

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Major Parties Want Votes of Minority Communities but Refuse to Stand-up for a History Curriculum that Reflects their Positive Contributions to Quebec Society.

September 24, 2018

Montreal, QC - The Committee for the Enhancement of the History Curriculum in Quebec (ComECH-Quebec) will hold a **press conference on September 25th at 10:00AM at the English Parents' Committee Association office (7875 Chemin de la Côte-de-Liesse).**

We will report on the responses we received to a letter outlining ten specific problems with the current history curriculum and asking the main political parties if they agree that each was a problem and whether they are willing to act to correct this problem. The letter was accompanied by a document containing excerpts from the secondary four textbook providing concrete examples of the problems identified in our letter. The letter was sent to the leaders of the PLQ, CAQ, PQ, QS and PVQ as well as the candidates for these parties in the ridings of Laurier-Dorion, Mont-Royal-Outremont, Notre-Dame-de-Grace, Saint-Marie-Saint-Jacques and Westmount-Saint-Louis.

ComECH-Quebec chairperson Robert Green expressed disappointment at the tepid response the letter received. "Each of the major parties have been courting the votes of Anglophones and other minority communities and yet neither the Liberal, CAQ, PQ nor QS leadership is willing to speak out about a history curriculum that eliminates the positive contributions of any minority community from the curriculum."

According to Green, this should be an election issue: "In considering who to vote for, members of minority communities should be aware that the leaders of the major political parties see no problem forcing their children to endure two years of ethnic nationalist propaganda that sends them a clear message that they are second-class citizens."

This problem has academic implications for students from minority communities: "As a teacher I know that my students have a better chance at success when they can make personal connections with the curriculum. By writing the positive contributions of minorities out of the program and neglecting local history the government is systematically putting all students from minority communities at an academic disadvantage".

Green also expressed disappointment at the lack of response from major party candidates running in ridings representing large numbers of citizens from minority communities.

"None of the candidates from major parties running to represent the large Jewish community in Mont-Royal-Outremont were willing to agree that it is a problem that the textbook represents a complete whitewash of Quebec's history of antisemitism; none of the candidates running in the ethnically diverse riding of Laurier-Dorion were willing to agree that it is a problem that the textbook re-enforces Islamophobic stereotypes and reduces the contribution of immigration to replenishing the labour market; none of the candidates running in the primarily Anglophone riding of Westmount, including Liberal candidate and President of the Quebec English School Boards Association, Jennifer Maccarone, were willing to agree that it is a problem that the textbook demonizing the entire Anglophone community as a monolithic block of elites. It is a shocking lack of courage and principles we are seeing from these candidates." said Green. "These candidates claim to want to see minority voices represented in the National Assembly but refuse to stand up for them being represented in the history curriculum."

However, Green pointed out that the letter did receive some positive responses. In addition to a supportive response from QS candidate for NDG, Kathleen Gudmundsson, our letter received several supportive responses from Green Party candidates, including party leader Alex Tyrell.

"The Green Party was by far the most supportive of our letter. Alex Tyrell was the only party leader willing to commit to changing the curriculum to reflect the values of an inclusive democratic society", Green said. "We were also

particularly impressed with the strong words of support offered by Westmount Green Party candidate Sam Kuhn and NDG Green Party candidate Chad Walcott.”

Finally, the members of ComECH-Quebec want voters to consider that recent changes to the history curriculum have occurred in a context of rising xenophobia in Quebec society.

“Political parties in Quebec have in recent years shown an increased willingness to pander to xenophobic sentiments in the population. By remaining silent about this highly problematic curriculum, they are now signalling their willingness to have the provincial history curriculum politicized in order to reproduce such xenophobic views in the minds of young people. This is a very serious issue for the future of our society,” warned Green. “Those who believe in a Quebec that is open, democratic and inclusive of its minority communities, should think long and hard about this issue before casting a vote”.

About the Committee for the Enhancement of the Curriculum of History in Quebec

ComECH-Quebec is an ad hoc committee created by the English Parents’ Committees Association (EPCA), Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN), the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA), and the Quebec Association of Geography Teachers. The Committee is chaired by Westmount High School teacher Robert Green.

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Enclosures: Letter sent to parties and candidates; Documents from Secondary 4 Textbook Reflections.qc.ca; Quebec’s Secondary III & IV History Curriculum: In Need of Change