

2007 Quebec Provincial Election

Answers by candidates in the Outaouais to questions asked by CRAPO



Benoît Pelletier, Liberal Party, Chapleau

<p>1- If your party is in favor of Quebec independence what guarantees can it give to workers in the federal public sector (the government and agencies) about their employment? Will you guarantee similar employment (salary and working conditions) in a Quebec public service or negotiate an arrangement with Ottawa whereby they could be kept on in the federal public-sector?</p>	<p>The Liberal Party of Quebec is against the independence of Quebec.</p> <p>To the contrary, we believe that Quebec has its place within Canada; we believe that Quebec is capable of being a leader within Canada; we believe that it is possible, and our record proves it, that Quebec's specificity is recognized within Canada.</p> <p>So what's the use of separating?</p>
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2- What does your party intend to do to eliminate poverty in Quebec? Give us some concrete examples.

Social justice is one of the values that drives the political action of the Quebec Liberal Party.

We acted very soon on this issue during our last mandate. We proposed a plan to fight poverty and social exclusion worth more than \$2.5 million. This plan consists of specific tools (a work premium and child support) to come to the assistance of the most underprivileged persons in society. We believe that, in the long term, this plan will greatly help reduce poverty in Quebec.

Moreover, as we are aware that poverty can affect the entire population of Quebec, we offered medication to an additional 45,000 senior citizens free of charge.

Through the *Secrétariat à l'Action communautaire autonome* (Quebec Secretariat for independent community action), we have made sustained efforts to support the numerous community organizations in Quebec. We intend to continue providing this support.

During a second mandate, the Quebec Liberal Party will step up its spirited fight against poverty and social exclusion by acting in partnership with the family community organizations (FCOs) and community organizations in the health care and education fields to improve support and guidance offered to the three target groups :

- Children from poor homes so that they can do better at school;
- Deprived young adults so that they can find a job;
- Struggling parents so that they can regain their confidence which will greatly benefit their children.

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<p>3- What does your party intend to do to counter the harmful consequences of climate change?</p>	<p>The fight against climate change is a priority for the Quebec Liberal Party.</p> <p>We have taken several firm steps since 2003 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We adopted an action plan on climate change that requires all industries to cooperate. - We created at Green Fund to finance projects that contribute to environmental protection. - We adopted the first Quebec policy on public transit development. - We implemented a QST credit of \$1000 toward the purchase of a low gas consumption hybrid vehicle (6 and fewer liters per 100 kilometers). <p>That was one part of our record on the environment. During his second mandate, we intend to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieve the targets in the Kyoto protocol by 2012 - Increase public transit ridership by 8% - Double the tax credit for hybrid vehicles - Fight for a carbon credit - Begin consultation to prepare for post-Kyoto.
<p>4- Are you in favor of using subcontracting and privatization to reduce the size of the Quebec public service? What role would you give to the public service to deliver quality services to citizens?</p>	<p>We believe that Quebec government has one of the best public services. Moreover, its competence and expertise in several fields is recognized around the world. However, since this involves the use of taxpayers' money, we will continue to manage our government and the public service carefully.</p> <p>The modernization of government appears against the backdrop of this careful management. Far from being the ideological slashing operation as some would describe it, modernization is a methodical process resulting in the redeployment of our state based on the needs of Quebecers today. Modernization also saves money by reducing the number of employees, providing services over the Internet which cost less and combining procurement and services. Modernization means a government that is less costly, more efficient and able to offer better services to its citizens.</p>

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5- What will you do to help the region improve traffic between Gatineau and Ottawa? If your party forms the government, would it contribute to the funding of a corridor reserved for STQ (Rapibus) buses? If so, how much would your government contribute?

We were the first government to adopt a policy on public transit. Since one of our commitments is to increase public transit ridership by 8%, we are very open to initiatives and projects from regions across Quebec to improve public transit.

In the Outaouais, we committed ourselves to completing the Rapibus public transit project promoted by the STO. The Rapibus project is worth an estimated \$200 million. Local authorities will contribute 25% to the project. The Government of Quebec and the federal government will split the difference. Work will begin in 2008 with deployment scheduled for 2010. Rapibus should result in an additional 3000 trips per day, an increase of 15%.

The Outaouais can count on us for this project!

