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ELECTIONS 2026



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Quebec civil court judge forces government to issue bilingual election information cards

1.6 million English-speaking Quebecers 'deserve respect,' says Task Force's Andrew Caddell

MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

A provincial lobby group that promotes bilingualism in Quebec is applauding a decision by judge Sylvain Lussier to force bilingual election information cards to be sent out before the October 5 provincial election.

The Task Force on Linguistic Policy has been using legal challenges, public meetings, rallies, expert panels and submissions to governments and the courts to promote bilingualism, inclusion and the protection of linguistic rights across Quebec.

Task Force president Andrew Caddell pointed

out the organization was a leader in the bilingual information card issue, which called for an injunction against the decision by Élections Québec to issue all information in French.

Task Force led case

"Congratulations to lawyers Doug Mitchell and Eric Maldoff, who brought the initiative to court," Caddell said in a statement issued last week, while noting that Task Force vice president Geoffrey Chambers was the plaintiff in the case.

"We have been calling this decision voter suppression from the very beginning, and we have been joined by commentators and public officials across Quebec and Canada," added Caddell.

He said the decision sends a message to Premier Christine Fréchette, French Language Minister François Roberge and French Language Commissioner Benoît Dubreuil, "who deliberately prevented bilingual information," Caddell maintained.

"There are 1.6 million English-speaking Quebecers who deserve respect," said Caddell. "As citizens and taxpayers, they should be treated equally with every other Quebecer."

Vulnerable Anglophones

Although the CAQ government had said a QR code in the election information would be satisfactory for English-speaking Quebecers, Caddell responded:

"While the vast majority of Anglophone Quebecers are bilingual, many who are not are the most vulnerable: the elderly, indigenous people, visible minorities, the rural poor and people with physical and mental challenges. Many do not have smart phones and are not capable of using a QR code."

In a phone interview late last week with Newsfirst Multimedia, Caddell said what astonished him most about the situation was the CAQ government's determination to ignore Élections Québec's recommendation that the English-language text be included in the pre-election materials.

CAQ ignored Élections Québec

"They first started writing to them in 2023," he said regarding the provincial election office's intervention. "And the last letter was the eighth of April 2025, which is when they last wrote to them and they continued to say no."

While noting that Élections Québec is supposed to be an autonomous body at arm's length from the provincial government, Caddell said the CAQ government passed Bill 96 (which he dismissed as unconstitutional), making Élections Québec subject to the reform of Bill 101, Quebec's original French language protection legislation.

"So, Élections Québec had to ask the minister if they could get an exemption from the Charter of the French Language to do what they've always done in the past – and which is in line with Section 133 of the constitution and Section 3 of the Charter – where one affirms English-language rights and the other affirms voting rights."

Bill 96 challenge still in play

The Task Force currently has a major court case still in motion to challenge Bill 96. They are hoping to be allowed to invoke a legal principle set by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2016 when the "Jordan rule" established a framework for numerical ceilings to go to trial within a reasonable time after charges are laid to the conclusion of a case.

"We submitted our brief on January 31 more than two years ago and we have yet to hear from the Quebec government as to how they are going to respond," Caddell said. "Like that is a delay that is far too great. And the issue is, I think what is happening is they're waiting until the decision on Bill 21 on the notwithstanding clause has been decided by the Supreme Court."

Notwithstanding 'irrelevant,' Task Force claims

"But our case shouldn't be determined on the basis of the notwithstanding clause, because we argued that the notwithstanding clause is actually in some ways irrelevant to the issues that we're raising," he continued. "Because we're raising issues about different parts of the constitution, and we're also saying that the charter itself and the notwithstanding clause should be put aside, because the charter itself does not change any laws that already exist."

Caddell said the Task Force's view is that the government should have given them a court date sooner, "but we're still waiting." He said the Task Force has no intention of giving up on the issue until they've exhausted all legal avenues.



Task Force on Linguistic Policy president Andrew Caddell said they were elated upon learning last week of a Quebec Court judge's decision ordering the Quebec government and Élections Québec to print and circulate English-language pre-election explanatory materials after they had initially declined to do so.

Police investigating murder attempt in Parc Ex, followed by car fire

MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

The Montreal Police are investigating an attempted murder in Parc Extension and a later vehicle fire.

The two incidents which occurred between Friday night Sept. 11 and Saturday morning Sept.

12 are believed to be related.

Around 11 p.m. Friday, a 22-year-old man was shot in the upper body in an alley near Crémazie Boulevard in Parc Extension. The victim was taken to the hospital, where his condition was not considered life-threatening.

The suspects fled before police arrived, and no arrests were immediately made. Several bullet

impacts and spent shell casings were found at the scene.

In the second incident, less than an hour later around 11:45 p.m., a pickup truck was destroyed by fire on Chemin de l'Anse à l'Orme in Senneville near the western tip of Montreal Island.

Although no one was reported injured in either

of the two incidents, firefighters found incendiary materials at the scene of the pickup truck fire. As a result, the investigation has been turned over to the police department's arson squad.

While the police had not made any arrests, they are investigating a possible link between this incident and the attempted murder that occurred earlier.



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Publishers

George Bakoyannis
George S. Guzman

General Director

George Bakoyannis

VP Sales & Marketing

George S. Guzman
sales@newsfirst.ca

Graphic Design

Lareine Zakhour
Elena Molter
Thomas Bakoyannis

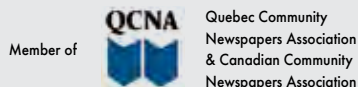
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George S. Guzman

Editorial Staff

Martin C. Barry
Alessandro Commisso
Dimitris Ilias
Maria Diamantis
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OPINION & Editorial



Quebec election 2026 contenders show disrespect for province's Anglo voters

While Premier Christine Fréchette was dealt a humiliating blow late last week when a Quebec Superior Court judge ruled the incumbent CAQ government must prepare bilingual voter reminder cards for the October 5 election, this chapter in recent history should serve as a reminder to the province's English-speaking community of just how marginalized they are becoming in Quebec.

