

OFFICIAL **BILINGUALISM** is **FORCED** **BILINGUALISM**

The case against
government
imposed French
language laws in
Canada

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One of the great Canadian political myths promoted by both federal and provincial politicians is the following one: "Canada is a bilingual country."

Nothing could be further from the truth.

An individual is said to be bilingual if he or she is capable of speaking fluently in two languages. These languages do not necessarily have to be English or French; they can be *any* two languages. Clearly, in this sense, a great many Canadians are indeed bilingual. Usually (though not always!) with English as one of their languages of *choice*, the other language may be Italian, German, Dutch, Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, Spanish, French, a North American native language, or even perhaps some local dialect few would understand.

But the *majority* of Canadians are *unilingual*; that is, a *majority* of Canadians speak only *one* language of choice. And here's where it gets tricky: Among *unilingual* Canadians, there are *two politically identifiable* languages: English and French, which is why the myth that "Canada is bilingual" came into being. However, given Canada's cultural and political heritage, this should not be surprising. But neither should it be cause for the terrible division, animosity, expense, and public contempt created by something so innocent sounding as "official bilingualism".

Unfortunately in Canada, and now in Ontario, "official bilingualism" has become a thorny and emotional political issue.

That's because in *theory*, politicians call it *official bilingualism*; in *practice*, it is *forced bilingualism*.

It is *force* when the government *forces* manufacturers to package their products in *two* languages, thus driving the price of the product up, and preventing many other products from entering the Canadian marketplace. (Canadians end up paying with higher prices and fewer choices.)

It is *force* when the government *forces* taxpayers to fund French and English television and radio networks in areas where the demand simply does not justify such services. (Canadians end up paying for nothing.) It is *force* when, in Quebec, the government *forces* businesses to display signs in *French only*, and threatens to fine and jail businesspeople who do not comply.

Across the country everywhere, Canadians are *forced* to pay for and support a massive, unjustifiable policy of "official bilingualism" under the guise of granting two different languages equal *status*, when the real intention is to promote equal use.

Recognizing this, it becomes apparent that *unless "official bilingualism" is abandoned in favour of freedom of choice in language, the future of English-French relations in Canada will be doomed to a bitter never-ending political conflict resulting in increased intolerance, division, racism, and even violence. And taxpayers will get to foot the bill.*

Freedom Party believes that the *purpose of government* is to *protect* your freedom of choice, *not* to restrict it.

Government has no business dictating language policy to anyone. Government *does* have a right however (as do all individuals), to choose the language it uses on the basis of what best serves its customers. There are legitimate reasons for a government to designate an "official" language --- but only for *government administration and affairs*. Obviously, it is desirable that the designated "official" language be generally understood by the people of the jurisdiction.

But to impose a language --- regardless of which language --- on individuals whose language of choice is not the one being imposed is morally and ethically reprehensible.

It is a disgraceful irony indeed that the same politicians who force us to support *two* differing standards in language so recently argued for the necessity of imposing *one* language of measurement (metric) on the nation --- also at a tremendous cost to consumers, businesspeople, and taxpayers --- and also a "language" that was not in popular use. How does it make sense to *force two* official standards in spoken language, while *forcing one* official standard in the language of measurement? The simple answer is: it *doesn't* make sense.

Similarly, forced bilingualism (French) is now coming to Ontario despite the fact that the population of Ontario is comprised of individuals of every imaginable ethnic and linguistic background. But instead of acknowledging this reality, *Bill 8* was passed giving equal "status" to another language that *80% of the population does not use or understand.*

There could be justification, in certain areas, for offering government services in French if Ontario's French-speaking sector was unable to understand English, but in the vast majority of cases this is not so.

Furthermore it is quite likely that all future generations of Franco-Ontarians will be able to speak English even if they chose to continue using French as their other language of choice.

Because it is being politically *forced*, Ontario's policy of "official bilingualism" creates an artificial need for French fluency by government employees and burdens the already over-taxed taxpayer with the cost of duplicating services. (This also creates unnecessary waste and pollution!)

Another hidden cost to all will be in the quality of people hired by the government, as a major prerequisite will be English/French bilingualism, rather than having the best qualifications and ability to actually do the job in question.

As a result, taxpayers will get cheated out of even more value for their tax dollar.

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It is regrettable that politicians have such contempt for their constituents that they will not even allow them the freedom to choose the language in which they conduct their affairs or which they wish to support with their consumer and tax dollars. But it is important to realize that "official bilingualism" would never have become a political issue in the first place if more voters became concerned with restricting the actions of their governments rather than with giving their governments more power to continue restricting the actions of citizens.

Support YOUR freedom of choice in language by supporting FREEDOM PARTY today! After all, freedom of choice is what we're all about!

If you would like to know more about the Freedom Party of Ontario, please write us at the address below or call us by phone.

Freedom Party believes that the purpose of government is to protect your freedom of choice, not to restrict it, and we offer written material on all issues of importance to Ontarians and Canadians.

The Freedom Party is an officially registered Ontario political party, so your contributions are tax-creditable!

Write us:

FREEDOM PARTY,

P. O. Box 2214, Stn. A.,

London, Ontario, N6A 4E3

or call us at:

(519)433-8612



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