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CANADA

PROPOSALS FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES REGARDING THE DRAFT PROPOSED REGULATIONS UNDER PART VII OF THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages

Yvan Baker, Chair

**MAY 2026
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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Chair**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

has the honour to present its

FIFTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(3)f), the committee has studied the proposed Official Languages (Advancement of Equality of Status and Use of English and French) Regulations and has agreed to report the following:



PROPOSALS FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES REGARDING THE DRAFT PROPOSED REGULATIONS UNDER PART VII OF THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages reviewed the draft proposed Official Languages (Advancement of Equality of Status and Use of English and French) Regulations tabled in the House of Commons on 9 December 2025 (Sessional Paper 8560-451-895-02) and agreed to report it by making the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1 (clearly define “initiative”)

That the draft proposed regulations clearly define the term “initiative” and ensure that it reflects the obligation of federal institutions to analyze the impact of any decision that may affect the government’s commitments under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

Recommendation 2: (“other stakeholders”)

That the draft proposed regulations be amended to replace the term “other stakeholders” with the following: “other stakeholders engaged in supporting the achievement of the commitments set out in sections 41(1), 41(2) and 41(3) of the *Official Languages Act*.”

Recommendation 3 (addition of a purpose clause)

That the draft proposed regulations include a purpose clause stating that the purpose of the regulations is to develop a procedure that is systematically implemented on an ongoing basis. This procedure must be applied by federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*. It must also ensure that they fulfill their obligations with respect to the complementary objectives of Part VII, which aim to advance the substantive equality of the official languages:

- **the vitality and development of the official language minority communities and the full use of English and French in Canadian society (section 41(1));**



- the protection and promotion of French in all provinces and territories (section 41(2) and subparagraph 41(6)b(i)); and
- the commitments to learning in the minority language (section 41(3)).

The procedure applies to departmental, interdepartmental and intergovernmental initiatives.

Recommendation 4 (mandatory development of an action plan on Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*)

That the Treasury Board Secretariat issue a directive to require federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII to develop departmental action plans for the implementation of Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*. That these action plans set out:

- the federal institutions' objectives with respect to all the objectives of Part VII;
- the positive measures proposed to achieve these objectives;
- performance indicators; and
- accountability measures.

That the directive require action plans to be published on the websites of federal institutions and to be submitted to the Treasury Board Secretariat as part of the preparation of the reviews on official languages. The Treasury Board Secretariat will evaluate the action plans periodically.

Recommendation 5 (mid-term evaluation)

That the draft proposed regulations require the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) to conduct a mid-term review of the action plans. That, following this review, the TBS issue the necessary directives to federal institutions and other institutions subject to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* in order to reorient their plans if they are not aligned with the initial obligations or are contrary to the *Official Languages Act*.

Recommendation 6 (impact analyses)

That the Treasury Board Secretariat issue a directive to require federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* to:

- **conduct an impact analysis prior to any decision that may affect the commitments made under sections 41(1), 41(2) and 41(3) of the Act; and**
- **disclose the results of the impact analyses referred to in section 41(7) of the Act when they serve as the basis for dialogue and consultation, and follow up with interested parties.**

RELATED OBSERVATION

The Committee recognizes the importance of subjecting all decisions that may affect Part VII commitments to an impact analysis. That said, it is concerned about the effect that a request for analyses in every case – conducted on all existing initiatives as soon as the regulations come into force – might have on the delivery of those initiatives. The Committee believes that impact analyses should be conducted in order of priority by asking federal institutions and entities subject to Part VII of the Act to focus on initiatives under development, under evaluation or subject to a Treasury Board budget allocation request.

Recommendation 7 (use of official languages-based analysis)

That the Treasury Board Secretariat issue a directive to require federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* to conduct their impact analysis using a tool for differentiated analysis based on the official languages in order to account for the fact that the needs of anglophone and francophone minority communities are different and that each francophone community, including French-speaking Quebec, has unique needs. (See below recommendation 8, “development of an analysis tool”).

