

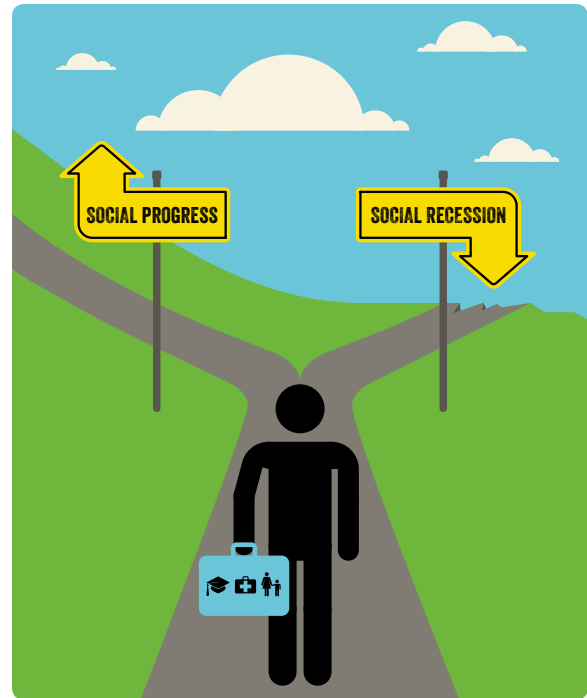
**IMAGINE
MOVING
FORWARD**

SOCIAL PROGRESS IS UP TO US.



CHOICES WITHIN OUR REACH

Politics is shifting, to put it mildly, from the art of making choices to the art of convincing us that there aren't any other choices – TINA, There Is No Alternative – dragging us deeper and deeper into a “social recession”. Combined with the current fad for right-wing ideas mixed in with calls for change, you have the context in which the CSN has decided to launch a grassroots education campaign, in particular with members of its affiliated unions. For representatives of the CSN, the claim that certain choices are now beyond our reach is false. Social justice, equality and equity are not luxuries that we cannot afford and that we must do without—they are values that must guide our actions.



LIFELONG INCOME SECURITY

Declining unemployment rates, the participation of more women in the labour market and narrower wage gaps between women and men are all signs of better employment conditions in recent decades. But the situation is far from perfect.

Many are still unemployed. Atypical jobs are on the rise, often associated with precarious, contingent working conditions. Raises in pay are low – often barely keeping pace with inflation – and more and more people are relying on credit to maintain their level of consumption. Many people are carrying disturbingly large debt loads.

Labour laws and the programs that make up the social safety net need to be strengthened. The minimum wage is not enough to provide a way out of poverty, even for someone working full-time. Growing numbers of workers are suffering substantial reductions in income when they lose their jobs or retire. Employers are shrugging off their responsibilities, and governments are complicit.

Despite the adoption of the Act to combat poverty and social exclusion in December 2002, the level of social assistance benefits for persons deemed unfit for work is not enough to cover basic necessities. Kept in extreme poverty, it is hard for people like them who are just trying to survive to look for work.

Although some groups of workers are doing fairly well, this is clearly not the case for everyone. Does the pursuit of more flexibility necessarily have to mean more precarious, uncertain employment for sizeable numbers of workers?

Shouldn't governments and employers take much more responsibility for ensuring income security when times are hard or when people retire?

WE NEED
STRONGER LABOUR
LAWS AND SOCIAL
SAFETY NET
PROGRAMS.

Basing economic growth on precarious employment and working conditions and minimal social protection is not a viable long-term solution. It's a strategy that leads to growing inequalities and a loss of social cohesion.



TELLING STATISTICS

- In 2012, there were 335,900 workers without jobs in Québec, for an unemployment rate of 7.8%. When discouraged workers, part-time workers who would have preferred to work full-time and those waiting to be called back to work were added in, the rate jumped to 10.4%.
- More than one in three (38.1%) of the employed had jobs that were part-time or temporary, were self-employed or worked for a placement agency.
- From 2010 to 2011, use of food banks went up by 17%.
- Between 2008 and 2011, the average annual rate of growth in the median hourly rate of pay, excluding inflation, was only 0.6%.
- More than 60% of workers in Québec don't have any supplemental pension plan.
- In 2012, the debt load of Canadian households reached a record 164.6% of disposable income. (Because housing prices, and therefore mortgages, are lower in Québec, the debt load of households in Québec was approximately 142% of disposable income.)
- In Québec, approximately 6% of employees work for minimum wage, but almost 20% benefit from any increase in the minimum wage.

MORE THAN 60% OF WORKERS IN QUÉBEC DON'T HAVE ANY SUPPLEMENTAL PENSION PLAN.