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<p>6- What will you do to help the region improve traffic between Gatineau and Ottawa? If your party forms the government, would it contribute to the funding of a corridor reserved for STQ (Rapibus) buses? If so, how much would your government contribute?</p>	<p>Healthcare is our first priority. We acted by conducting the largest overhaul in the past 15 years of the health care and social services system. We are aware that much remains to be done, and that is why we are seeking a second mandate to complete the work already undertaken.</p> <p>Access to a family doctor is a priority as far as we are concerned. Our platform calls for more family doctors in Quebec over the next five years. This will improve access to front-line services. By adapting the organization of services and the methods of medical practice, families and vulnerable persons will have access to a family doctor.</p> <p>Our second mandate will also enable us to achieve guaranteed access to health care services. As a result, we want to guarantee operations within six months, develop Info-Médicaments and Info-Social telephone services, reduce the traffic and emergency wards in Quebec and provide better access to ambulance services.</p> <p>The priority of the next two years for all candidates of the Liberal Party will be to continue efforts with all partners, and recruit doctors and nurses. We want to see to it as well that more home care is provided and that more investment is made in housing for senior citizens.</p> <p>Our MPs will also continue their action to develop new family medicine groups in the region. Other initiatives will retain the attention of our candidates. This includes, among other things, bursaries for students at two hospitals in Gatineau County, doing suicide prevention in connection with the info-social line in the Papineau riding, 24/7 service for front-line service at the Aylmer health co-op in the Pontiac riding, and enhance health and disease prevention promotion among the population on the entire territory, particularly in the Hull and Chapleau ridings.</p>
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<p>7- What is your party's platform on daycare services? In particular, we would like to know whether you intend to increase the current \$7 cost per day. In addition, what is your position on the presence of the private sector in the daycare services sector? Are you also planning on increasing the number of subsidized spaces in the Outaouais?</p>	<p>Our pledge to Quebec families is to offer more support to parents on a day-to-day basis. During our first mandate, we added 35,000 new day care spots and improved the flexibility of services provided to better meet the needs of the parents, particularly those working atypical schedules.</p> <p>During a second mandate, a Quebec Liberal Party government will continue increasing the number of day care spaces as a result of the rising birthrate and will continue to facilitate work-family balance. We will add 20,000 new day care places between 2007 and 2012, particularly in the workplace, to offer diversified solutions tailored to the various needs of parents.</p> <p>In order to improve services to parents and to better meet the various needs of today's families, we will provide forecasted and stable funding for drop-off day care in the communities in Quebec, which will enable parents to have their children minded for a few hours when they choose to.</p> <p>As far as the rates are concerned, the leader of the Quebec Liberal Party and premier mentioned to several different audiences that the government had no plans in the works to increase daycare rates.</p>
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8- What measures which are party propose to improve primary and secondary school education? Provide some concrete examples. Moreover, are you in favor of maintaining the freeze on tuition fees in universities?

As far as this party is concerned, education clearly is a priority. In order to improve primary and secondary school education, our platform contains several different measures :

- The hiring of an additional 1000 professionals to assist students in difficulty.
- To continue developing the help-with-homework service.
- The implementation of a Department French test at the end of each cycle of primary and secondary school.
- The introduction of an innovative plan to promote reading in school.
- The creation of a national spelling test.
- The launch of the campaign on the quality of French.

In keeping with our platform, the freeze on tuition in universities will be lifted. As a result, administrative costs in university will be adjusted each year from 2007 to 2012 which will mean a hike equal to \$50 per 15-credit session (\$100 for two 15-credit sessions).

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<p>9- What is your party's position on the deconfessionalization of Quebec society? In particular, do you believe that the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides sufficient protection to guarantee the denomination-free nature of society and its public institutions? If not, what do you plan to do to rectify this problem?</p>	<p>(The candidate answered questions 9 and 10 together)</p> <p>Our party believes that Quebec society must remain denomination-free. We believe that a common language, i.e., French, is a main component of Quebec's identity.</p> <p>Our identity is also enhanced by the contribution of citizens from all over the world representing all traditions. Although Quebec's diversity is an asset, it also represents a permanent challenge, as a balance must be struck between the rights of the majority and the rights of the minorities.</p> <p>In view of this, a government represented by the Quebec Liberal Party will reassert, during a second mandate, the common values of Quebecers and its profound conviction that the diversity of Quebec is one of our most valuable assets. We will follow up on recommendations from the special parliamentary commission on ethnocultural accommodations chaired by Gerard Bouchard and Charles Taylor. The commission's mandate is to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paint an accurate picture of accommodation practices that relate back to cultural differences; - Consult with Quebecers on the issue; - Make recommendations to the government so that these accommodations respect the common values of Quebecers. <p>Although Quebec does welcome other people, there are some values that Quebec society will never budge on: equality of men and women, the primacy of French and the separation of the church and the state.</p>
<p>10- What is your party's current position with respect to the current debate on a reasonable accommodation? Specify, in particular, which fundamental values you believe that Quebec society must not negotiate (equality of men and women, deconfessionalization, etc.) when it reviews requests for accommodation in the public sector.</p>	