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Mark Carney's
investment summit

West Quebec Post

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The Hôtel-Casino du Lac-Leamy will host Bienvenue Québec 2026 from October 19 to 21, drawing more than 400 tourism buyers to Gatineau for a three-day marketplace that Tourisme Outaouais chief executive Geneviève Latulippe calls an exceptional showcase for the region, and one expected to generate close to \$800,000 in local spinoffs. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE QUEBEC MINISTRY OF TOURISM

The world loves West Quebec Tourism in the Outaouais is growing in leaps and bounds: winter, spring, summer and fall



Tashi **Farmilo**
LJI Reporter

Bienvenue Québec, one of the province's largest gatherings of tourism buyers, will draw more than 400 delegates to the Hôtel-Casino du Lac-Leamy complex in Gatineau from October 19 to 21, a coup for Tourisme Outaouais that is expected to inject close to \$800,000 into the local economy and put the region in front of the people who package and sell it to the world.

The three-day marketplace, organized by the Fédération des transporteurs par autobus, runs as a bilingual business hub for group and individual travel, assembling tour operators, receptive agencies and suppliers from Quebec and abroad. Its engine is a speed-meeting format in which buyers and sellers move briskly from one appointment to the next, and the federation says the approach yields more than 8,000 meetings and upwards of \$56 million in transactions in a typical year. Twenty local businesses that belong to Tourisme Outaouais will sit across the table from those buyers to pitch the region.

The economics reach past the three days on site. Delegates will fill hotel rooms and spend in restaurants and shops, and Geneviève Latulippe, chief executive of Tourisme Outaouais, said the real prize is what follows. "The visitor of today is often the citizen, the talent or the investor of tomorrow," she said, adding that some delegates are expected to extend their stays before or after the event, a business-plus-leisure pattern the industry calls "bleisure."

Landing the event also flips the usual sales trip on its head. Tourisme Outaouais spends much of the year courting operators in Quebec, Canada and abroad, with France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States and Mexico among its priority markets. "Rather than going to present our destination elsewhere, we invite the buyers directly to our home," Latulippe said. "These are the same professionals who, once won over by the region, will sell our offer to travellers." The region did not simply inherit the gathering, either,

having bid for it through a call for candidacies before Bienvenue Québec selected the host.

Winning the bid gives the region a chance to perform rather than describe. The program pushes delegates out across the territory, with a VIP evening October 18 at Square Old Chelsea, an opening reception October 19 at the Canadian Museum of History, and five excursions fanning out through the Outaouais. Those outings reach Parc Oméga and Fairmont Le Château Montebello in the Petite Nation, the Chutes Coulonge park in the Pontiac, Arbraska Laflèche in the Collines-de-l'Outaouais, the Canadian Museum of Nature and the National Gallery of Canada in the Gatineau-Ottawa core, and the Village Majopial in the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau. A shuttle bound for the Pontiac runs through Aylmer with a guide aboard, giving the west end a turn in front of the visitors as well.

The event brings a track record to build on. The federation has run Bienvenue Québec since 1989 to stimulate group tourism in Quebec, and it now bills itself as a fixture of more than 35 years, linking travel agencies, receptive operators and tour operators from across North America and beyond with suppliers in Quebec, eastern Canada and the northeastern United States. Confirmed delegates so far span France, the United Kingdom, China, the United States, Germany, Mexico and India, though the gathering remains closed to the general public.

That next act falls to a venue accustomed to an audience. The Lac-Leamy complex, a Loto-Québec property that opened in 1996 in the former city of Hull, sits about five minutes from Parliament Hill and pairs its casino with the 349-room Hilton Lac-Leamy and an 1,100-seat theatre that ranks among the region's busiest concert halls. Julie Kinnear, its general manager, said the property intends to leave a mark: "We are extremely proud to host Bienvenue Québec 2026 at the Hôtel-Casino du Lac-Leamy complex and to help position the Outaouais as a must-visit destination. Delegates can expect the warm welcome and the distinctive experience that our establishment is known for."



Québec
ELECTIONS 2026
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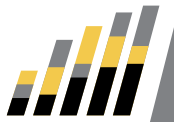
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Québec ELECTIONS 2026



Quebec Provincial Elections: candidates answer newsroom questions



Jude Osmond
Drazen Seslija

With just a couple of weeks to go before the provincial election on October 5, the West Quebec Post submitted three questions to the candidates and political teams in the Outaouais region, covering local priorities and concerns, the protection of minority communities, and democracy and the future of local media. These questions will allow residents to compare the candidates' proposals on issues that directly affect the region.

Please note: In the data provided, the list of candidates was compiled as of September 10, and their responses were collected between September 11 and 16.

HERE ARE THEIR RESPONSES:

GATINEAU

Bertin Aboussou — Conservative Party of Quebec (PCQ)

Question: What are your local priorities and concerns?

Answer: During my meetings with voters and door-to-door canvassing, the concern I hear most often is the cost of living. Families are working hard, but they are finding it increasingly difficult to absorb the rising costs of groceries, housing, transportation and taxes. In a constituency as large as Gatineau, this reality is particularly important because many residents have to travel long distances to work, study or access health care.

I believe the government must start by leaving more money in residents' pockets. The Conservative Party of Quebec is proposing, among other measures, a significant increase in the basic personal amount to reduce income taxes. Our financial framework also calls for reducing waste and certain government expenditures to fund tax cuts while protecting essential public services.

But the cost of living is not limited to taxes. We also need to make it easier to build housing by reducing delays and unnecessary bureaucracy, improve access to health care, and ensure that every dollar spent by government delivers results for residents.

As an MNA, my priority will be to defend the purchasing power of Gatineau families while ensuring that essential services remain accessible. To me, good government starts with a simple question: does the decision we are making improve people's lives?

Question: How do you plan to protect minority communities in Quebec? What would this mean in practical terms for institutions such as schools?

Answer: Quebec must protect French as its official and common language, but this should not come at the expense of the fundamental and historic rights of minority communities.

In the Gatineau constituency, this reality is very concrete. We have Francophone and Anglophone communities living, working and raising their families side by side. As an MNA, my role would be to represent all residents, regardless of their language or background.

The Conservative Party of Quebec has committed to protecting the historic rights of the Anglophone community. To me, this means that they should be able to access the

services to which they are entitled without language becoming a barrier.

In education, Anglophone community institutions are particularly important. Schools are not simply buildings: they contribute to the vitality, culture and continuity of a community.

I therefore believe we must respect the rights of minority communities and their ability to participate in decisions concerning their institutions, while maintaining French as Quebec's official language.

We do not have to choose between protecting French and respecting minority communities. We can do both.

Question: In your view, how should the provincial government support journalism and the long-term viability of local media?