In most developed nations throughout the world, the carefully regulated organization of elections is regarded as one of the benchmarks of a civilized society.

It's notable that even in communist or totalitarian nations, it has always been considered important to hold elections with at least a semblance of fairness even when they are rigged.

And even though Quebec's 2026 elections are far from fixed, Premier Fréchette's response to the voting card issue — which was in itself a direct result of legislation her party passed while in office — only serves to further demonstrate the disregard the outgoing CAQ government has for its English-speaking constituents.

The unilingual mailouts were a result of language law reforms by the Coalition Avenir Québec government. The Quebec Court ruling temporarily suspended part of the language law. Despite this, Fréchette herself had gone on record to defend the unilingual mailings, saying French is the sole official language of the province.

Last week, Judge Sylvain Lussier told the government that it had no choice but to prepare bilingual reminder cards to mail to voters ahead

of the vote. Now, however, Élections Québec doesn't have enough time to send out English versions of the registration notice and voter's guide before the election.

The legal decision came after a hearing for a lawsuit against the government and the elections directorate over the French-only mailouts. However, Judge Lussier ruled only on part of the challenge, granting the demand for a provisional interlocutory injunction.

"The evidence indicates a serious risk that a large number of anglophone seniors will be unable to exercise their right to vote due to a lack of understandable information," Lussier wrote.

His ruling did not include the English version of the registration notices or the voter's guides, as he believed it would be unrealistic and extremely costly to force the government to send bilingual versions of these documents.

Geoffrey Chambers — a past president of the former Quebec Community Groups Network (now known as TALQ) who had applied for the ruling — said the judgment "makes it very clear that the rights of the community have been compromised."

In the meantime, the English election notification cards issue was not the only problem relating to language that surfaced during the 2026 campaign.

Let's not forget — especially four years from now when National Assembly candidates come around seeking votes again — that any hope of a televised English-language debate got shut down early in the current election process when the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) and Parti

Québécois (PQ) declined to take part in an English debate, even though at least two other parties had agreed to participate.

A consortium of Quebec-based media, comprising CBC Quebec, CTV News Montreal, CJAD 800, Global Montreal, CityNews Montreal and The Montreal Gazette, had invited the leaders of the five main Quebec political parties to a 90-minute English-language debate, which had been set to take place on Sept. 24.

While the Conservative Party of Quebec and Québec solidaire accepted, the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) and Parti Québécois (PQ) did not. For their part, the Quebec Liberal Party said they would only participate in a debate if all five also agreed, which admittedly became a convenient excuse to say no.

Even though Quebec provincial election English-language debates are not a firmly established tradition (the first actually took place prior to the 2018 election, while another was called off in 2022 when the CAQ and PQ declined to participate), these latest developments don't augur well for relations between future Quebec governments and their English-speaking constituents.

It's the kind of alienation that may end up driving votes from the province's Anglophone community to parties once considered fringe — like the Canadian Party and the Conservative Party of Quebec — who at least have shown themselves to be completely open to fully recognizing the importance Quebec's English-speaking residents.

— Martin C. Barry —

PRINTED MEDIA IN PERIL

AN ELECTORAL ISSUE QUÉBEC CANNOT IGNORE

As the provincial election approaches, we wish, on behalf of a coalition representing Québec's printed media, to draw your attention to a fundamental question: the place Québec intends to give its culture, its information ecosystem, and the media that sustain them — both in the debates ahead and in the years that will follow.

The reform of the recycling and curbside collection system has created inconsistencies and anomalies that must be clearly understood: the fewer printed media in circulation, the higher the fees imposed on them for material recovery. In other words, the recycling tax hits hardest the titles whose circulation is declining — a mechanism that directly threatens the financial stability of printed media, and in some cases, their very survival. This same logic also affects Québec's entire printed culture, including books, which have now become collateral victims of a system that does not measure value in tonnage.

Beyond this technical issue lies a cultural one. Newspapers, magazines, and weekly publications are far more than physical objects; they are essential carriers of cultural and journalistic content. They are indispensable to protecting our language, our values, and the dissemination of reliable, local information. The attachment of Quebecers to printed formats remains deep and genuine. Millions of citizens continue to rely on them

daily — not only by choice, but by necessity, particularly in regions with limited digital infrastructure, among older citizens, and in households where connectivity remains constrained. For these readers, the disappearance of a regional newspaper, a weekly, or a local magazine is not the loss of a product; it is the loss of a cultural space, a source of information, and a sense of belonging.

Printed media also represent one of the last spaces where culture and information can fully express themselves, without being diluted by the flood of foreign content that dominates today's digital environment. Guided by proven editorial practices, they offer a structured framework that strengthens the quality of public debate and helps combat misinformation — a growing democratic concern, especially during an election period.

It is precisely because content and medium are inseparable that the current situation cannot be ignored. What our magazines, newspapers, and weeklies contain cannot be treated as mere residual material. Unlike single-use packaging, whose purpose ends the moment it is opened, the paper that carries our printed media is inseparable from the cultural and journalistic content it conveys — content produced here, for the benefit of all Quebecers. This principle extends beyond printed media: wherever written culture exists, its medium cannot be treated as simple waste.