OUR PROPOSALS FOR LIFELONG INCOME SECURITY

- *Increase the minimum wage and change the Labour Standards Act to put an end to differences in rates of pay based on employment status.*
- *Enact legislation promoting the right for all workers to be covered by a pension plan to which each employer would contribute.*

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic crisis in 2008 made it very clear that a strategy based on over-consumption relying largely on household debt is unsustainable – for the economy, for society and for the environment. We need to imagine ways of working that benefit everyone and that bring together economic and social development, environmental protection and the creation of quality jobs instead of pitting them against each other.

A strong manufacturing sector is crucial to any sound economy. It is an important source of quality jobs. But this sector has been hit especially hard in the past decade. Factors that explain the major decline of employment in this sector include not only a higher dollar, trade liberalization, competition from low-wage countries like China and India, technological progress, but also the race to the bottom in taxation as countries compete to attract investment.

A strategy based mainly on extracting natural resources without requiring any processing in Québec is certainly no way to ensure sustainable economic development here.

We have been told repeatedly for years that we have to give “the market” free rein, that government must limit

itself to creating a hospitable environment for investment: tax breaks, minimal regulation, solid infrastructure and a labour force qualified and ready to work. But this hasn’t produced the promised results!

Québec has to adopt a genuine industrial policy that gives government a proactive role, one that encourages economic activity with positive spinoffs for a maximum of businesses, regions and people.

TELLING STATISTICS

- Between 2002 and 2011, the manufacturing sector in Québec lost 160,000 jobs.
- Some regions were especially hard-hit: Montréal (56,700), the Montérégie (30,200), Chaudière Appalaches (10,600) and the Estrie (10,300). The Bas-Saint-Laurent and the Laurentides were the only regions that registered an increase in manufacturing jobs in the past decade (+1,500 and 1,800 respectively).
- In 2012, the average weekly wage in manufacturing was \$874.19, compared to \$750.09 in the service sector and \$575 in retail trade.
- From 2003 to 2008, the Québec government collective a total of \$255.8 million in mining royalties, while giving the same industry at least \$624 million in tax breaks.



OUR PROPOSALS FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

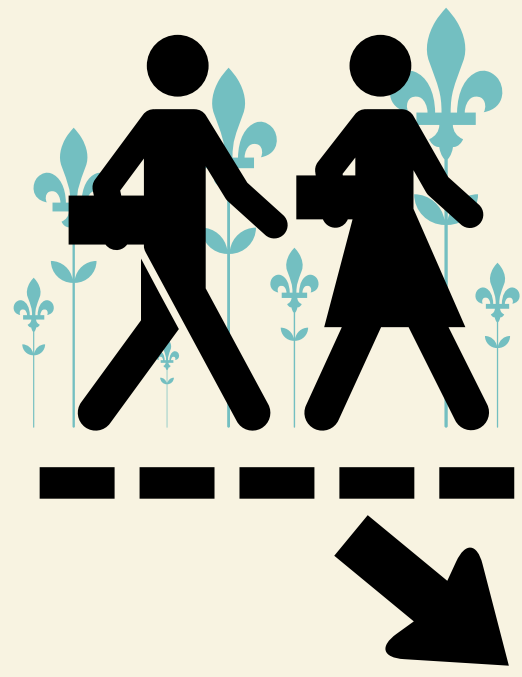
- *Develop and implement an industrial policy to revive Québec’s manufacturing sector, based on the principles of sustainable development.*
- *Establish measures to make the transformation of our natural resources in Québec a government priority as a way of stimulating the creation of quality jobs and regional economic development.*

MAINTAINING AND DEVELOPING OUR PUBLIC SERVICES

Over the past four decades, we have developed a whole range of public services based on the principles of universality, fairness, accessibility and quality. In addition to ensuring greater equality among people, these services have contributed to economic development in all regions of Québec.

Québec society has changed, of course. With an aging population, changes in families, scientific progress and changes in the world of work, new needs are emerging. How can we provide satisfactory assistance to the aged as their independence declines? How can we support families and achieve a better balance between work and parental responsibilities? How can we guarantee access to education at all levels of the education system and in all regions of Québec? How do we meet the challenges of access to and funding of our public services?

Recent history proves that leaving it up to the private sector and individual responsibility is no solution in terms of accessibility, fairness, quality or costs. In fact, privatization and the user-pay principle both stem from ideological positions that seek to shrink the role of government. Better public services depend on reinvestment and government commitment.