Answer: I remain optimistic about the future of democracy in Quebec, but a strong democracy requires informed residents, transparent institutions, and elected officials who are accessible and accountable to the public.

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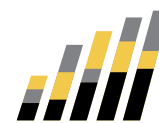


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Québec ELECTIONS 2026



Quebec Provincial Elections: candidates answer newsroom questions

Continued from page 2

Local media play a particularly important role. In a region like the Outaouais, they are often the ones covering municipal councils, community organizations, regional issues and decisions that directly affect residents' daily lives. When these media outlets disappear, an important part of local democratic life disappears with them.

The government must therefore create an environment in which local journalism can remain viable while absolutely protecting its independence. Journalists must be able to question and criticize the government without fearing that their funding will depend on how they cover elected officials.

I favour transparent, fair and accessible measures for all eligible media outlets rather than discretionary decisions made by government.

As an MNA, I would also commit to remaining available to local media, answering their questions and facilitating access to public information.

A healthy democracy needs free journalists, but it also needs elected officials who are willing to be held accountable.

Raphaël Déry — Parti Québécois (PQ)
Did not respond.

David Logue — Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ)
Question: What are your local priorities and concerns?

Answer: During my door-to-door visits over the past 18 months, the number one priority identified by citizens has been health care, as well as the cost of living, particularly housing costs.

With regard to health care and staff retention, we will introduce special legislation for the Outaouais, providing a \$90-million investment in our local health-care system. This will ensure pay equity with Ontario for all frontline health-care workers in the region, in order to stop the loss of staff to Ontario and attract more professionals, particularly nurses. A central pillar of our plan will be to expand the training of nurses and health-care professionals directly through our regional CEGEPs.

In response to the critical housing crisis, our goal is to have 100,000 homes built per year. Our plan also calls for the creation of

40,000 affordable rental units over five years to directly address the lack of affordability and rising costs.

Question: How do you plan to protect minority communities in Quebec? What would this mean in practical terms for institutions such as schools?

Answer: As a member of the First Nations and the son of a Francophone mother, this issue is deeply important to me. Protecting individuals' freedoms while ensuring the French language thrives is not a contradiction: it is at the very heart of the mandate of an MNA representing the Gatineau riding. For the past eight years, the CAQ has prioritized confrontation by pitting Quebec culture against the rights of our English-speaking and First Nations communities. At the Quebec Liberal Party, we reject this false choice. Our position is clear: pride in our language should never come at the expense of fundamental rights or our partnerships with Indigenous peoples.

Concretely, for our educational institutions, this means maintaining local governance by preserving the autonomous management of English-language school boards by their communities; removing the artificial enrolment caps imposed on English-language CEGEPs to restore students' freedom of choice, while supporting our universities; and, offering accessible and accelerated French courses directly within the school system to ensure everyone's success.

I believe the future of democracy in Quebec rests on respect for the rule of law, inclusion, and citizens' trust in our institutions. For the Quebec Liberal Party, democracy thrives through strictly respecting the fundamental rights and minority rights guaranteed by the Charters, governance focused on unity, the integration of communities, and a nation-to-nation partnership with First Nations, and a strong affirmation of Quebec's identity within Canada.

A strong democracy must bring Quebecers together, decentralize powers toward the regions, and modernize our public institutions.

Question: In your view, how should the provincial government support journalism and the long-term sustainability of local media?

Answer: Our democracy runs on local

information. Regional newspapers such as *The Bulletin* in Aylmer and Gatineau are the true lifeblood of our communities, allowing citizens to stay connected to the realities around them. That is why the government must stop ignoring our local media and completely rethink how it distributes its advertising spending. Giving these independent newsrooms a fair and equitable share means ensuring journalism remains rooted in the community and investing directly in our region.

William Robertson — Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ)

See the Coalition Avenir Québec's political team responses given by Pontiac candidate Mariana Mefleh.

Emmanuelle Tremblay — Québec Solidaire (QS)
See Québec Solidaire's political team responses given by Pontiac candidate Bianca Baldo.

PONTIAC

Bianca Baldo — Québec solidaire (QS)
(Representing QS political team)

Question: How do you plan to protect minority communities in Quebec? What would this mean in practical terms for institutions such as schools?

Answer: The Pontiac and Gatineau Valley are home to well-established Anglophone communities. The City of Gatineau is the second-largest immigration hub in Quebec. Québec solidaire is proposing several measures to protect linguistic, sexual, religious and racialized minorities. *Continued on page 6*



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Print media under threat: an electoral issue that Quebec cannot ignore

With the elections fast approaching, we wish, on behalf of a coalition of Quebec's print media organisations, to draw your attention to a fundamental issue: the place Quebec intends to accord to its culture, its news and the media that convey them, both in the upcoming debates and in the years to come.

The reform of the selective collection system has given rise to inconsistencies and anomalies that it is important to understand fully: the fewer print media in circulation, the higher the fees imposed on them for material recovery. In other words, the recycling levy hits publications with declining circulation hardest – a mechanism that directly threatens the financial stability of print media, and even their survival in some cases. This same logic also affects, in its own way, the entire spectrum of printed material in Quebec, including books – a new victim of the selective collection system, whose value cannot be measured in tonnage either.

For beyond this technical issue, it is a question of cultural value that arises. Printed newspapers, magazines and weeklies are much more than mere physical media;

they are essential vehicles for cultural and journalistic content, indispensable to the protection of our language and our values, as well as to the dissemination of reliable, local information. Quebecers remain deeply and genuinely attached to print media. Millions of citizens continue to rely on them on a daily basis, not only by choice but also out of necessity, particularly in regions with poorer digital infrastructure, amongst older citizens, and in households where internet connectivity remains limited. For them, the disappearance of a regional newspaper, a weekly publication or a local magazine is not the loss of a product: it is the loss of a space for culture, information and a sense of belonging.

These media outlets also represent one of the last spaces where culture and information can be fully expressed, without being diluted by the flood of external content that characterises today's digital landscape. Guided by tried-and-tested editorial practices, they provide a structured framework that contributes to the quality of public debate and the fight against disinformation, in a media landscape where the reliability of information is an

increasingly important democratic issue, particularly during election periods.

It is precisely because content and form are inseparable that the current situation cannot be ignored.

The content of our magazines, newspapers and weekly publications cannot be treated as mere waste material. Unlike single-use packaging, which serves no further purpose once opened, the paper on which our printed material is produced remains inseparable from the content it carries – cultural and journalistic content produced here for the benefit of all citizens of Québec. This principle, as we know, extends beyond the case of print media alone: wherever the written word conveys a culture, the medium itself cannot be treated as mere waste.

A REFORM THAT UNDERMINES DEMOCRACY

However, the recent reform of the selective waste collection system undermines what our print media have taken decades to build. By placing an increasing financial burden on them, this new scheme directly threatens the long-

term survival of numerous publications across Quebec, and with them, an irreplaceable part of our cultural and democratic life.