A reform that weakens what took decades to build

The recent reform of the recycling system undermines what Québec's printed media have spent decades building. By imposing an everincreasing financial burden, the new regime directly threatens the sustainability of numerous titles across Québec — and with them, an irreplaceable part of our cultural and democratic life.

The upcoming electoral debates offer an opportunity to reaffirm what Québec chooses to be: a society that protects its culture, values its information, and refuses to allow its democratic and cultural space to shrink quietly. Where do our party leaders stand on this issue?

The coalition of printed media includes, among others:

Le Devoir, the Journal de Montréal, the Journal de Québec, The Globe and Mail, The Gazette, L'Actualité, Ricardo, as well as the publications of TVA Publications, PraticoPratiques, KO Média, Bayard Presse Canada, Publications BLD, and Naitre et grandir. The Laval News, The North Shore News, Nouvelles Parc Extension News, and Greek Canadian News-TA NEA. It also brings together the 53 members of the Association québécoise des éditeurs de magazines (AQEM), the 136 members of Hebdomas Québec, and RecycleMédias.



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U.S./Canada trade war puts over 50,000 Canadian small businesses at risk

Additional product bans loom, Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimates

MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

According to new estimates released in recent weeks by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 53,112 businesses are directly impacted by either U.S. tariffs, Canadian counter-tariffs or both.

Of that total, 13,160 are exporters, while 45,414 are importers.

Small business excluded

"While government has made a few important and welcome changes to the main tariff supports, the programs continue to exclude about half of the small business community," says Corinne Pohlmann, executive vice-president for advocacy at the Toronto-headquartered CFIB.

"We have been telling government that the counter-tariffs would have a far broader impact than the U.S. tariffs," she continues.

"Programs that only help a few thousand businesses are unacceptable when tens of thousands need support," says Pohlmann, adding that the recent announcement that some Canadian goods will be outright banned from U.S. import at the end of September only underscores the need to get support ASAP.

Small business relief

With that in mind, the CFIB is proposing three important measures:

A dedicated Small Business Tariff Relief (SBTR) program, where impacted exporters and importers who can provide direct evidence they paid the tariffs directly, or adjusted prices to absorb part or all of the tariff, would be eligible to receive initial tariff relief up to \$70,000 CAD.

An SME Desk for Tariff Remissions to speed up decisions on eliminating Canadian retaliatory tariffs if there are major negative impacts on the industry or if alternatives to the U.S. product are not readily available.

Immediate tax relief for all small businesses in the form of a Small Business Corporate Tax Rate cut from 9% to 6%, retroactive to January 1, 2026, and an increase to the Small Business Deduction threshold from \$500,000 to \$700,000 with future indexation to inflation.

"The Regional Tariff Response Initiative Programs have standardized eligibility criteria and reduced their access thresholds down to \$1 million, but it doesn't go far enough," said Pohlmann.

Direct support for small players

"A \$1-million threshold will still exclude a huge number of businesses. We need a simple, direct support program to help small businesses on the U.S. and Canadian tariff lists in addition to broad-based tax relief to help all small firms that will be hurt by the trade war."

In an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia, Ryan Mallough, vice-president for legislative affairs and communications at the CFIB, was asked whether the CFIB foresees the current tariff war between Canada and the U.S. being toned down in the next two years or sooner as President Donald Trump's time in office is projected to end in January 2029.

"First and foremost, really and truly, I think we hope it doesn't take two years," he said. "I hope we're able to reach some kind of deal well

before then." He suggested that the date many Canadians and Americans are now eagerly anticipating comes in November when the U.S. midterm elections take place.

Shifting political climate in U.S.

Historically, midterm elections often see the president's party lose seats in the U.S. Congress, and frequently see the president's opposite-party opponents gain control of one or both houses of Congress.

"If the House or the Senate changes hands or both of them change hands, what that does can change the administration's tenor or their ability to invoke things," said Mallough. "So, the first potential exit ramp is probably over the next couple of months."

After that, he said it will be a question of whether federal Minister Responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade Dominic LeBlanc and his U.S. counterpart Jamieson Greer continue to talk and "force the conversation to become more pressing on both sides, and do we see something happen there."

No signs of short-term relief

"Overall, we hope that the sides are still communicating and talking," Mallough continued. "You know, would I expect a deal imminently? I don't think so. But, as we've experienced throughout the trade war, things tend to move very quickly in both directions."

"So, it would both be a surprise and not a surprise to hear that there is a deal, you know, in the works. But at the same time, I think a lot of people are making the calculus that in two years, constitutionally there has to be a change in the presidency, you know, and that's sort of the long end of the timeline on that side."



Ryan Mallough, vice-president for legislative affairs and communications at the CFIB, says there is a growing belief that midterm elections in the U.S. in November may help lead to more positive developments in the tariff war between Canada and the U.S. (Photo: Courtesy of Canadian Federation of Independent Business)

Élection provinciale 2026 : 908 candidatures acceptées et les détails de vote pour les électeurs de Parc-Extension

NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA
info@newsfirst.ca

Élections Québec annonce que 908 candidatures ont été officiellement acceptées en vue de l'élection générale de 2026. Réparties dans les 127 circonscriptions électorales, elles représentent en moyenne sept candidats par circonscription, un chiffre légèrement supérieur aux 880 candidatures enregistrées en 2022.

Élections Québec publiera des statistiques détaillées sur son site Web au cours de la campagne.

Parc-Extension : plusieurs façons de voter lors de l'élection provinciale

Les électeurs de ParcExtension disposent de nombreuses options pour exercer leur droit de vote, sans attendre le jour officiel du scrutin.