Recommendation 8 (development of an analysis tool)

That the Treasury Board Secretariat develop an official languages-based analysis tool (or “linguistic lens”) applicable across all federal institutions. To this end, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat should identify and draw on existing instruments, including:

- **the substantive equality analytical grid developed following the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision in *Desrochers v. Canada* (the CALDECH case);**
- **the *Guide on Part VII of the Official Languages Act: Support to communities and promotion of English and French*;**



- **the *Framework for the Vitality of Official-Language Minority Communities*;**
- **the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada’s *Roadmap for federal institutions’ obligations under Part VII of the Official Languages Act*;**
- **Canadian Heritage’s *Official Language Requirements for Transfer Payments*;**
- **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s *Policy on Francophone Immigration*; and**
- **Employment and Social Development Canada’s *Official Languages Lens*.**

That it issue a policy and a directive requiring federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII to use the official languages-based analysis tool in their impact analysis.

RELATED OBSERVATION

The Committee believes that the Treasury Board Secretariat should draw on gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) in developing the differential official languages-based analysis tool. Ultimately, the Committee would like federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII of the Act to have the same reflex to carry out an official languages-based analysis as they have developed for GBA+.

Recommendation 9 (consideration of New Brunswick’s linguistic regime)

That the draft proposed regulations affirm that all federal or intergovernmental initiatives applicable to New Brunswick must comply with the province’s linguistic regime, which recognizes the equality of status and equal rights of the English linguistic community and the French linguistic community.

Recommendation 10 (recognition of various types of learning)

That section 4(4)(b) of the draft proposed regulations be amended by adding, to section 4(4)(b)(vi), a direct reference to non-formal and informal learning.

Recommendation 11 (consultations)

That the draft proposed regulations require federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* to conduct effective consultations with a view to taking positive measures in accordance with the objectives of Part VII. To this end, the draft proposed regulations must specify the institutions' responsibilities set out in section 41(9.1), particularly those listed in 41(9.1)(d) and 41(9.1)(e).

Thus, the draft proposed regulations must state that the dialogue must be conducted on an ongoing basis and that the consultations must be conducted prior to a decision being made. The dialogue and consultation activities must be:

- **conducted in a manner that promotes stakeholder participation, in particular by:**
 - **providing them with reasonable advance notice and sharing documentation – including supporting evidence – in advance;**
 - **taking the capacities of stakeholders into account; and**
 - **taking a differentiated approach to francophone minorities, anglophone minorities and organizations that actively promote the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society, including francophone organizations in Quebec.**

Recommendation 12 (consultations – reporting and follow-up)

The draft proposed regulations must ensure that federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* conduct timely, proactive follow-ups with the stakeholders who participated in the consultations. They do this by:

- **sharing their analysis of the consultations, including how stakeholder input influenced the process, and, where possible, proposing concrete measures; and**
- **allowing stakeholders to respond to these proposals.**

Recommendation 13 (Quebec – promotion and protection of the French language and vitality of the anglophone minority)

That the draft proposed regulations include Quebec's linguistic regime as one of the factors that federal institutions are to consider in impact analyses.



That the draft proposed regulations set out details regarding:

- **the implementation of section 2b.2) of the *Official Languages Act*, which commits the Government of Canada to advancing the existence of a majority-French society in a Quebec where the future of French is assured;**
- **the implementation of section 41(6)(b)(i) of the *Official Languages Act*, under which positive measures must be taken while respecting the necessity of protecting and promoting the French language in each province and territory, including Quebec; and**
- **the obligation of federal institutions to protect and promote French in Quebec while fostering the vitality and development of English-speaking communities in Quebec with a view to taking complementary measures that support both objectives.**

Recommendation 14 (taking of positive measures)

That the draft proposed regulations specify that the positive measures taken by federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*:

- **are the result of an official languages-based analysis and meaningful consultations with key stakeholders, and are informed by evidence-based analysis;**
- **are concrete and tailored to the specific needs and objectives of each official language community;**
- **stem from the core mandate of federal institutions and other entities and are incorporated into all of their policies, programs and initiatives on an ongoing basis;**
- **take into account the purposes and principles set out in sections 2, 3.1 and 41(6)(c) of the Act, as well as the rights enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*; and**
- **have a real and measurable impact on the vitality and development of official language minorities, the recognition and use of English and French throughout Canada, the protection and promotion of French, as**

well as learning in the minority language and other related responsibilities.