The upcoming election debates present an opportunity to reaffirm what Québec chooses to be: a society that protects its culture, values its news and refuses to allow its democratic and cultural space to shrink in silence. What do our party leaders think?

Lily Ryan, publisher of the West Quebec Post and the print media coalition, comprising, amongst others:

Le Devoir, Le Journal de Montréal, Le Journal de Québec, The Globe and Mail, The Gazette, L'Actualité, Ricardo, as well as publications from TVA Publications, Pratico-Pratiques, KO Média, Bayard Presse Canada, Publications BLD and Naître et grandir. It also brings together the 53 members of the Association québécoise des éditeurs de magazines (AQEM), the 136 members of Hebdomas Québec and RecycleMédias.

LETTERS

to the **Editor** *Opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by the paper*

Crafts, Culture and Community: Celebrating the Grandmothers-to-Grandmothers Campaign in Support of African Grandmothers

Aylmer community members are invited to enjoy a vibrant celebration of creativity and culture at an upcoming marketplace featuring handcrafted goods, live entertainment, and a meaningful cause which takes place October 6 at Library and Archives on Wellington Street from 4 to 8 pm.

The event will showcase a diverse selection of artisan crafts and unique gifts, along with performances by Steven Page (one of the founders of The Barenaked Ladies), the Kamengo Cultural Troupe, Jacqui Du Toit, storyteller/performer and Stacey Dela Can-Tamakloe, professional dancer and international student, all of whom are members of the African diaspora in the region. Visitors will have the



Lerato Maduna/South Africa

opportunity to browse, shop, and connect with older women from across Canada celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Grandmothers-to-Grandmothers Campaign of the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

Through fundraising, advocacy, and community building, the Campaign supports grassroots partners working to strengthen health, education, food security, and economic resilience. Grounded in Stephen Lewis's unwavering belief in the leadership of women and community-driven change, G2G is rooted in compassion, shared purpose, and collective action—an international movement demonstrating the power of women-led philanthropy and global solidarity.

I am one of the grandmothers who is part of this movement and a resident of Wychwood and want to personally invite my fellow Aylmerites to attend.

The event is free and organizers encourage residents to come out, enjoy the festivities, and make a difference through their support. Every purchase and donation helps support African grandmothers and the children who depend on them.

This event promises an evening of community spirit, cultural appreciation, and charitable giving. Perhaps an opportunity to get a start on holiday shopping? Register at this link. <https://tinyurl.com/3tfw8ysp>

Pat Dolan

West Quebec Post

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Science Matters by David Sullivan & Faisal MO **Mark Carney's investment summit is bound to fail unless it faces this fundamental issue**

Prime Minister Mark Carney has invited 300 global CEOs, entrepreneurs and institutional financiers to a Canada Investment Summit. They collectively manage \$120 trillion in global assets and the goal of the conference is to catalyze private and sovereign capital into Canadian industries. I understand the urgent need to stand up against Trump, a bullying madman, by reducing our dependence on US markets and I applaud Carney's efforts. He's a smart, tough guy.

After interviews I have had with Carney, before and after he became a politician, I believe he is very intelligent, understands the gravity of the climate crisis and is committed to reduce the threat. But we have run out of time to delay the radical and deep cuts in emissions that are needed to avoid climate chaos. As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says about the emissions causing climate change: "We are digging our own graves" and "we are in a deep climate hole and to get out, we must first stop digging."

The economy and the environment are not separate matters — they are inextricably linked. Nature is the foundation of all life, while the economy is made by and for humans. As Carney points out in his book, "Value(s): Building a Better World for All," nature is an externality to the economy. But Carney is first and foremost a banker, deeply embedded in the economic system. He now has a politician, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, and Alberta separatism to deal with. Cancelling a carbon tax without replacing it with a mechanism to reduce fossil fuel use, eliminating environmental considerations to fast-track development, indeed supporting steady economic growth, all reflect the failure to see that the global economy is the driving force of ecological destruction.

I'm not a gambler, but I bet Carney's conference next week will not even mention climate change as a threat to the economy. Thirty United Nations COP meetings — each involving thousands of delegates meeting to stop the threat of climate change — have failed to even cap, let alone radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Even when all "stakeholders" in any issue are present at roundtables, they are doomed to fail unless they begin with fundamental agreement on why they are there.

In the late 1990s, when discussion about Alberta's oilsands was heating up,

a CEO of one of the largest oil companies there called me. "Could I come and talk to you?" he asked. I was surprised and replied, "It would be an honour."

The next day, he came to the David Suzuki Foundation office. I thanked and welcomed him. "Before you come into my office, I'd like you to do me a favour," I said. "Please leave your identity as a fossil fuel company CEO outside. I want to meet you as one human being with another. I don't see any point in discussing fossil fuels and global warming before we start from agreement."

I could see he was uncomfortable, but he was a good person and reluctantly agreed.

As we sat down, I said, "I know this isn't what you came for, but I would like to state what I believe is the platform on which we can carry out a discussion. What do you think is the greatest need of every person on the planet?"

"I don't know," he said. "A job? Money? A house?"

I replied, "Most of us live in cities where our highest priority is our job, for the money to buy what we need and want. But if we don't have air for three or four minutes, we die! We take a breath and absorb whatever is in the air to get oxygen to fuel our metabolic fire.

"We can survive longer without water, but we'll die after four to six days without it. Water inflates our cells, enables metabolism, transports signals throughout our body, cools us and flushes out toxins. Fresh air and pure water are not created by human factories or technology; they're recycled, cleansed, replenished, gifts from nature."

I continued, "The food we eat to create our bodies was once alive. We take the carcasses of plants and animals into our mouths, tear them apart and construct our body from the debris. All of our food ultimately comes from the soil. Without anything to eat, we will perish in four to six weeks.

Our most elementary and essential needs are dictated by our biological makeup, but our legal, economic and political systems are created to shape, guide and constrain human behaviour without regard to nature and so are inevitably destructive.

If we can't start with this fundamental agreement, we are bound to quibble over vested interests and fail. Carney's meeting won't address climate change that threatens all of humanity.



Carney's Campaign

by Gwynne DYER

AUTHOR, HISTORIAN & INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST

"You campaign in poetry. You govern in prose," said former New York Governor Mario Cuomo forty years ago. Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney is now in the poetic phase of his campaign to create an alliance — maybe just a loose alliance — of middle powers who can resist the brutal strength of the great powers.

Carney knows how the world used to work, and how it is changing as the 'rules-based international order' fades away under the impact of the three great autocrats, Putin, Trump and Xi. "Middle powers must act together," he told the Davos conference last January, "because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu."