Vote par anticipation

Les résidents peuvent voter avant le 5 octobre, grâce aux journées de vote par anticipation :

- Dimanche 27 septembre, de 9 h 30 à 20 h
- Lundi 28 septembre, de 9 h 30 à 20 h

Vote au bureau du directeur du scrutin

Élections Québec offre également cinq jours de vote dans les bureaux du directeur du scrutin. Des possibilités de vote sont aussi offertes :

- sur certains campus universitaires et collégiaux,
- dans des résidences privées pour aînés,
- dans des CHSLD,
- à domicile pour les électeurs incapables de



se déplacer pour des raisons de santé. Les critères d'admissibilité et les horaires varient selon l'établissement.

Voter ailleurs au Québec

Un électeur qui se trouve dans une autre région du Québec pendant la période électorale peut voter au bureau du directeur du scrutin de l'endroit où il séjourne, tout en choisissant un candidat de sa propre circonscription, comme LaurierDorion.

Vérification de l'inscription : une étape essentielle

Avant de se présenter au vote, les électeurs doivent vérifier :

- que leur nom figure sur la liste électorale,
- que leur adresse est correcte.

Cette vérification peut se faire :

- sur le site d'Élections Québec,
- ou grâce à l'avis d'inscription reçu par la poste.

Cette étape est cruciale pour les personnes ayant déménagé récemment, car le Québec n'autorise pas l'inscription ou le changement d'adresse le jour du vote. Toute correction doit être faite avant la date limite de révision.

Pièces d'identité acceptées

Pour voter, il faut présenter une pièce d'identité parmi les suivantes :

- Carte d'assurance maladie du Québec
- Permis de conduire du Québec
- Passeport canadien
- Certificat de statut d'Indien
- Carte d'identité des Forces armées canadiennes

Avis d'inscription et carte de rappel

L'avis d'inscription envoyé au début de la campagne indique :

- l'adresse du lieu de vote par anticipation,
- les horaires.

Une carte de rappel jaune, envoyée plus près du jour du scrutin, précise :

- le bureau de vote régulier,
- la liste des candidats de la circonscription.

La carte de rappel est utile, mais non obligatoire : un électeur peut voter sans elle s'il est correctement inscrit et peut prouver son identité.

Trouver son lieu de vote

Les lieux de vote sont attribués selon l'adresse résidentielle. Les électeurs de ParcExtension ne doivent donc pas présumer que leur centre communautaire, école ou édifice public habituel sera leur lieu de vote.

L'outil de recherche d'adresse d'Élections Québec permet de :

- trouver le bureau de vote exact,
- vérifier son accessibilité physique.

Les électeurs dont le lieu de vote ne répond pas à leurs besoins peuvent contacter le directeur du scrutin pour discuter d'aménagements possibles.

Un rappel important

Avec l'arrivée du vote par anticipation, vérifier son inscription et son lieu de vote dès maintenant permet d'éviter toute mauvaise surprise le jour du scrutin.

Élections provinciales 2026



Votez le 5 octobre de 9 h 30 à 20 h

Où et quand voter?



Consultez les documents que vous recevrez par la poste ou rendez-vous au electionsquebec.qc.ca/ou-quand-voter.

Vous n'êtes pas disponible le jour du vote?

Votez par anticipation le 27 ou le 28 septembre de 9 h 30 à 20 h.

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Pour voter

- Vous devez être inscrite ou inscrit sur la liste électorale et votre adresse doit être à jour. Vérifiez au electionsquebec.qc.ca/verifier.
- Vous devez apporter une pièce d'identité (permis de conduire, carte d'assurance maladie, passeport canadien, etc.).

Nouvelle carte électorale : votre circonscription a peut-être changé.

Vérifiez au electionsquebec.qc.ca/trouvercirconscription.



Amenez vos enfants voter avec vous!

Initiez vos enfants à la démocratie grâce aux petits bureaux de vote.



Tous les lieux de vote par anticipation sont accessibles; le 5 octobre, la majorité le sont aussi. Consultez les critères d'accessibilité de chaque lieu au electionsquebec.qc.ca/ou-quand-voter.

Si votre lieu de vote ne répond pas à vos besoins, demandez l'autorisation de voter ailleurs à votre directrice ou directeur du scrutin.

Le 5 octobre, on exerce notre droit de vote

élections
Québec



Debate night: Quebec's leaders face their defining moment before the October 5 election

NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA
info@newsfirst.ca

As Quebecers prepare to head to the polls on October 5, 2026, the province's televised leaders' debates have emerged as the defining events of the election campaign. In an era increasingly dominated by social media clips, campaign advertising, and carefully choreographed political appearances, the debates remain one of the few occasions when party leaders must step beyond prepared talking points and engage directly with their opponents before a province-wide audience.

For voters trying to decide who should lead Quebec through the next four years, the debates provide a unique opportunity to compare competing visions, leadership styles, and policy priorities. They offer a rare political test where candidates are evaluated not only on what they promise but also on how they react under pressure, defend their records, and communicate their ideas in real time.

This year's election comes at a particularly significant moment in Quebec politics. Questions surrounding healthcare, housing affordability, economic uncertainty, immigration, climate policy, and the future of Quebec identity dominate public discussion. At the same time, voters are being asked to assess a new generation of political leadership, making the debates even more consequential than usual.

A new political landscape

For the first time in nearly a decade, Quebec's political landscape is evolving under new leadership. Premier Christine Fréchette, leading the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), enters the election campaign seeking a third consecutive mandate for her party while establishing herself as a leader in her own right.

