

AQ Announces Initiative Against Bill 171

PRESS CONFERENCE

For immediate release:

Montreal, Wednesday, May 16, 2001 – Alliance Quebec has bitterly opposed the PQ government's proposed Bill 171, a bill to amend the Charter of the French Language so that a municipality or borough would only be granted bilingual status if more than 50% of the residents were mother tongue English-speaking. Prior to this amendment the law set the threshold at 50 per cent users of a language other than French.

“Naturally we are extremely concerned by the PQ government's attempt to define the English-speaking community in the narrowest way possible,” said Alliance Quebec President Anthony Housefather. “In introducing Bill 171 to complement Bill 170, the PQ government will in effect reduce our numbers and as a result English language services to our community.”

“It is disconcerting to think that in the future this definition may be used in areas like health care to define who is entitled to service in English,” continued Housefather. “Alliance Quebec cannot accept this definition.”

At the same time, Alliance Quebec notes that it has always opposed the premise that an institution could only erect signage in English and require its staff to know English, if the minority was the majority within that institution. “Bill 171 was the last straw on this issue,” stated Housefather, “We are now prepared to attack the entire premise of bilingual status at the municipal and institutional level being banned unless an absurdly high threshold is reached.”

Alliance Quebec has retained lawyer Brent Tyler and will hold a **PRESS CONFERENCE** to outline AQ's initiative against Bill 171 on:

Thursday, May 17, 2001 at 11:00 am
At Alliance Quebec's office
1980 Sherbrooke St. West, Suite 830.