"The old order is not coming back," he told them. That should have been obvious to all of them, but many countries in Europe and beyond still clung to the belief that somehow, one of these days, maybe after Trump relinquishes power or dies, the old order can be resurrected.

In a single speech that catapulted him into the de facto position of leader of the middle powers, he disabused them of that fantasy and offered them a path to resistance instead. They gave him a standing ovation, a very rare thing at Davos — and he managed to convince them without mentioning any of the problematic powers by name. So I will.

The United States is obviously the most dangerous of the three great powers, having fallen under the control of a man who regards war as a useful tool for subjugating countries or changing their governments. The United States has bombed seven countries since Donald Trump took office in January of last year.

Russia has only invaded one country in the past five years, and by most conventional measures it scarcely even qualifies as a superpower any more. However, it still has over 5,000 nuclear weapons, and Vladimir Putin might choose a high-risk gamble to finish his four-and-a-half year war in Ukraine quickly rather than plodding on endlessly at a dozen metres a day.

China's Xi Jinping is almost harmless by comparison, although he does reserve the right to invade Taiwan if it won't 'reunite' with the mainland. In fact, China hasn't bombed anybody in decades, and Xi has even lamented the demise of the 'rules-based international order'. In some circumstances, China could be an ally of the middle powers, but don't count on it.

So this is the political environment in

which the middle powers must operate, and Mark Carney was almost bound to emerge as its leader. He had the right personal qualities and experiences, but more importantly he governs the middle power most vulnerable to subjugation in the short run. Most Canadians realise their country's peril may be existential.

Although Trump is obsessed with the "nasty Canadians", most still doubt that he would treat Canada like Venezuela, let alone like Iran. But his decline is accelerating so they cannot even be sure of that any more — and they know that at a minimum he wants to turn Canada into a North American version of Belarus.

The 'middle power' group Carney is trying to create would ideally include twenty to thirty countries with population ranging from around 40 million (Canada, Spain, South Korea) to 200 million (Mexico, Indonesia, Bangladesh). Their purpose would be to protect the sovereignty of every country that is threatened, including non-members.

It might not even be a membership-based organisation, just like-minded democratic countries cooperating on an ad hoc basis. If it were wildly successful and the wind was blowing in the right direction, it might even be the seed from which a new rules-based order might one day grow, but that is certainly not the immediate goal.

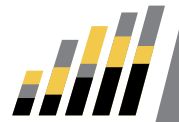
And why is this enterprise being launched with a rather non-specific invitation by European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen for Canada to become an 'associate member' of the European Union? It's because you have to start somewhere, and the 27-member EU is a better place than most.

Most EU members belong to NATO, as does Canada, but this is not a military exercise. There will be no European pledge to defend Canada — that would be a pointless provocation — and it is unlikely that the 'middle power group', even if it grows far beyond this like-minded and culturally close group, would ever develop into a binding alliance with a military arm.

Mark Carney will probably choose not to remain at the head of this new group for long. It's a job that requires somebody's full attention, and he has a country to run. But he and von der Leyen have got the ball rolling, which is a great achievement in a dark time.



Québec ELECTIONS 2026



Quebec Provincial Elections: candidates answer newsroom questions

Continued from page 3

For the Anglophone community in the Outaouais, QS is committed to respecting its existing institutions, including its schools. The party recognizes and seeks to combat systemic and institutional racism and condemns discriminatory laws 21 and 94. Its immigration policies place a strong emphasis on human rights and dignity.

Québec solidaire is proposing a public school system for everyone: every student would have access to a genuinely free public school, without selection based on grades or abilities. No one would be excluded because of their academic results or abilities.

English-language schools would therefore continue to exist and remain part of the public school system. However, across all public schools, both English- and French-language, socioeconomic diversity would once again become the norm: students from different socioeconomic backgrounds would once again attend the same schools, as was the case in the past.

We would also restore the right to work for women who had to leave or give up jobs in education because of wearing religious symbols.

Question: In your view, how should the provincial government support journalism and the long-term viability of local media?

Answer: The future of democracy in Quebec depends on the health of its media and a strong system of democratic civic education.

In Pontiac, from Aylmer to Fort-Coulonge, in Petite-Nation and the Gatineau Valley, this reality is experienced firsthand: without local radio stations, newspapers and other media outlets telling the stories of what is happening in our communities, people lose an important tool for staying informed and participating in democratic life.

Our communities deserve strong local media capable of covering the issues that truly affect our neighbourhoods and village centres.

Québec solidaire is proposing the creation of a Quebec Media Fund, financed through a \$75-million annual tax on digital giants such as Meta and Google and managed by a committee independent of government.

We can see the situation clearly in the region. The Equity, the Pontiac newspaper since 1883, was sold in 2025 and could cease printing. The Bulletin d'Aylmer is struggling to find the funding needed to provide printed copies. Journal Les 2

Vallées, serving the Papineau RCM and eastern Gatineau, had to cease operations. Le Droit, which went digital in 2023, is facing similar difficulties.

The Media Fund would give them the means to continue.

Marcela Cazas — Parti Québécois (PQ)

Did not respond.

André Fortin — Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ) - Incumbent

Question: What are your local priorities and concerns?

Answer: By far, health care is the number one issue I hear about. From seniors to young parents, newcomers to long-time residents, access to health care is the main concern in the constituency and throughout the region.

Our provincial platform is ambitious when it comes to health care. We want to establish a public telehealth platform so residents can speak easily and quickly with a health-care professional. This platform is not intended to replace consultations with health-care professionals, but rather to improve access when dealing with minor issues that do not require a visit to a doctor—for

example, renewing a prescription, adjusting medication or completing documents requiring medical approval. It would also improve timely access to mental health resources.

More importantly, we are addressing a problem that particularly affects the Outaouais: we need more staff. Our region has fewer health-care workers per capita than any other region. This is partly because we do not train enough workers locally and because we lose many of them to Ontario, which offers attractive working conditions.

The shortage of staff explains why we have the longest wait times for emergency care and surgeries. This fall, the Cégep de l'Outaouais turned away 112 nursing applicants because it does not have enough spaces. The CAQ has rejected its infrastructure project over the past five years.

The Quebec Liberal Party would move forward with construction of the Cégep project to train more health-care workers here in the region. In addition—and this is the most important point—the Quebec Liberal Party proposes offering health-care workers in the Outaouais compensation equivalent to what is offered in Ontario. This measure is essential if we want to attract and retain staff in our region.

Continued on page 7

2026 Provincial Election



**Vote on
October 5**
9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Where and when to vote



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Québec**



Québec ELECTIONS 2026



Quebec Provincial Elections: candidates answer newsroom questions

Continued from page 6

The Outaouais is a different region and needs solutions adapted to its specific needs.

Question: How will you protect minority communities in Quebec? What would this mean in practical terms for institutions such as schools?