As the head of the incumbent government, Fréchette carries both the advantages and burdens of office. She can point to the CAQ's record on economic growth, infrastructure

investments, and French-language protection. However, she must also answer for continuing concerns about access to healthcare, housing shortages, and growing frustration among voters who wonder whether the government has accomplished enough after eight years in power.

Challenging her is Charles Milliard, the relatively new leader of the Quebec Liberal Party. For many Quebecers, the debates represent their first extended opportunity to evaluate whether Milliard possesses the stature and political skills necessary to become premier. The Liberals are attempting to rebuild after several disappointing election results and present themselves as a credible alternative government capable of reconnecting with voters across the province.

Meanwhile, Paul St-Pierre Plamondon and the Parti Québécois continue their effort to transform renewed public interest into electoral success. The PQ leader has positioned himself as both a defender of Quebec's identity and a proponent of sovereignty, while simultaneously addressing day-to-day concerns such as affordability, economic development, and public services.

On the progressive side of the political spectrum, Ruba Ghazal and Québec solidaire aim to expand the party's appeal beyond its traditional support base. By focusing on housing, climate change, social equity, and public investment, Ghazal hopes to convince voters that Québec solidaire offers the boldest vision for tackling contemporary challenges.

Finally, Éric Duhaime and the Conservative Party of Quebec continue to present themselves as an alternative to what they describe as Quebec's political establishment. Duhaime's message of lower taxes, greater individual freedom, and a reduced role for government has attracted voters seeking a different approach to provincial governance.

Why debates still matter

Political debates rarely determine election outcomes on their own. Most voters have already formed impressions of parties and leaders long before debate night. Yet debates continue to play a critical role because they reinforce, challenge, or reshape those impressions.

Unlike campaign commercials, which are polished and scripted, debates place leaders in an unpredictable environment. They must answer difficult questions, respond to criticism, and challenge opponents without the support of advisors, speechwriters, or carefully controlled settings.

This allows voters to evaluate qualities that cannot easily be measured through campaign literature. Confidence, competence, authenticity, temperament, and communication skills often become just as important as policy proposals. Voters frequently ask themselves a simple question while watching a debate: Who looks and sounds like a premier?

For undecided voters, that question can be decisive.

Political history is filled with examples of leaders who elevated their campaigns through strong debate performances and others whose momentum was weakened by one poor evening. In a competitive election, even a modest shift in public opinion can alter the results in dozens of closely contested ridings.

Healthcare: the defining issue

If there is one subject almost guaranteed to dominate the debates, it is healthcare.

Across Quebec, concerns remain widespread over access to family doctors, overcrowded emergency rooms, shortages of nurses and specialists, and lengthy wait times for medical procedures. Healthcare consistently ranks among the most important issues facing voters and remains a source of frustration for many families.

Each party has offered proposals aimed at improving the system. The governing CAQ argues that reforms already underway need additional time to deliver results. Opposition parties counter that deeper structural changes are necessary and that Quebecers deserve faster improvements.

Because healthcare touches nearly every household, debate performances on this issue may prove more influential than discussions on any other topic.

Housing and affordability

Closely following healthcare is the issue of housing affordability.

The housing crisis has become one of the defining challenges of modern Quebec. Rising rents, escalating home prices, and insufficient housing construction have placed immense pressure on young families, newcomers, seniors, and low-income residents.

Whether in Montreal, Laval, Quebec City, or smaller regional centres, voters increasingly want immediate action.

The debates offer an opportunity for leaders to explain not only what they would do but how they would do it. Promises to build more housing are popular, but voters are also asking practical questions. How will projects be financed? How quickly can homes be built? Can government remove barriers slowing development?

Candidates who can provide convincing answers may gain valuable political support.

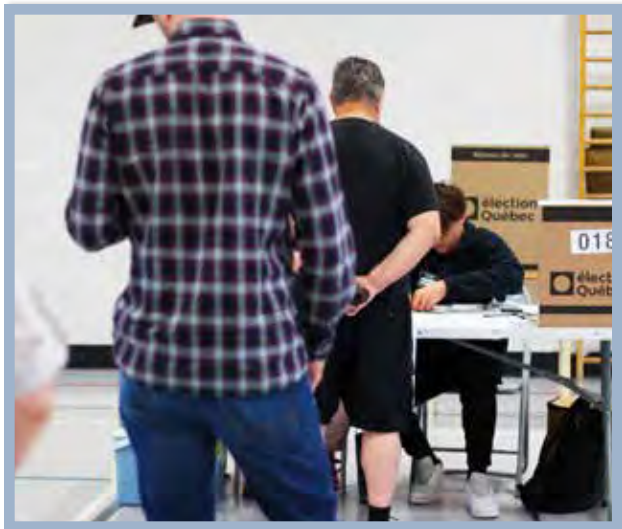
The cost-of-living challenge

Although inflation has moderated compared with its recent peaks, the cost-of-living crisis remains a reality for many Quebec households.

Food prices, utility bills, transportation costs, insurance premiums, and mortgage payments continue to strain family budgets. Even voters who have traditionally focused on other issues increasingly view affordability as a central concern.

Throughout the campaign, every party has attempted to position itself as the strongest advocate for middle-class and working families. Tax reductions, targeted assistance programs, and economic growth strategies have all featured prominently in campaign announcements.

The debates provide a forum where these competing approaches can be compared directly, allowing voters to determine which proposals appear most realistic and financially sustainable.



► Continued on page 9

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ELECTIONS 2026



◀ Continued from page 8

Immigration, integration, and demographic change

Few issues generate more emotional discussion in Quebec than immigration.

