

For immediate release

Quebec must drop plans to abandon the riding of Westmount-Saint Louis

Montreal – February 10, 2016 – The QCGN is disappointed that the *Commission de la représentation électorale du Québec* (CRE) apparently failed to follow the criteria related to the delimitation of electoral divisions by eliminating the Westmount-Saint Louis electoral division.

“The proposed electoral divisions of Ville Marie and Westmount-Notre-Dame-De-Grace will not provide effective representation for the natural community of Westmount, whose unquestionable cultural and historical heritage goes back generations,” commented Geoffrey Chambers, Vice-president of the QCGN.

The democratic rights of Quebecers are clear: Effective representation in the National Assembly is achieved by electoral districts that balance voter parity with minority representation and cultural identity. For a community that is already underrepresented in the National Assembly, the loss of the provincial riding of Westmount-Saint Louis means the loss of an English-speaking constituency and the MNA charged with representing its interest.

“Setting electoral boundaries is not a cold calculation of numbers. The courts have made clear that electoral boundaries must reflect effective representation, that involves a balance of voter parity, as the primary factor, with countervailing criteria that may include minority representation and cultural identity,” said Chambers, adding that the Commission de la représentation électorale du Québec must balance of these criteria to assess effective representation. “The Commission clearly failed to ensure this balance in its latest proposals to eliminate Westmount-Saint Louis.”

The QCGN believes the Commission’s recommendation related to Westmount-Saint Louis must be abandoned to ensure Westmount citizens are afforded effective representation in the National Assembly, which must in turn represent the diversity of Quebec’s social mosaic.

The Quebec Community Groups Network is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 51 English-language community organizations across Quebec. A centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action, QCGN identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec. It also encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

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