Answer: By protecting Quebecers' rights. Protecting minority rights is part of the role of an MNA in Pontiac. The Quebec Liberal Party fundamentally believes that it is not necessary to infringe on anyone's rights to protect the French language. In our view, this is the approach the CAQ has taken over the past eight years.

The latest proposal from the CAQ and the PQ to prevent Francophones from attending English-language adult education and vocational training institutions should be abandoned. No government regulation should prevent someone from accessing education.

This type of policy does not improve the French language situation; it simply weakens Anglophone institutions and prevents adult students from accessing the program of their choice in our community.

In addition, we would remove the enrolment cap at English-language CEGEPs so that Heritage College could expand at the same pace as Cégep de l'Outaouais. Our region is growing. All our institutions must be able to grow with the population.

Quebec has all the tools necessary to have a healthy and open democracy. We have institutions that deserve to be protected, an accountable government and independent media. But we cannot take these things for granted.

Candidates have a role to play in strengthening our democracy, including by participating in local debates and answering questions from local journalists.

Question: In your view, how should the provincial government support journalism and the long-term viability of local media?

Answer: First, by recognizing that residents get their information from independent and local media. These media outlets reach residents directly in many communities throughout Quebec, as they do here in Aylmer with the Bulletin. As such, independent and local media should receive their fair share of government advertising.

Mariana Mefleh — Coalition Avenir Québec (CAO)

(Responses for CAQ political team)

Question: What are your local priorities and concerns?

Answer: Health care is clearly the number one

priority in Pontiac. In rural areas, the issue is even more pressing: when you live far from major centres, having access to a CLSC, a nurse practitioner or primary care services close to home can make all the difference.

Our government has already taken important steps: bonuses to attract and retain staff, investments in our facilities, and \$70 million to create a Health Hub with UQO to train more professionals here and keep them in the region. We have also begun preparatory work for the future hospital at the Asticou site.

But we need to go further, particularly in rural areas. We want to strengthen access to CLSCs and primary care services in remote areas, including by expanding the role of nurse practitioners and other professionals.

We also want to accelerate access to surgeries and diagnostic imaging, including by using the private sector when wait times become too long, at no cost to patients.

Our priority has always been to continue catching up with the rest of the province in health care and ensure that residents, whether they live in Gatineau or Campbell's Bay, can access the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Question: How do you plan to protect minority communities in Quebec? What would this mean in practical terms for institutions such as schools?

Answer: We are always vigilant in ensuring that minority rights are respected. Our priority is to find the right balance between protecting these rights and respecting our shared values in Quebec.

Our government has taken concrete steps, including creating the position of Minister Responsible for the Fight Against Racism. For us, every person must be able to fully participate in Quebec society while having their rights and our shared values respected.

In practical terms, we must first ensure that our schools are environments conducive to learning. This means promoting civility and creating environments free from bullying and discrimination.

Every student must be able to learn and grow in a healthy school environment, regardless of their background, sexual orientation, beliefs or gender.

The secularism law in the education system also strengthens these protections by prohibiting, among other things, bullying, violence, hatred and discrimination based on racism, sexual orientation, sexual identity, homophobia, a disability or a physical characteristic.

Democratic values are deeply rooted in Quebec society. Our parliamentary system allows every citizen to make their voice heard and choose both the government and the person

who will represent the interests of their region.

Obviously, as a society, we must continue to protect our democracy and encourage civic participation. We want Quebec to maintain a strong democracy in which everyone can have their voice heard and participate in the decisions that shape our society.

Question: In your view, how should the provincial government support journalism and the long-term viability of local media?

Answer: We are aware of the significant challenges facing local media, particularly because of digital transformation, declining advertising revenues, distribution and dissemination challenges, as well as Meta's blocking of news and the shift in advertising revenue toward major digital platforms.

Local and regional media play an essential role in our democracy: they understand the realities of our communities, inform the public and contribute to the vitality of our regions.

Our government already supports them, notably through the operating assistance program for community media, which supports the production of local and regional news and digital adaptation.

We want to continue supporting our media while respecting our ability to pay and, above all, their editorial independence.

HULL

Sacha Cannon — Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ)

1. Local priorities and concerns

a. What do citizens identify as their number one priority when you go door-to-door during the election campaign?

Without a doubt, their main priority is health-care services. Everyone is affected— young parents and seniors, newcomers and long-time residents alike. It is the issue that comes up constantly, whether I am canvassing door-to-door or visiting residences for seniors and retirees.

b. In concrete terms, how do you plan to address this priority if elected?

The urgent issue in the Outaouais is the staff shortage. We have fewer health-care workers per capita than any other region because we do not train enough of them here and we lose many to the working conditions in Ontario. This is the reason for our wait times—the longest in Quebec—in both emergency rooms and surgery.

Continued on page 8

Avançons

avec
Mariana Mefleh
Pontiac

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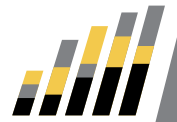
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Équipe
Christine Fréchette

Agente officielle Équipe Christine Fréchette - Coalition Avenir Québec



Québec ELECTIONS 2026



Quebec Provincial Elections: candidates answer newsroom questions

Continued from page 7

This shortfall of over a thousand positions is projected to widen to nearly three thousand by 2032 with the arrival of the CHAU (Outaouais University Hospital Centre).

This fall, the Cégep de l'Outaouais turned away 112 nursing applicants due to a lack of space, and the CAQ has been blocking its expansion project for five years. The Quebec Liberal Party will launch construction on this project to train more health-care staff right here in the region.

More importantly, the PLQ proposes—through legislation passed during its first term—wage parity with Ontario for staff in the Outaouais public health and social services network, with parity maintained over time through indexation. This is essential for attracting and retaining staff. Our region needs solutions tailored to its specific reality. I am making this a solemn commitment.

We also want to roll out a public, walk-in telehealth platform. This is not intended to replace your doctor, but rather to improve access for minor needs (such as prescription renewals or medication adjustments) and to make mental health resources available more quickly.

In the Outaouais, we pay our taxes to Quebec just like everyone else. It is time we received the services we are entitled to.

2. Minority communities and institutions in Quebec

a. How do you intend to protect minority communities in Quebec?

By protecting the rights of all Quebecers. Defending minority rights is part of the job description for an MNA representing the Outaouais. The Quebec Liberal Party fundamentally believes that we do not need to infringe upon anyone's rights to protect the French language. Yet, that has been the CAQ's approach for the past eight years. In our region—a bilingual area situated on the border—the English-speaking community has been rooted here for generations and is an integral part of our identity.

b. What would this mean in concrete terms for institutions such as schools?