The province faces a complex balancing act. Businesses and public institutions continue to face labour shortages, creating pressure for increased immigration. At the same time, many Quebecers remain concerned about the integration of newcomers and the protection of French language and culture.

These competing priorities have produced significant political divisions.

Some parties emphasize economic necessity and demographic realities. Others focus more heavily on cultural preservation and the capacity of public services to accommodate growth.

The leaders' debates are likely to expose these differences clearly, offering voters a deeper understanding of how each party envisions Quebec's future.

Quebec identity and sovereignty

Questions of language, culture, identity, and national aspirations continue to occupy a unique place in Quebec politics.

Although sovereignty is no longer the dominant issue it once was, it remains central to the Parti Québécois and continues to influence broader political discussions. At the same time, concerns about protecting French language and Quebec culture extend far beyond the sovereigntist movement.

The CAQ, Liberals, PQ, Québec solidaire, and Conservatives all approach these questions differently. Debate exchanges on identity often become some of the most passionate and closely watched moments of an election campaign because they touch on fundamental questions about who Quebecers are and where they want the province to go.

Beyond the television cameras

Today's debates do not end when the moderator signs off.

Within minutes, key moments are shared across social media platforms, dissected on talk radio, analyzed by journalists, and debated by voters online. In many cases, the most influential audience is not the one watching live but the much larger



audience that experiences the debate later through clips and commentary.

A memorable exchange can dominate news coverage for days. A strong answer can energize volunteers and attract donations. A mistake can quickly become a campaign liability.

For modern political leaders, the challenge is twofold: perform effectively on stage and create moments that resonate long after the broadcast ends.

The final test before election day

As Quebec moves closer to October 5, the leaders' debates represent one of the campaign's final and most important democratic exercises. They force politicians to defend their ideas publicly, challenge one another directly, and demonstrate why they deserve the trust of voters.

The debates will not answer every question facing Quebec, nor will they determine the election alone. But they provide something increasingly rare in modern politics: an opportunity for citizens to evaluate leadership in its simplest form.

When Quebecers cast their ballots, they will think about healthcare wait times, housing costs, taxes, schools, immigration, and the cultural future of the province. They will also remember the performances, exchanges, and impressions created on the debate stage.

For some voters, those moments may confirm an existing choice. For others, they may prove decisive.

Either way, the leaders' debates remain one of the campaign's most significant events, offering Quebecers a final opportunity to separate rhetoric from reality before choosing who will lead the province into its next chapter.

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9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.



Borough seeks residents to help review development decisions

DIMITRIS ILIAS
dimitri@newsfirst.ca

Parc-Extension residents are being invited to apply for a seat on the committee that reviews significant planning, zoning and development requests before they reach the borough council.

The borough of Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension announced on September 18 that it is recruiting regular and substitute members for its urban planning advisory committee, commonly known by its French abbreviation, CCU.

The committee examines planning applications and makes recommendations to the borough council. It does not possess decision-making authority, meaning elected officials retain responsibility for approving or rejecting the applications brought before them.

Despite that limitation, the committee is involved in files that can produce visible changes in neighbourhoods.

Its responsibilities include reviewing minor exemptions from zoning and subdivision rules, conditional-use applications and special construction, alteration or occupancy projects. It also examines matters involving architectural appearance, the placement of new construction and how a project fits into its surroundings.

The CCU may provide recommendations on proposed changes to zoning or subdivision regulations and can study other planning questions referred to it by the borough council. Its members also sit on the borough's demolition committee.

The committee includes three elected officials, six regular resident members and three resident substitutes. Its sessions are held in



camera, generally once a month on Wednesday evenings.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old and live in Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension. A professional background in planning is not mandatory.

The borough says some members will be selected for their training or experience in urban planning, architecture, built heritage, landscape architecture or related fields. Other members may be chosen because of their interest in those subjects.

The selection process is also intended to provide representation from the borough's different neighbourhoods, as well as balance in terms of gender and cultural background. That makes participation from Parc-Extension particularly relevant in a committee serving three neighbourhoods with different built environments and planning concerns.

Appointments are for two years and may be renewed once.

Applications must contain a curriculum vitae and a letter explaining the applicant's interest

and relevant abilities. They must be received by noon on October 2. Submissions may be sent electronically through the address listed in the borough's official announcement or mailed to the borough secretary at 405 Ogilvy Avenue, Suite 200.

Residents seeking information about the application process may call 438-951-2464.

The recruitment offers residents a formal—although advisory—role in examining projects that can influence streetscapes, construction, land use and neighbourhood development.

FOR SALE

Chomedey: Enjoy the best of both worlds in this stylish two-bedroom, open-concept condo. Located in the heart of the action, this home features a beautiful kitchen designed for both daily life and hosting. Commuting is a breeze with immediate access to major highways and a location just minutes from the Lachapelle Bridge. Best of all, you'll never hunt for a spot with two dedicated parking spaces (one garage, one exterior).

MLS: 23852845

Chomedey: Discover this 1 bedroom, 1 bath, newer construction condo ideally located in the heart of Laval, just steps from groceries, pharmacies, schools, parks, daycares, restaurants, and public transit. The open concept layout features large windows that flood the space with natural light, complemented by quality finishes throughout. This well built concrete and steel structure offers superior soundproofing between floors, two elevators, and a convenient storage locker. Also enjoy access to a cardio gym on the main floor and a stunning rooftop terrace with panoramic views. Easy to visit! Must see!

