




COALITION AVENIR QUÉBEC'S 2014 PLATFORM

WE'RE ON THE TAXPAYERS' SIDE

THIS ELECTION PLATFORM SETS OUT THE COMMITMENTS THAT WILL BE FULFILLED BY A COALITION AVENIR QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT, IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE BALANCED BUDGET ACT. THESE COMMITMENTS ARISE OUT OF THE DIRECTIONS AND PROPOSALS DEVELOPED BY MEMBERS OF THE POLICY COMMISSION OF COALITION AVENIR QUÉBEC AND BY THE SUPPORTERS GATHERED IN THE GENERAL COUNCIL OR AT THE CONVENTION SINCE THE PARTY WAS FOUNDED IN APRIL 2012. IN THIS DOCUMENT, THE MASCULINE GENDER IS USED WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION, FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF MAKING THE TEXT EASIER TO READ. _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A word from François Legault	2
Introduction	3
1. The St. Lawrence Project: 100,000 quality jobs	7
2. \$1,000 in tax reductions for families	9
3. Less bureaucracy, more services	11
4. Putting Québec first	13



A WORD FROM FRANÇOIS LEGAULT

Québec is overflowing with talent and resources. Throughout its history, it has been able to take on major challenges. If it takes the necessary measures, it may aspire to great things. To do so, we need to renew our pride and confidence. We need to draw on our creativity and our spirit as pioneers, as groundbreakers and as builders. Starting right now, we need to put our sights on a winning Québec – a Québec that will have the means to fulfill its ambitions, and that will be entirely the master of its own destiny.

Given the indignation and cynicism that have won over a large part of the population, Coalition Avenir Québec wants to put hope back on the agenda. For this reason, our party is putting forward a mobilizing project to reinvigorate the Québec economy and to create a context here in which prosperity and quality of life will come together. The St. Lawrence Project is the best antidote with which to fight the prevailing sluggish economic climate and to collectively regain the will to move forward, the will to win!

PUTTING TAXPAYERS FIRST

Coalition Avenir Québec is the party of budgetary rigor. It therefore intends to review the ways in which government operates, to make sure that Québec taxpayers will get their money's worth. Québec families, especially those in the middle class, are currently bearing an insufferable and unprecedented tax burden. The successive hikes in fees, income tax and other taxes that they have recently endured must stop. Coalition Avenir Québec wants to bring in tight controls over public spending in order to give middle-class families the tax relief that they so greatly need.

Our program also takes the side of families by attacking glaring problems for which solutions still have not been found. This is why Coalition Avenir Québec is proposing concrete measures in its platform to reduce waiting times in the health sector and to vigorously attack the problem of school dropout rates.

Québecers have everything to gain by relying on their best assets: talent, creativity and audacity. All that is needed is a boost for Québec to reconnect with its past successes. I have the profound conviction that our election platform and its principal components, namely the St. Lawrence Project and the Cap sur nos Familles Report, will provide Québecers with a key to regain their self-confidence, to start dreaming once again, and to make the Québec that we love the kind of society that will be the envy of the world.

I therefore invite you to set your sights on a winning Québec by supporting Coalition Avenir Québec this coming April 7.

François Legault

Leader of Coalition Avenir Québec

INTRODUCTION

WE'RE ON THE TAXPAYERS' SIDE

Québec has everything that we need as a society to aspire to all that is best. Our population is dynamic, creative and hard-working. Our educational institutions are excellent. The outreach of our culture is exceptional, and many of our large businesses are achieving remarkable success beyond our borders.

Despite all this, a certain sense of gloom prevails among us. There is widespread cynicism toward the political sphere. It is becoming increasingly difficult to launch large-scale projects. Hope has come to a standstill in Québec.

Our economy's performance is among the weakest in Canada. In 2011, the standard of living in Québec, measured in terms of real-dollar GDP per capita, ranked 7th in the Canadian federation. Worse still, we continue to lose ground in comparison to the rest of Canada. Between 2010 and 2013, Québec had an annual economic growth rate of 1.47%; and things are not improving. Job creation in Québec has been sluggish over the past year. This means that our collective ability to increase our wealth is weaker than that of our neighbours.

Québec taxpayers, especially middle-class families, are being squeezed by an increasingly painful tax burden. Recent data published by the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ) on the trends in personal disposable income per inhabitant, are shockingly revealing. Year by year, we are moving toward the back of the pack. Of the thirteen provinces and territories in Canada, now only Prince Edward Island is really doing worse than we are. The situation is clear. Québécois have less and less money in their pockets in comparison to citizens in the other provinces.

The level of public services provided by the government is not up to par with the tax burden that taxpayers are asked to shoulder. The problem of waiting times to obtain health-care services remains a thorny issue. School dropout rates are too high, and many parents cannot get access to adequate daycare services for their children.