Our commitment is clear: to maintain the current proportions of the French and English college networks, while preserving the freedom of adults to choose their post-secondary education, subject to available space. In practical terms, an adult should not be denied access to their program of choice. The recent proposal by the CAQ and the PQ—which would prevent Francophones from attending adult education or vocational training programs in English—runs counter to this principle and must be abandoned.

This approach also allows our institutions, such as Heritage College, to continue evolving alongside the region. We must also protect our English-language schools—such as those in the Western Quebec School Board—which serve as true pillars of the community.

3. Democracy and journalism in Quebec

a. In your view, what is the future of democracy in Quebec?

Quebec possesses all the tools for a healthy, open democracy: institutions worth protecting, an accountable government, and independent media. However, we cannot take this for granted. Candidates have a role to play by participating in local debates and answering questions from local journalists. We must also remain vigilant against fake news and foreign interference—very real threats facing all major democracies—and work with the federal government and other provinces to counter them.

b. In your view, how should the provincial government support journalism and the long-term viability of local media?

First, by recognizing that citizens rely on local, independent media for information. These outlets reach people directly in communities across Quebec—such as here thanks to The West Quebec Post. Consequently, local and independent media should receive their fair share of government advertising. A strong local press means a healthy democracy.

Anne-Marie Couturier — Conservative Party of Quebec (PCQ)

Did not respond.

Paul Fauteux — Parti Québécois (PQ)

Did not respond.

Mariève Forest — Québec solidaire (QS)

See Québec Solidaire's political team responses given by Pontiac candidate Bianca Baldo.

Suzanne Tremblay — Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), Incumbent

See the Coalition Avenir Québec's political team responses given by Pontiac candidate Mariana Mefleh.

CHAPLEAU

Denis Charron — Conservative Party of Quebec (PCQ)

Did not respond.

Michel Langevin — Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ)

According to residents, what is their number one priority when you go door to door during the election campaign?

The issue that clearly appears to be the top priority in my conversations with residents

is health care. After visiting several thousand homes, people have shared stories about their experiences and disappointments when loved ones have needed health-care services.

Many of these stories describe the inability of health-care professionals to take care of patients quickly and effectively. People talk about endless waits in emergency rooms. Several have told us that they now seek treatment in Ontario, while others turn to private health care.

How do you plan to address this priority concretely if you are elected?

The PLQ is proposing several regional measures to improve access to primary care, including pay parity for all health-care workers across the Outaouais region with workers in Ontario. Staff retention is the major issue at the heart

of the region's health-care challenges. What we are missing are nurses.

We will also commit to constructing a fourth floor at the Félix-Leclerc campus of Cégep de l'Outaouais during our first term. This year, the Cégep turned away 112 candidates who wanted to enroll in nursing.

The CAQ's promise to reduce emergency-room wait times has been a resounding failure. We therefore believe that the telemedicine proposed by the PLQ would be an appropriate measure to reduce wait times in the region's emergency rooms. In some minor cases, this approach would make it easier to consult a health-care specialist. Statistics show that far too many patients go to emergency rooms because they have no other options.

How do you plan to protect minority communities in Quebec?

I believe we need to stop treating minority communities in our society as competitors. In Chapleau, people talk to me a lot about French and protecting the language. That is important, but protecting French should not come at the expense of minorities.

There can be coexistence and a balance to achieve. There is no need to infringe on minority rights, as the CAQ has done in recent years.

What would this mean concretely for institutions such as schools?

We believe the CAQ's proposal to prevent Francophone students from attending English-language CEGEPs restricts students' access to education.

As adults, the role of the state should be to promote education and allow our young people to broaden their horizons.

The PLQ would allow CEGEP students to choose the language in which they wish to pursue their education.

In your view, what is the future of democracy in Quebec?

As a trained journalist, I believe we are fortunate in Quebec. We have a genuine

democracy, as well as independent traditional media. I believe

journalism and the media should be encouraged in every part of the province, while maintaining a transparent democratic process.

During an election campaign, for example, it is important for local media to provide journalistic space to candidates from all parties so that the public can make a more informed choice ahead of the election.

In your view, how should the provincial government support journalism and the long-term sustainability of local media?

I see the difficulties facing several local media outlets as they struggle to survive in a constantly changing environment. Local media need to receive their fair share of government advertising investments, as well as financial support through government programs.

Media outlets have a responsibility to put forward innovative tools and platforms to improve the quality of both their products and their journalism.

In this context, governments should support them to preserve journalistic neutrality as well as our democracy.

Mathieu Lévesque — Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), Incumbent

See the Coalition Avenir Québec's political team responses given by Pontiac candidate Mariana Mefleh.

Meixia Maltais — Parti Québécois (PQ)

Did not respond.

Doryan Pansanel — Québec solidaire (QS)

See Québec Solidaire's political team responses given by Pontiac candidate Bianca Baldo.

PAPINEAU

Linda Gauthier — Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ)

See the Coalition Avenir Québec's political team responses given by Pontiac candidate Mariana Mefleh.

Michel Kadri — Conservative Party of Quebec (PCQ)

Did not respond.

Isabelle Millette — Parti Québécois (PQ)

Did not respond.

Benoît Renaud — Québec solidaire (QS)

See Québec Solidaire's political team responses given by Pontiac candidate Bianca Baldo.

Isabelle Sabourin — Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ)

Did not respond.

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with classic rock band "Lower Road." -Oct. 10: Karaoke night. -Oct. 17: Dance with the 70s/80s rock band "Allez Cats". Info: Aylmerlegion33@gmail.com.

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Améliorer l'accès aux soins en anglais : arrivée d'une guide accompagnatrice en Outaouais



Tashi Farmilo

Le Centre de ressources Connexions a récemment annoncé la nomination d'Andrea Liosatos au poste de guide accompagnatrice de patients d'expression anglaise pour la région de l'Outaouais. Ce poste a été créé afin d'aider la population anglophone de la région à mieux s'orienter dans le système de santé et de services sociaux québécois.

L'arrivée de Mme Liosatos s'inscrit dans les actions menées par le gouvernement provincial pour améliorer l'accès aux soins de santé, aux services sociaux et aux informations médicales en anglais pour les communautés anglophones du Québec. En effet, ces personnes sont souvent confrontées à la complexité du système de santé provincial, dans lequel elles doivent naviguer dans une langue qui n'est pas la leur. Les guides accompagnateurs viennent donc remédier à ces difficultés persistantes.

Les accompagnateurs de patients sont des alliés précieux pour un accès équitable aux soins de santé, veillant à ce que les patients obtiennent des services et des



informations en anglais lorsqu'ils en font la demande. En outre, ils offrent un soutien moral essentiel aux patients ainsi qu'à leurs familles.

La langue joue un rôle fondamental dans le continuum des soins de santé, car elle constitue le principal moyen

de communiquer les symptômes, les diagnostics, la planification des traitements et les consignes médicales à suivre. Une communication claire et comprise par le patient est en effet étroitement liée à une plus grande sécurité, à une réduction des erreurs médicales et à de meilleurs résultats en matière de santé.