MLS: 13585109

Laval: Here is your opportunity to become a homeowner in one of Fabreville's most soughtafter neighbourhoods. This charming semi-detached bungalow offers generous living space and has been beautifully maintained by its owners over the years. The property features a total of 3 bedrooms and 1+1 bathrooms. The main floor boasts a bright, openconcept layout that seamlessly connects the kitchen and dining area, complemented by a welcoming living room perfect for relaxing. The basement provides an excellent additional living space with a cozy family room ideal for unwinding or hosting guests.

MLS: 14952293

SOLD

FOR RENT

Chomedey: Bright 5 1/2 situated in a prime location, offering 3 generous bedrooms 1 full bath. Steps from major shopping destinations, grocery stores and daily amenities. Quick access to main highways and public transportation. Located close to all schools, parks and community services. Available for September 1st.

MLS: 20380508

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Cote-des-Neiges: Apartment for 4 ½ for rent. Newly renovated 2 bedroom apartment located in the Cote-des-Neiges/Notre-Dame-de-Grace close to all amenities, shopping, schools and transportation. Included are all stainless-steel appliances, fridge, stove, dishwasher washer/dryer and cooking fan. Close to all services, restaurants, hospital and pharmacies.

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OPUS comes to Android as phones become transit passes

DIMITRIS ILIAS
dimitri@newsfirst.ca

Public-transit passengers with Android phones can now purchase and validate fares without carrying a physical OPUS card, following the official launch of virtual transit tickets in the Chrono application.

The Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain announced the new service on September 15 after gradually making it available to Android users during August.

Passengers can purchase an eligible fare in Chrono, store it on their phone and validate it by holding the device near a fare reader when boarding. The physical OPUS card remains available and passengers are not required to switch to the new system.

For Parc-Extension residents who regularly use Acadie or Parc métro stations and neighbourhood bus services, the change provides another way to purchase a fare without visiting a ticket machine or point of sale.

The majority of regular-fare tickets are available virtually. These include All Modes A, AB, ABC and ABCD fares, bus fares, and the unlimited evening and weekend passes.

However, the virtual system is not yet a complete replacement for OPUS.

Reduced-fare tickets, including certain fares used by students and seniors, are not currently offered in virtual form. Passengers who need those fares must continue using their physical card.

Virtual All Modes and unlimited tickets can be validated aboard buses, in the métro and on the Réseau express métropolitain. At present, they cannot be validated before boarding a commuter train. Bus-only virtual fares are restricted to bus travel.

The virtual card created in Chrono is also separate from a passenger's physical OPUS card. Tickets cannot be transferred between the two. The virtual transit card is stored inside the Chrono application rather than in the phone's general digital wallet.

The ARTM says more than half of OPUS reloads are now completed digitally, representing more than 16 million transactions. Until now, passengers could use a compatible phone to read and reload a physical OPUS card, but the card itself was still required when



travelling.

The new system removes that final step for eligible Android users: the fare remains on the phone and the phone is presented at the reader.

The service is not yet available on iPhones. The ARTM says it is continuing to work with Apple to introduce that option, but no launch date has been announced. Work is also continuing on the eventual introduction of payment by bank card across the metropolitan transit network.

For now, the change offers greater flexibility while leaving several groups—including reduced-fare passengers, iPhone users and commuter-train customers—dependent on the traditional OPUS card.

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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

HEAD GAMES

Q I have a coworker I've been friendly with for several years. About three months ago she started being too busy to have lunch together. I asked her once whether anything was wrong and whether I offended her in some way. She assured me nothing was amiss and she considers me a friend at work.

But in the past month she stopped speaking to me unless absolutely necessary. No more sailing into my office, flopping onto a chair, and asking, *How is life?* No more talking about her work stuff and home stuff. No more good morning or good night, even when she is leaving the office next door to mine and always used to pop her head in.

Once she went so far as to look through me to say good morning to someone else. Another time she was in the conference room having arrived first for a meeting. I arrived second, and she kept her head down as if very busy until a third person arrived, then said hello to both of us.

There have been hundreds of instances of not seeming to hear me when I say a normal pleasant greeting to her in her office or in the hallway. I feel hurt and disturbed as I wonder if I'm being accused of something I didn't do, or if I put my foot in my mouth in a way that never struck me as offensive.

I feel it would be useless to ask again if something is wrong. I think my real question is, how can I make myself tougher so a thing like this doesn't occupy my mind and bring me close to tears a few times every day? Are there steps a person can take to grow a tougher skin?

Alexia

A Alexia, Wayne once asked a 60-ish friend why he was always in such high spirits. This friend explained that as a young man he worried incessantly. He worried over tests, dates, and whether he would ever find a job. Then in his late teens he had an epiphany. Worry accomplishes

nothing.

What you need is not so much a tougher skin as to stop worrying over things beyond your control. You asked if there was a problem and she denied it. You've done all you can. For some reason, the friendly woman with an office next door moved away and a person with whom you have little in common and no rapport moved in. That's curious, but it's not a reason for worry.

In the personal space between her ears something is going on. You are likely never to know what. Wayne once smiled at a friend on a street corner and was baffled when a woman he didn't know and hadn't noticed crossed the street to ask why he was laughing at her. Say what?

People do all manner of strange things. People tell tales, create hoopla, and use passive aggression. They also show extraordinary kindness and care. Good people torture themselves asking why, why, why. But the answer is often as simple as displaced emotion. This woman may be a little like the serial killer who wants to kill his mother but kills other women instead.

Not everything in life carries the same weight. Your family carries a certain weight, your partner a certain weight, your house a certain weight, and your neighbors a certain weight. Your job carries a certain weight. You are giving her too much weight. Your purpose at work is work.