REGAINING QUÉBEC'S MOMENTUM

A change of course is needed. We need to draw on the remarkable potential of Québécois to regain Québec's

momentum, and to give ourselves back the collective will to succeed and to achieve.

This reinvigoration depends first of all on economic development. Québec's economy has been dragging its feet. This trend needs to be reversed, by equipping ourselves with a modern and ambitious economic development plan.

The time to act is now. Québec is at a crossroads. Only a strong economy will enable Québec to generate prosperity so as to improve the quality of life, to maintain the social safety net and to give taxpayers some relief. But in order to achieve this objective, a solid economic development plan is needed that will go beyond the hollow phrases and short-term solutions that are all too often put forward.

This plan that our party has been working to develop for more than a year, the St. Lawrence Project, invites Québécois to once again take ownership of this majestic river that flows through our history. We need to draw on our assets and on our past to build our future, and this future depends on innovation, high-level education and entrepreneurship. By combining these strengths, we can bring into being an «Innovation Valley», along the shores of the St. Lawrence that will guarantee our prosperity.

The St. Lawrence Project, which is at the core of our election platform, is first of all a strategy to create high-quality jobs here. It is also a game plan to catch up with the level of wealth of our neighbours, particularly in Ontario.

Our goals are ambitious. By means of the St. Lawrence Project, we aim to see more Québécois holding well-paid and rewarding jobs, a substantial increase in the standard of living of families, and increases in the revenues of the Québec government to ensure the long-term viability of our social programs.

The St. Lawrence Project is more than an economic development plan. It is a project for society that aims to beautify our cities, to depollute the St. Lawrence River and to decontaminate its shores. These are noble and desirable goals, the achievement of which will contribute to improving the quality of life of Québécois. We have a duty to give back to our children the valuable heritage left to us by our ancestors. However, the achievement of these objectives is also essential if we want to create this Innovation Valley that

I have just evoked and that will become the spark plug to trigger the start-up of a modern Québec. We will attract the best talents here, not only by placing value on the dynamic nature of our economy, but also through the beauty of our cities, the majestic beauty of our great river, the pristine beauty of our natural sites, and in general, the quality of our living environments.

TAX REDUCTION FOR FAMILIES

In order to build our future on solid ground, we need to mobilize Québécois around an audacious project. However, we also need to manage our public funds rigorously. For this purpose, we need to review our ways of doing things, to get out of the ongoing state of crisis in which our public finances in Québec are now mired. To achieve this objective, we need a coherent plan of action, and not a series of improvised measures.

This rigorous plan was developed under the direction of Christian Dubé, MNA for Lévis. The objectives set for this process are clear: to free up some room to manoeuvre that will make it possible to give Québec taxpayers, and especially middle-class families, the tax relief that they so greatly need. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will capitalize on the departure of many employees on retirement in the broader Québec public service to achieve this objective, by maintaining the number of jobs in the government system at its current level for the next several years. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will reduce the number of administrative jobs by not replacing all those left vacant following departures on retirement, in order to increase the number of employees providing services directly to the population. Our party therefore undertakes, in the course of a first term, to provide Québec taxpayers with significant tax relief by gradually eliminating the health tax and the school tax. The abolition of these two taxes will put \$1,000 back into the pockets of middle-class families in Québec, without in any way compromising the achievement of a balanced budget and the maintaining of accessibility to quality services.

The best way to protect taxpayers and to supervise the government's taxation power is to formally adopt a Taxpayers' Charter. The provisions of this important piece of legislation, which will be the first bill enacted by a Coalition Avenir Québec government, will shelter taxpayers from sharp rate increases, such as the 4.3% increase in electricity rates planned for next April. It will specify that no increases

in taxes and rates will be allowed to exceed inflation. It will also provide mechanisms, such as the indexing of income tax tables, which will eliminate the various forms of hidden increases in the tax burden. Québec taxpayers shoulder the heaviest tax burden in Canada. Furthermore, the situation continues to deteriorate in this regard. We need to reverse this trend. The adoption of a Taxpayers' Charter, by setting ground rules for the Québec government's appetite for taxation, will send a strong signal. Through its various provisions, this Charter will make it possible to re-establish a balance in favour of Québec taxpayers and to ensure that they really get their money's worth. This is the meaning of being on the taxpayers' side, which is at the core of our election platform.

QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

Coalition Avenir Québec has always been concerned about ensuring the long-term viability of the social programs that Québec has established. This is why our election commitments are responsible and targeted. The same is true in the health sector. We propose, first and foremost, changes in certain rules of management and governance, particularly with regard to physicians' compensation and the financing of hospitals, which will make it possible to improve the efficiency of the system. We also intend to free up resources for front-line services by abolishing the health agencies.