Plus concrètement, les principales fonctions des guides accompagnateurs de patients d'expression anglaise sont les suivantes : aider les personnes anglophones à s'orienter dans le système de santé et de services sociaux (p. ex. fixer des rendez-vous ou remplir des formulaires); offrir aux patients un accompagnement et un soutien émotionnel; les aiguiller vers les ressources communautaires disponibles en anglais; défendre leurs besoins et

collaborer avec les professionnels de la santé; tenir à jour des dossiers clients précis et documenter toutes les interactions; les aider à organiser leurs déplacements liés aux soins interrégionaux.

Le Centre de ressources Connexions, situé au 67, rue du Couvent à Aylmer, est un organisme sans but lucratif voué au bien-être et à la vitalité de la communauté anglophone de l'Outaouais. Il reçoit un soutien financier du Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise et du Réseau communautaire de santé et de services sociaux (RCSSS) pour offrir ses services d'aiguillage et de santé.

On peut joindre Mme Liosatos par téléphone au 819-557-0615 ou par courriel à l'adresse a_liosatos@centreconnexions.org. Trad. : MET

Union president says drones and violence are rising at Hull's aging jail



Tashi Farmilo
Local Journalism Initiative

Drone smuggling, violence and overcrowding are getting worse inside the Hull Detention Centre, the president of Quebec's correctional officers' union, Mathieu Lavoie, told the Aylmer Bulletin, pointing to years of underinvestment and staffing shortages at the aging Gatineau jail as the province prepares to tighten inmate discipline rules on September 28.

Lavoie, who heads the Syndicat des agents de la paix en services correctionnels du Québec (SAPSCQ-CSN), says the violence officers deal with has been building for years. "For years now, across the whole network, we've seen a constant rise in violence between inmates, violence against staff, and psychological violence too, the threats, the intimidation," he said. He argues the province's official numbers understate it because of how a serious injury is defined. "For them, it only counts as a serious injury if it risked permanent damage or death, and to me that's a way of trivializing the violence, because if the person doesn't die, it gets minimized."

The threat he raises most urgently comes from the air. "We've been raising the alarm about drones for a long time, and it gets worse month after month," Lavoie said.

What was once occasional in the regions now happens at some institutions "every day, several times a day," he said, with drugs, cellphones and weapons dropped over the walls. He describes a trade run for profit. "It's a lucrative market, it's organized by the street gangs, and it lets them finance their criminal activity on the outside." A smuggled phone, in his telling, is more dangerous than it looks. "A cellphone can seem harmless to the public, but in detention it lets organized crime keep running its trafficking, intimidate witnesses and victims, and set up deals on the outside." At Hull, the trouble concentrates in the oldest part of the jail. "We see it mainly in the old section, where the windows get broken so packages dropped by drone can be pulled inside," he said. By his estimate, officers stop only a fraction of it. "We seize maybe 30 to 35 per cent of what comes in, and that's really just the tip of the iceberg, because that's only what we can see and act on."

Crowding, he says, makes the rest harder to control. "When we have to move someone for security reasons and there's no room, we lose our capacity to manage the population inside the facility, and that's the whole network, not just here," Lavoie said.

Continued on page 11

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Union president says drones and violence are rising at Hull's aging jail

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He estimates that people held before trial make up "around two thirds" of those inside. Provincial statistics show remand detainees are now the largest and fastest-growing group in Quebec's jails, up nearly 12 per cent in a year and more than half since 2019-2020.

Staffing runs beneath all of it, Lavoie says. Hull holds up better than many institutions, in his view, but the wider system has thinned since the spring. "We're seeing more absences, people off on sick leave or after workplace accidents, physical and psychological," he said. The union reported about 250 vacant positions and more than 300 officers on leave, roughly a fifth of its members, in late 2025, along with about a hundred resignations a year. Support for officers is expanding, he said, "but specialized resources aren't easy to find."

The state of the building is where he keeps landing, and where he is most direct about what he wants. "The old section of Hull is falling apart. There's water getting into the walls, they've had to put up netting to stop the bricks from falling, and it needs major investment fast. We have to stop deciding that the correctional system isn't worth investing in," he said. He also described a strained relationship between officers and management as a live source of tension inside the jail. A project to repair, modernize and expand the site, estimated in 2024 at more than \$50 million, remains in the province's infrastructure plan at the study stage.

The Ministry of Interior Security gives a steadier account. It says its facilities remain safe for staff, inmates, visitors and the surrounding public, and that serious-injury incidents across its jails have in fact fallen, from 49 in 2024-2025 to 20 in 2025-2026. The ministry names drones, contraband phones and violent behaviour as its leading security concerns, and says it is meeting them by securing yards and windows, gradually rolling out drone-detection equipment, regulating the airspace above its jails, analyzing intelligence, working with police and reinforcing the disciplinary process taking effect September 28. Its figures from earlier in 2026 recorded 361 drone

Mathieu Lavoie, president of Quebec's correctional officers' union, says drone smuggling, violence and overcrowding are worsening at the aging Hull Detention Centre, while the Ministry of Interior Security maintains its jails are safe and reports serious-injury incidents falling. (TF)

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SYNDICAT DES AGENTS DE LA PAIX EN SERVICES CORRECTIONNELS DU QUÉBEC



sightings across the network between January and March, with 81 per cent of packages recovered, and a single March operation across seven jails, Hull among them, seized about \$676,700 in contraband.

On the pressures Lavoie describes, the ministry's position is more measured. It puts Hull's capacity at 232 as of January 31 but does not release occupancy rates by institution, citing security, and it reports no significant staffing shortfall at the jail, describing the Outaouais as a strong pool of candidates. It frames Hull first as a place of rehabilitation, pointing to a reintegration fund behind addiction, suicide-prevention and education programs, to Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups, and to job training in construction safety, road flagging and bicycle repair. Health care, including mental health, falls to Santé Québec, with the jail referring inmates to specialized services such as the Pierre-Janet hospital and drawing on an in-house suicide-prevention team, reintegration officers and a chaplain.

The work is unfolding under a renamed department. In April, Premier Christine Fréchette's government

replaced the Ministry of Public Security with the Ministry of Interior Security, led by Deputy Premier Ian Lafrenière, and says its mission for correctional services has not changed. For Lavoie, what happens at Hull turns on whether governments are willing to spend on a place most people never think about. "Investing in prisons isn't popular, it's not a vote-getter for politicians, but it's a necessary evil, it's an essential service in the justice system," he said. "These are people who are inside because they're considered too dangerous to be outside."



