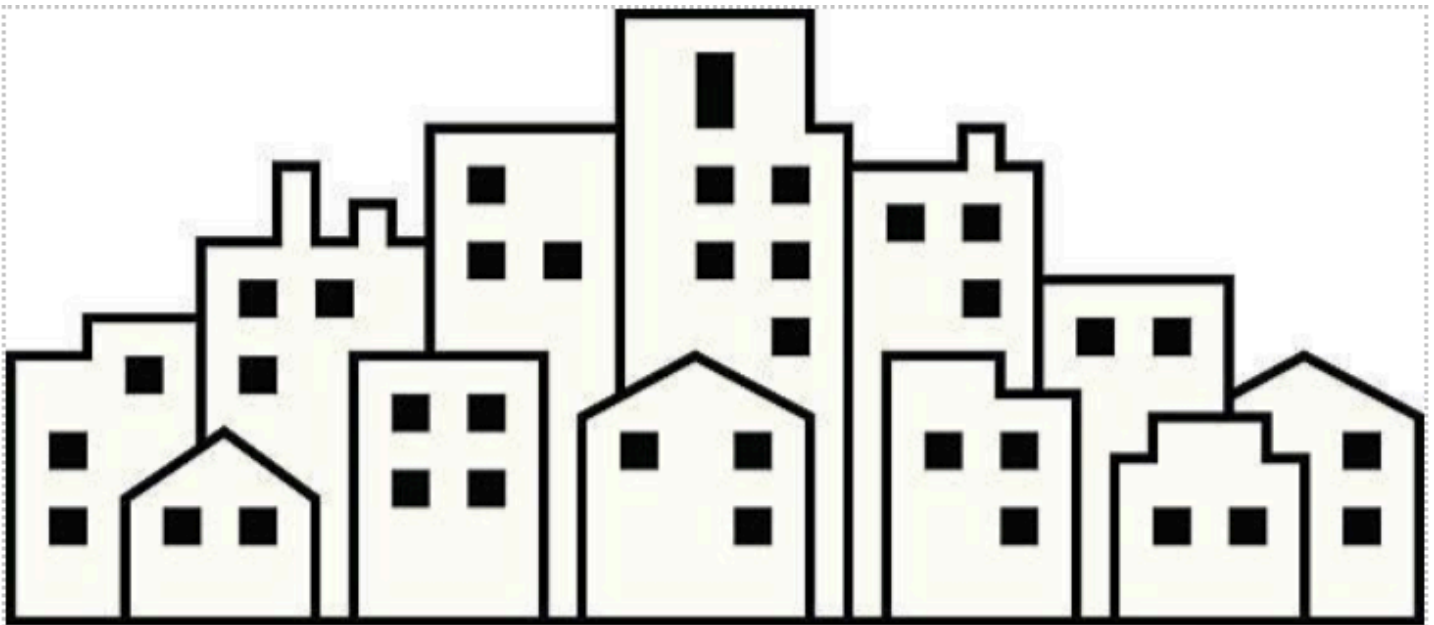
– Sylvia Martin-Laforge

### A Community hub for English-speaking Quebecers – help shape our vision!

English-speaking Quebecers have built a vibrant network of organizations that advocate for our rights, deliver vital services, and strengthen our communities. But today, many of these groups face serious challenges, including rising costs for office and spaces, shrinking resources, and the need for greater collaboration to meet growing demands.

That's why the Quebec Community Groups Network is exploring the creation of a Community Hub: a shared, collaborative space in Montreal designed to bring together organizations that serve English-speaking Quebecers – both provincial and sectoral groups that advocate across the province and local groups providing direct services to Montrealers.

By sharing affordable office spaces, meeting rooms, and multi-purpose event facilities, these organizations could better support each other, spark new partnerships, and deliver stronger services to the community. A Community Hub would reduce costs, foster innovation, and most importantly, create a space where the English-speaking community can grow, connect, and thrive.



"This is about much more than just sharing space," says Peter Starr, Chair of the QCGN's Shared Spaces Committee. "It's about creating a dynamic environment where organizations – from grassroots groups to provincial leaders – can collaborate, exchange ideas, and work together to better serve English-speaking Quebecers."

The idea has already generated strong interest. Now, with the support of a small grant from Canadian Heritage, the QCGN is conducting a feasibility study to better understand the needs of organizations and the services a Hub should offer.

If you are part of an organization that serves English-speaking Quebecers – whether you work province-wide or deliver services locally – we invite you to complete a [short survey](#). Your feedback will guide the development of our Community Hub and help ensure it meets the real needs of our community.

For more information about the Community Hub project or the feasibility study, please contact me, Director of Special Projects, [Rita Legault](#).

Together, we can build a stronger, more connected future for English-speaking Quebecers.

– *Rita Legault*

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Thank you for reading our regular newsletter. For up-to-date news about the Quebec Community Groups Network you can visit our website at [www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca) or follow us on social media



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