The needs in the field of education are enormous. Sound management of public finances is therefore more than ever necessary to deal with the trends in the costs of our system collectively. That being said, in education as in other fields, priorities must be established. Coalition Avenir Québec has made its priority the fight against school dropout rates, which are endemic in Québec. Two measures will be emphasized, namely early screening of children aged 3, 4 and 5 who display learning disabilities, and better supervision of students in secondary school. It is necessary to take action at two critical stages in a student's schooling: in early childhood to detect learning difficulties, and during the delicate step between the 3rd and 4th levels of secondary school. In both cases, we can and must do better if we want to significantly increase school retention, particularly among boys.

A third priority for families is the balancing of work and family responsibilities. Québec has equipped itself in recent years with a system of daycare centres with reduced fees that have many good qualities. The sharp increase in

daycare costs announced in the most recent budget is unacceptable. It is equivalent to a \$1,000 increase for a family with two children. A Coalition Avenir Québec government will cancel this increase, limiting the increase in daycare costs to the level of inflation. A recurrent problem for families is the shortage of spaces in daycare centres. This situation could be solved more quickly than proposed by previous governments by making use of the vacant places in private-sector daycare centres. It is necessary to take a targeted approach in order to fulfill our families' most pressing needs.

The Coalition Avenir Québec platform is based on well-targeted priorities: creating high-quality jobs, cleaning up public finances, providing tax relief to taxpayers and assisting families through targeted interventions in health and education.

Over and above these priorities, Coalition Avenir Québec proposes a broad-based plan for Québec, the St. Lawrence Project, in order to create a unique environment among us where prosperity and quality of life will come together.

OUR KEY COMMITMENTS

- The St. Lawrence Project: 100,000 quality jobs
- \$1,000 in tax reductions for families
- Less bureaucracy, more services

1. THE ST. LAWRENCE PROJECT: 100,000 QUALITY JOBS

Coalition Avenir Québec is proposing a project with the objective of enabling Québec, over the next few years, to achieve a large-scale development. A project to enable Québec to take advantage of all of its assets, beginning with this great river that flows through its history.

This project aims to bring into being an "Innovation Valley" in the St. Lawrence Valley in order to generate prosperity, improve our standard of living, protect and strengthen our social programs, improve our quality of life and finally give Québec taxpayers some relief. By increasing our collective wealth, we will cease to be less wealthy than the rest of Canada and will stop being dependent on equalization payments. This is what will make us a nation with the means to fulfill its ambitions, a nation that will be free to make its own choices and that will remain the master of its own destiny.

The St. Lawrence project is based on a reflection process that lasted more than a year, and that led to the publication of a book, "Cap sur un Québec Gagnant", which describes the main aspects of this project. This broad-based economic and social development plan aims to bring the economic decline of Québec to an end. Its end purpose is to catch up to the average level of wealth in Canada. Its implementation aims to create quality jobs, to increase the personal disposable income of Québec families, to increase the revenues of the Québec government to ensure the long-term viability of our social programs, and to undertake a series of measures to improve the quality of life of Québécois.

The main commitments of Coalition Avenir Québec, which flow from the implementation of the St. Lawrence Project, are articulated around three main directions.——

COMMITMENTS

1. To create 100,000 quality jobs in the 20 innovation zones that will be consolidated or created during the deployment of the St. Lawrence Project.
2. To review and amend Québec's policy of support to businesses in order to stimulate investment and innovation. This new policy should be better targeted and better directed. It will provide an accountability mechanism to better assess the spin-offs of assistance to businesses in relation to the projected goals.
3. To review the allocation of the 2 billion dollars in income tax credits to businesses in order to target the creation of value-added jobs, and to better finance academic research in connection with innovative businesses, particularly in the field of engineering.
4. To develop a policy to restore industrial sites in order to develop innovation zones there.
5. To adopt a master plan to make innovation zones into high-quality living environments.
6. To review the mandate and operation of Investissement-Québec in order to give it the complete role of supervision and deployment of the business support policy.
7. To give Investissement-Québec the mandate to develop an overall strategy and to act in partnership with the municipalities and affiliated agencies to support the development of innovation zones.
8. To increase the number of university graduates in order to catch up to the highest-performing Canadian provinces within 10 years.
9. To improve scientific training for young Québécois by setting up a program similar to the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program in the United States.
10. To develop an entrepreneurship policy in order to increase the number of entrepreneurs in Québec and to improve their training.
11. To develop a long-term plan to depollute the St. Lawrence, placing the emphasis on waste-water treatment, particularly in the Montréal region.
12. To make the shoreline of the St. Lawrence more accessible by supporting local initiatives aiming toward this objective.
13. To foster the distribution of local agricultural products and stimulate innovation in Québec's agri-food sector.
14. To develop the exceptional tourism potential represented by the St. Lawrence.
15. To increase the shipping traffic in the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes corridor.
16. To develop and exploit the petroleum resources in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in partnership with the private sector and in a responsible manner.