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Mulgrave-et-Derry campground alarms residents



Abigail Chénier
Special to the West Quebec Post

Lalièvre Nature, a branch of Terrains Lalièvre, opened their inaugural rustic camping sites earlier this year in Duhamel and Mulgrave-et-Derry, two communities in the MRC de Papineau.

"We couldn't refuse it," says André Harvey, mayor of Mulgrave-et-Derry. "[The campground] was authorized under the territorial zoning, as it's a 'recreational tourism' area." Harvey also indicated that this project fit under a larger vision for the area, one that was in place long before he entered office in September of last year. The question wasn't if the campground should exist, he said, but what rules should be put in place to protect the area, as there were no municipal regulations for campgrounds before this.

With approximately a dozen out of 22 possible sites open on Lac-la-Blanche, Mulgrave-et-Derry, Lalièvre real estate director Pierre-Marc Beaulieu stated that they were "very proud" of what they accomplished this year, despite concerns expressed by residents throughout the season.

Although many residents say they don't have any issues with a campground in theory, they are worried about the consequences it could have if not done properly and safely. "My concerns are not about the existence of the campground itself, but about how it is being operated," says Misha Kropp, who lives on the Lac-la-Blanche waterway. "Public safety, environmental protection, traffic, waste management, and respecting the Municipality's own planning documents should all be priorities."

"It's such a volatile area," says Mulgrave resident Stephen Berndt. "Human activity could devastate the lake." Berndt, having worked for the Ministry of Natural Resources as a park warden for over 10 years, points out that it's not only pollution that has to be worried about, but also cross-contaminants from other lakes. "It's avoidable in a small, contained lake." He also points out that the campground is located in a pine forest,



Locals listed numerous concerns regarding Lalièvre Nature's new rustic camping site, some of which include fire risks, waste management and pollution, and dangerous parking habits. (AB)

PHOTO : ABIGAIL CHENIER

where fires could easily get out of control. Not only would these incidents affect the flora of the area, but the fauna as well. There have been increased bear sightings in the area, and it has been claimed that quantities of fish have decreased since last year, but whether that relates directly to the campground is unknown. As Berndt points out, many simply buy a tent and camp, without realizing the specific needs and characteristics of the area in which they are planning on staying. It's crucial, he says, to have education, enforcement, and security for projects like this to work.

This, however, is exactly what Lalièvre and the municipality seem to have in mind. With an extensive list of rules on Lalièvre's website and special directives during wildfire seasons, both of which were tested and worked on throughout the summer, Beaulieu says in a statement for Lalièvre that their primary goal is to "give back access to the territory in a safe way." So far, both he and Harvey seem to think that this is exactly what has been done.

Even though many of the hiccups have been resolved, such as the issue of uncollected garbage that arose in late July, residents still aren't completely at ease with the idea. There are worries surrounding unsafe parking on the 315, which some speculate could one day leave someone seriously injured. Furthermore, many claim the undertaking of this project lacked a certain level of transparency. Despite having been in the works, at both the corporate and municipal levels, since the early months of 2026, residents were informed only a week before the site's opening on June 19, many by a panel posted outside the campground on Route 315. Many residents felt it came out of nowhere. According to Sandra Miller, the project was raised at a citizen's meeting on June 13, where Harvey indicated it was "almost a done deal." Miller, who says she's all for the campground and giving families the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors safely, agrees that communication could have been better handled, suggesting that there could have been a townhall meeting. "It is a small municipality [...] and most people just want to be informed and their voices heard," she says. When asked if he would consider holding such a meeting before the municipality renews Lalièvre's permit for next year, he indicated that there was no need. Both he and Beaulieu wanted to stress to concerned residents that if there were any serious issues, to submit formal complaints to either the municipality or Lalièvre directly, and they would do their best to resolve it in a timely fashion.

For anyone interested in staying at one of these sights, they will be open until halfway through October. Beaulieu is confident they will reopen next year for the summer of 2027

A local petition supports the bill that could finally protect Gatineau Park



Tashi Farmilo
LJ Reporter

A petition started by a resident of Mayo is urging people across the Outaouais to get behind Bill S-229, a Senate bill that would hand Gatineau Park its first real legal protection by writing its borders into federal law and making conservation the priority in how the park is run. Launched by John McDonnell and open for signatures on the House of Commons website until October 29. The petition is in support of one of the region's best known green spaces — the forest and lakes that span Chelsea, La Pêche, Pontiac and Gatineau.

For all its trails, lookouts and swimming spots, Gatineau Park has almost no standing in law. Its boundaries are not set out in any Act of Parliament. They are drawn instead in a management plan produced by the National Capital Commission, a document that can be changed without vote. In practice that means chunks of the park can be sold, developed or handed off without Parliament ever weighing in, and the people who manage it have thin authority to protect its wildlife and habitat. The petition points to more than 90 endangered plant species and 50 endangered animal species living within those unofficial lines.

Bill S-229, sponsored by Senator Rosa Galvez, sets out to fix that. It would give the park formal legal status for the first time, lock its boundaries into legislation, and make ecological health the guiding principle behind every management decision. It



A petition is rallying the Outaouais behind Bill S-229, a Senate bill that would give Gatineau Park its first legal protection by enshrining its boundaries in federal law and making conservation the priority in how the park is managed, before signatures close on October 29, 2026. (TF)

PHOTO: TASHI FARMILO

would bar the sale of public land inside the park apart from narrow exceptions, force any future boundary change or major land transfer to go through Parliament, and require closer consultation with the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation, on whose unceded territory the park sits, and with the surrounding municipalities.

Understanding why the petition matters means understanding how slowly a bill like this travels. Every bill has to clear the same gauntlet twice, once in each chamber. In the Senate, where S-229 lives, it went through first reading, a formality that simply introduces it, then second reading, where senators debated the

idea itself and voted to keep it alive on April 15. It now waits at the committee stage, in the hands of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, where members can call witnesses, pick over the wording line by line, and propose changes. If it survives committee and a report stage, it faces a final third reading vote in the Senate. Only then does it cross to the House of Commons and begin the entire climb again, first reading through third reading. Once both chambers pass the exact same text, it goes to the Governor General for royal assent and becomes law.

That long road is the whole reason this campaign exists. S-229 is not a government bill, so it does not get guaranteed time or priority. It competes for the scraps of the parliamentary calendar reserved for senators' and private members' business, which makes it slow and fragile. Any bill that has not received royal assent dies the moment Parliament is prorogued or an election is called, forcing supporters to start over from nothing. More than a dozen attempts to protect Gatineau Park over close to two decades have collapsed for exactly that reason. Every stage cleared is ground that can be lost, which is why backers argue that visible public pressure now is what keeps the bill from stalling and quietly expiring like its predecessors.

The petition is a way for the people who live closest to the park to tell Parliament that its protection cannot wait for a fourteenth try. Petition e-7579: www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-7579