

# BILL 96: WHAT REPERCUSSIONS WILL IT HAVE ON INTERVENTION WORKERS AND ON MINORITY-LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES IN QUEBEC?

## CONFERENCE AND DISCUSSION ON BILL 96

### SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM DISCUSSION January 13th, 2022

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*Conference and discussion*

*Bill 96 : what repercussions will it have on intervention workers and on minority-language communities in Quebec?*

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## ACTIONS

- Beginning of February: the National Assembly's Commission on Culture and Education will continue to study Bill 96 article by article. If we want to try to modify the bill, it is urgent to act now.
- Letters from professional associations, community groups and others can be sent to the commission studying Bill 96.
- For tips or model letters: write to [janet.cleveland@affiliate.mcgill.ca](mailto:janet.cleveland@affiliate.mcgill.ca)

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## SUMMARY OF CONCERNS MENTIONED DURING THE DISCUSSION

### **The burden of translation will be transferred to the community sector**

- Participants in the discussion shared their concerns that the community sector will be faced with a significant increase in workload, without additional resources.
- Participants wonder whether this would in fact lead to a “privatization” of interpretation services.

### **The application of these provisions of Bill 96 would represent an added burden for public institutions**

- Some healthcare professionals will not be able to do their work adequately without interpreters. It will therefore be up to these same professionals to verify if their patients qualify for an exemption from these provisions of Bill 96 before serving them.
- Moreover, the Bill provides for penalties against public employees who try to do their work to the best of their abilities by using languages other than French to support non-French-speaking clients.
- Some bilingual CIUSSSs risk being overwhelmed as anglophone new arrivals gravitate towards them as they will be the only ones allowed to serve all English-speakers in English, regardless of whether they went to school in English in Canada.
- Result: additional pressure on an already-dysfunctional system.

*Point of information: for a list of institutions subject to these provisions of Bill 96, see Schedule I at the end of Bill 96*

- Part A lists agencies that are part of the Administration, which will be forbidden from using languages other than French, with exceptions.
- Part B lists semipublic agencies, which will not be affected.

### **Threat to the retention and sense of accomplishment of experienced workers**

- There is already a worker shortage in healthcare and education. These provisions risk further demoralizing intervention workers who devote themselves to offering services that respond to the needs of service users, patients, parents, children, and youth.
- These provisions of Bill 96 risk harming the sense of accomplishment of education and healthcare workers, often very engaged and experienced. Forbidding them from using tools which are essential for their daily work, like access to interpreters for those clients who will no longer be eligible for them, is not a good way to show that this work is valued.

### **Threat to the integration and autonomy of migrants and refugees**

- These provisions of Bill 96 will hinder the autonomy of persons by closing off access to certain spheres of the host society.
- The use of interpreters often allows people who speak little or no French to participate actively in the activities necessary for their personal (i.e. meeting with a nurse) or social (i.e. schooling) well-being.
- Studies show that interventions with migrants often require more time than those with non-migrants. Without interpreters, the time required will be extended even further. Migrants are already obliged to learn to navigate new systems and contexts that they are unfamiliar with (i.e. the Quebec health and educational systems). If they will now not even have access to interpreters, it is difficult to see how that would support their integration.

### **It is already difficult enough to access francisation courses**

- There are already many roadblocks standing in the way of signing up for francisation courses (i.e. insufficient demand to open a class, delays of several weeks or month before courses start). It may take months or years to improve this situation, especially given the shortage of teachers.

### **EXAMPLE in the context of occupational therapy and physiotherapy: What will happen to people who have suffered irreversible cognitive damage and lost the use of their second language?**

- Example: a Creole-speaking woman who, after a severe cranial trauma, loses the use of her second language (French). How will public-sector employees communicate with her? Will they stubbornly hold to using French only rather than calling on an interpreter?
- Example: a physiotherapy patient would be helped by viewing videos about exercises to do at home and these are available in a language other than French. Would it be forbidden to share these videos with the patient?

### **Concerns about people in situations which make it very difficult to learn French in six months**

- Refugees with significant psychosocial needs, without much education, or who lived through traumatic situations.
- Sometimes it is impossible to attend francisation courses immediately upon arrival due to family responsibilities.