Recommendation 15.1 (intergovernmental agreements – content of provisions)

That the content of the linguistic provisions to be included in intergovernmental agreements be further specified in section 7(2) of the draft proposed regulations.

Recommendation 15.2 (intergovernmental agreements – evaluation and monitoring of language clauses)

That the draft proposed regulations specify the manner and frequency with which institutions must evaluate and monitor the linguistic provisions of an intergovernmental agreement.

Recommendation 15.3 (intergovernmental agreements – disclosure of language clauses)

That, once an intergovernmental agreement is ratified, the draft proposed regulations require federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII to disclose the linguistic provisions they proposed to the other levels of government.

Recommendation 15.4 (intergovernmental agreements – interjurisdictional disputes)

That the draft proposed regulations require federal institutions to include provisions in intergovernmental agreements setting out the action to be taken in the event of non-compliance with the linguistic provisions.

Recommendation 16 (evidence-based data)

That the draft proposed regulations require federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII to:

- **base their impact analyses, in part, on objective, impartial and current data from various sources;**
- **compile evidence on an ongoing basis; and**
- **proactively disclose the evidence and its sources within a reasonable time frame, particularly during consultations, to allow stakeholders to analyze the data.**



Recommendation 17 (five-year review)

That the draft proposed regulations be amended to require a review to be conducted no later than five years after the regulations come into force.

Recommendation 18

Given that the vast majority of stakeholders believe that greater clarity as well as additional tools and guidance are needed to support the implementation of positive measures, that the Treasury Board Secretariat draw on witnesses' comments and take into account all the recommendations in this report to improve the first version of the draft proposed regulations.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada Alain Dupuis, Executive Director John Mark Keyes, Professor Liane Roy, President	2026/02/12	21
Treasury Board Secretariat Annie Proulx, Director, Regulations and Policy, Official Languages Centre of Excellence, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer Carsten Quell, Executive Director, Official Languages Centre of Excellence, People & Culture, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer Vidya ShankarNarayan, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, People & Culture, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer	2026/02/12	21
As an individual Linda Cardinal, Emeritus Professor, University of Ottawa	2026/02/24	22
Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences Denis Desgagné, Executive Director Geoffroy Krajewski, Chair	2026/02/24	22
Talking. Advocating. Living in Quebec. Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General Marion Sandilands, Lawyer	2026/02/24	22

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne Soukaina Boutiyeb, Executive Director Nour Enayeh, President	2026/02/26	23
Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne Martin Normand, President and Chief Executive Officer	2026/02/26	23
As an individual Rémi Léger, Full Professor	2026/03/10	24
Fédération culturelle canadienne-française Manon Henrie-Cadieux, Director, Strategy and Government Relations Nancy Juneau, Chair Gabriel Poliquin, Legal Advisor	2026/03/10	24
Fédération des associations de juristes d'expression française de Common Law Inc. Rénald Rémillard, Executive Director	2026/03/10	24
Société Santé en français Antoine Désilets, Managing Director	2026/03/10	24
As an individual Stéphanie Chouinard, Associate Professor	2026/03/12	25
Canadian Parents for French Derrek Bentley, Network Chief Executive Officer Ahdithya Rajan P. Visweswaran, Director, Advocacy and Public Policy	2026/03/12	25
Droits collectifs Québec Étienne-Alexis Boucher, Chief Executive Officer François Côté, Senior Legal Officer and Legal Research Director Esther Poirier, Legal Intern	2026/03/12	25

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Acfas

Cardinal, Linda

Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta

Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne

Canadian Parents for French

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences

Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick

Talking. Advocating. Living in Quebec.