2. \$1,000 IN TAX REDUCTIONS FOR FAMILIES

Families are running out of steam. Government services, support policies and tax advantages are no longer offsetting all the increases in taxes and fees that have been emptying the pockets of the middle class in recent years. The most recent examples are the maintaining of the health tax – despite promises to the contrary – and the increases in school taxes. In addition, electricity rates and daycare fees are set to increase substantially in the next few years.

If the government really intends to support families, it has a duty to provide them with a more advantageous tax system, because the current situation is untenable. Middle class families are having difficulty in balancing their work-related obligations and their numerous other responsibilities.

A change of course is called for. The current government overtaxes and overspends. Québec taxpayers are not getting their money's worth. To reverse the trend, Québec must be provided with a modern and efficient State. We need to draw on employee retirements and the elimination of all forms of waste, particularly in the management of information technology contracts awarded by the government. In this way, we will be able to free up the necessary room to manoeuvre that will enable us to reduce the tax burden on Québecers, and bring it down to an acceptable level.——

COMMITMENTS

1. \$1,000 in tax reductions for families, by abolishing the health tax and school tax.
2. To adopt a Taxpayers' Charter, stating that no increases in taxes and fees may exceed the inflation rate.
3. To limit the increases in electricity rates and daycare fees, announced by the Parti québécois government, to the inflation rate.
4. A freeze on the total number of employees in the broader public service over the next 4 years.
5. To set up mechanisms to recover the amounts misappropriated from Québécois in the various cases of collusion brought to light by the Charbonneau Commission.
6. An end to partisan appointments and exorbitant severance packages.

3. LESS BUREAUCRACY, MORE SERVICES

The quality of public services in Québec is not what it should be. Waiting times to obtain health-care services are much too long. Nearly 25% of Québecers do not have a family doctor, whereas that proportion is barely 12% in the rest of Canada. The care provided to our senior citizens in long-term care facilities (CHSLDs) is inadequate. Not enough resources are being devoted to reducing school dropout rates, and far too many parents are still waiting to obtain daycare spaces for their children.

Coalition Avenir Québec considers that the main problem underlying these shortcomings is not a lack of resources in most cases, but rather their improper allocation. This is why a Coalition government will eliminate unnecessary administrative structures such as the school boards and the health agencies, and will reduce the costs of bureaucracy in order to be able to devote more resources and provide better services directly to the population.——

COMMITMENTS

1. To review the method of financing of health and social services institutions, which will from now on be set according to the volume of care provided to patients.
2. To reform physicians' compensation in order to ensure better medical care of patients.
3. To gradually abolish specific medical activities (AMPs) in order to foster the return of general practitioners toward the practice of family medicine.
4. To upgrade the role of nurses and to broaden their field of practice by reviewing the sharing of duties with physicians, as well as the organization of care within the health system.
5. To streamline the bureaucratic structures by eliminating the health agencies.
6. A screening program for young children displaying learning difficulties.
7. To set up a tutorship program aiming to improve pedagogical support and supervision of secondary school students.
8. To add guidance counsellors to assist students in secondary school in making their career choices and in planning their future.
9. Better synergy between private daycare centres and the network of early childhood centres (CPEs) to more rapidly increase the number of spaces in reduced-rate daycare.
10. To improve the quantity and quality of care and services provided to our senior citizens, particularly those living in long-term care facilities (CHSLDs).

4. PUTTING QUÉBEC FIRST

The constitutional position of Coalition Avenir Québec may be summarized by the phrase: "putting Québec first". This position is more rallying and fruitful than those of our opponents. The PQ position is that of "only Québec", and of turning inward on oneself. That of the Liberal party is "putting Canada first". These two ways of seeing things divide Québécois and weaken them.

The primary loyalty of a great majority of Québécois goes to Québec. The dominant current in Québec society is in favour of strongly defending the interests of Québec. Coalition Avenir Québec fits within this current. Its political platform consists in rallying Québécois around the position of "putting Québec first" to advance three issues over the next few years: limiting federal spending power, eliminating expensive duplications between the levels of government, and broadening the responsibilities of Québec in the area of promoting its culture beyond our borders.

COMMITMENTS

1. A balanced and responsible position in the debate on the Secular Charter
2. Clearer guidelines on federal spending power.
3. To limit overlapping and duplication between the federal government and that of Québec.
4. A single tax return.
5. A significant broadening of Québec's responsibilities in the area of promoting its culture beyond our borders.



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