Treat this woman with the normal corporate politeness used in the workplace. Treat her professionally, clinically, and distantly. When you walk into a room and she is there, ignore her, but with a third person present act normally.

It always helps to ask ourselves, what is my purpose in life? Then let your life proceed from your purpose and not from the oddities and quirks of others.

Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of *YOUR OTHER HALF* (www.yourotherhalf.com)
Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964
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(California) | 11. Onions (4-5)
(Quebec) |
| 4. Medley tomatoes
(Canada) | 12. Celery (Quebec) |
| 5. Romaine lettuce
(Quebec) | 13. Oranges (3-4)
(South Africa) |
| 6. Yellow beans
(Quebec) | 14. Lemons (2)
(South Africa) |
| 7. Broccoli (Quebec) | 15. Garlic (Argentina) |
| 8. Corn (3) (Quebec) | 16. Bananas (4)
(Honduras) |
| | 17. Avocado (1)
(Mexico) |

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(Quebec) |
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(Canada) | 7. Onions (3)
(Quebec) |
| 3. Bananas (3)
(Honduras) | 8. Cantaloupe (1)
(Quebec) |
| 4. Avocado (1)
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TAURUS

If fatigue is building up, take a hard look at your lifestyle. With a new routine, stimulating outings and a balanced diet, you'll gradually regain vitality. Your body responds well to even the smallest adjustments.



GEMINI

Stress can transform into energy if it's properly channeled. By organizing your schedule and managing priorities more effectively, you'll turn pressure into a remarkable performance. You'll juggle work, personal life and ambitious projects with skill.



CANCER

Everything is clicking into place for a major turning point. Prepare for a launch, a promotion or new responsibilities. You'll discover talents you never fully tapped into before. This new perspective expands your capacity to take action and increases your confidence.



LEO

Travel plans are taking shape, although they're still out on the distant horizon. Passport, documents, vaccinations, reservations: the more you prepare, the greater your peace of mind. This preparation is already fueling your excitement and preventing last-minute oversights.



VIRGO

An injustice immediately awakens your sense of duty and your need to restore balance. You step in as a mediator, propose concrete solutions and give a voice to those who are rarely heard. Your intervention truly helps restore harmony.



LIBRA

Faced with a conflict, your first reaction might be firm, even harsh, but a more diplomatic approach will be more effective. By combining tact, empathy and a sense of justice, you'll manage to resolve a complex situation.



SCORPIO

You'll invest impressive energy into reaching an agreement, signing a contract or finalizing a transaction. Your nights may be disrupted by doubts, but your perseverance makes all the difference.



SAGITTARIUS

A leadership position may come your way. Before accepting, consider the emotional burden and stress the role may entail. With cautious deliberation, you'll protect your health while fulfilling your ambitions.



CAPRICORN

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AQUARIUS

You dare to say out loud what many think quietly. However, some comments may sting if your delivery is too blunt. By softening your words, you'll remain authentic while respecting others' feelings.



PISCES

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ACROSS

- Nest sound
- Luxury spot
- Small insects
- Farmer's measure
- Crony
- Painfully tender
- Blacken
- Circle section
- Perceived
- Threw
- Breakfast order
- Not repeated: hyph.
- Identical pairs
- Freight unit
- Taper off
- "Some Like It ____"
- Manicurist's concern
- Caribbean, e.g.
- No's opposite
- Summer fruit drink
- Peevish
- Thrive
- Cozier
- Sports venues
- Final word in prayer
- Clear profit
- Stable youth
- Heat outlet
- Nibble
- Ballet skirt
- Discontinues
- Lacking water
- Highbrow

DOWN

- Agreement
- Mountain feedback
- Geologic periods
- Human
- Digging tool
- Standard
- Spirits
- Credit
- "The First ____"
- Poplar or pine
- Released
- Trap
- Horror-film creature
- Pigs' place
- "Love ____ Neighbor"
- Sorrow
- That thing's
- Racetrack feature
- Gambling stake
- Green ____
- Packers
- Embellished
- Builds
- Pub servings
- Peppermint ____
- Own
- Bird of ill ____
- Set right
- Name word
- Singing voice
- Ticket remainder
- Pitcher handle

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line.

You already have a few numbers to get you started.

Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

GRID N° 1005

	7		8		2	4	9	
1			5					8
4	5	8		9		1	2	
2		9	4				5	
	1		3			8		
6			7				3	9
		3		7				
	4	7	1	8	3	5		
		1						

LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

C	R	A	M		I	C	E	D		M	O	D
H	U	L	A		N	E	A	R		A	R	E
E	M	I	T		H	E	R	O		S	E	W
A	B	E		R	E	S	E	N	T	S		
T	A	N	K	E	R		D	E	R	A	I	L
			E	V	I	L		O	G	L	E	
A	F	A	R		T	O	W		P	E	L	T
W	O	R	N			W	A	S	H			
E	X	C	E	P	T		G	A	Y	E	S	T
		A	L	E	R	T	E	D		R	O	W
F	E	D		S	O	U	R		W	A	R	E
R	Y	E		T	O	T	E		A	S	E	A
Y	E	S		S	P	U	D		D	E	S	K

Sudoku

8	2	1	7	4	3	6	5	9
6	5	9	2	1	8	3	4	7
3	7	4	5	6	9	8	2	1
5	9	8	1	3	7	4	6	2
4	1	7	6	8	2	9	3	5
2	3	6	9	5	4	1	7	8
1	8	5	3	2	6	7	9	4
9	6	2	4	7	1	5	8	3
7	4	3	8	9	5	2	1	6

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