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 21 to 32, and 34](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Yvan Baker
Chair

DISSENTING OPINION

Regarding the report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages of the House of Commons on the draft regulations concerning Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*

Mario Beaulieu on behalf of the Bloc Québécois

May 26, 2026

The member of the Bloc Québécois and Second Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages respectfully submits the following dissenting opinion:

This dissenting opinion from the Bloc Québécois is less concerned with the summary of testimony or reports presented to the Committee on Official Languages than with the imprecision or ambiguity of the report in ensuring that the draft regulations allow for the implementation of the new asymmetrical approach of the *Official Languages Act* (hereinafter OLA) in favour of French in Quebec, as determined by the Committee in the motion adopted on October 23, 2025.

This ambiguity reflects an inconsistency within the OLA and Part VII, in that they also include symmetrical elements suggesting that the English-speaking community in Quebec requires support comparable to that provided to French-speaking minorities outside Quebec. Francophone and Acadian communities face challenges that are incomparable to those of English-speaking Quebecers, especially given that in Quebec, English is clearly on the rise alongside with the rapid decline of French.

Main Recommendation (positive measures for French in Quebec)

That the draft regulations include a purpose statement affirming that the objective of the regulations is to develop a procedure to be implemented in a systematic and ongoing manner by federal institutions and other entities subject to Part VII of the OLA, in order to ensure that they fulfill their obligations regarding the purposes of the OLA and the complementary objectives of Part VII, which aim to ensure that positive measures are also taken for French in Quebec to promote progress toward substantive equality of the official languages:

- *Enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development” (paragraph 41(1)(a));*
- *Fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society”, and*
The Government of Canada, recognizing and taking into account that French is in a minority situation in Canada and North America due to the predominant use of English, is committed to protecting and promoting the French language.” (paragraph 41(1)(b) and subsection 41(2));
- *To foster the presence of a francophone majority in Quebec where the future of French is assured (policy objective inspired by paragraph 2(b.2));*

- *The necessity of protecting and promoting the French language in each province and territory, taking into account that French is in a minority situation in Canada and North America due to the predominant use of English”, and “the necessity of considering the specific needs of each of the two official language communities of Canada”* (subparagraph 41(6)(b)(i) and (ii))

Other Recommendations:

For the sake of clarity, this new main recommendation consolidates and complements the elements prescribing asymmetrical measures for French in Quebec that are scattered throughout the report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages:

- Recommendation 3 (purpose statement: subsection 41(2) and subparagraph 41(6)(b)(i));
- Recommendation 7 (differentiated analysis taking into account Quebec’s Francophonie);
- Recommendation 11 (consultation of francophone organizations in Quebec);
- Recommendation 13 (Quebec - the promotion and protection of the French language and the development of the English-speaking minority; paragraph 2(b.2) and subparagraph 41(6)(b)(i) of the OLA).

We also emphasize the importance of Recommendation 5 (mid-term evaluation), which would plausibly allow for the realignment of the 2023-2028 Action Plan, which runs counter to the current *Official Languages Act* insofar as it does not include any positive measures for French in Quebec.

Moreover, as always, we support all other proposals aimed at supporting francophone and Acadian communities.

Conclusion

Given that no new measure or initiative for French in Quebec has appeared in the 2023-2028 Action Plan or in the public accounts up to 2025, it is essential to stress the need to adopt significant positive measures for French in Quebec, which is in decline according to all linguistic indicators, while English is experiencing unprecedented growth. It should be recalled that 90% of Canada’s francophone minority resides in Quebec.

For these reasons, we believe that the report does not adequately reflect the requirements of the *Official Languages Act* with respect to the protection and promotion of French in Quebec and in Canada. A clarification of the recommendations, as well as an explicit strengthening of the asymmetrical approach, are required.