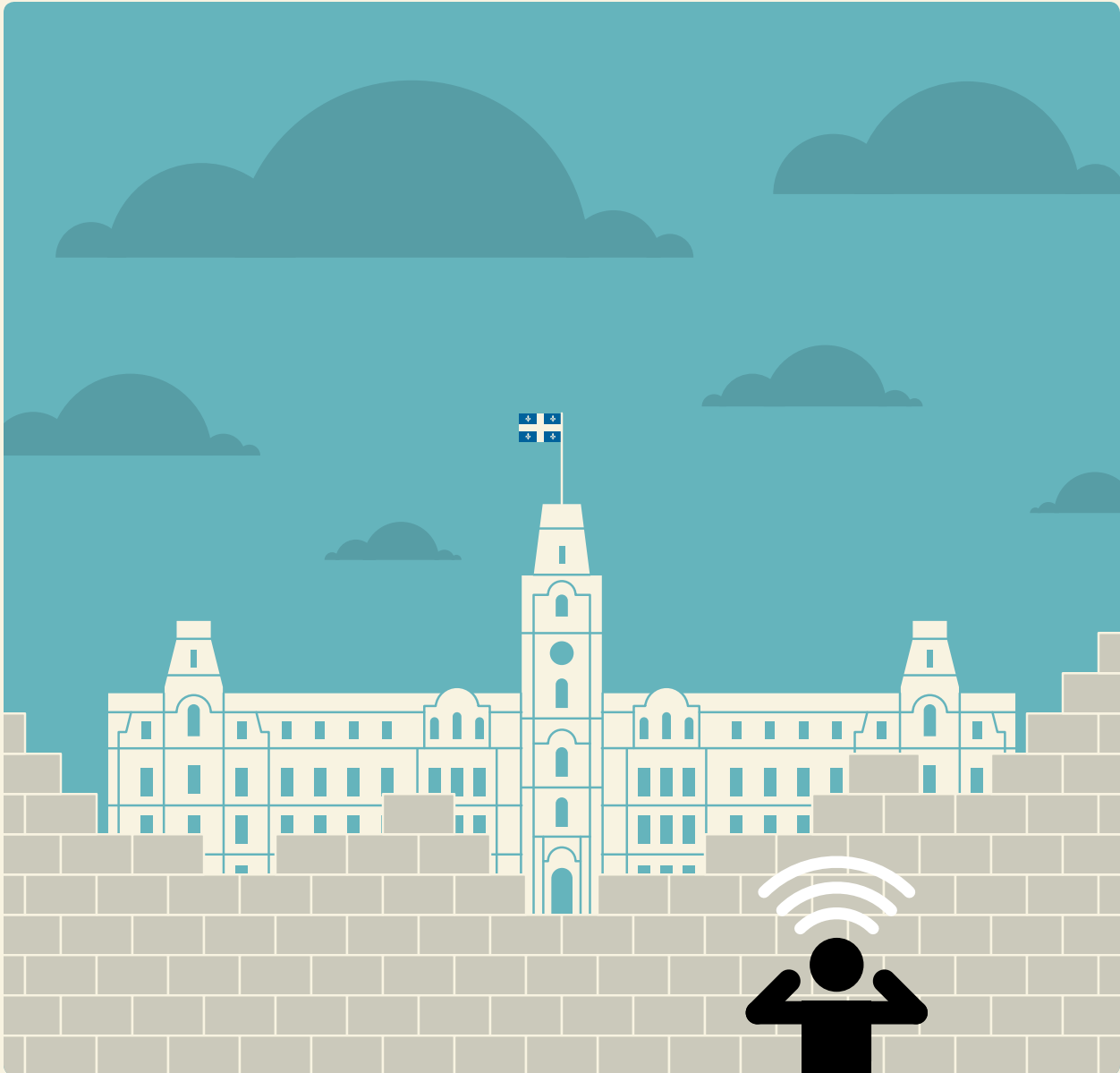


TELLING STATISTICS

- In 2011, people 65 or older accounted for 15.8% of the population of Québec. According to estimates from the Institut de la statistique du Québec, this proportion will rise to 23% in 2026 and 27% in 2041. In the next 30 years, the number of people aged 85 or older will increase from 158,582 to 505,944.
- In Québec, only 17% of the funding for long-term care is spent on home care and support services. The corresponding figure is 32% in the Netherlands, 41% in Sweden, 42% in Germany, 43% in France, 50% in Norway, 52% in Finland and 73% in Denmark.
- A study by Pierre Fortin, Luc Godbout and Suzie St-Cerny using 2008 data found that childcare services at lower rates encouraged 70,000 more mothers to hold jobs, adding \$5 billion to Québec's GDP. The return for the Québec government was \$104 for each \$100 in childcare subsidies.

OUR PROPOSALS FOR THE ELIGIBILITY AND EXPANSION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

- *Expand early childhood childcare services that ensure "one child, one space", focusing on the development of spaces in early childhood centres (CPEs) and the network of home childcare providers recognized by a co-ordinating office.*
- *Ensure accessibility at all levels of education, better support for students with learning problems, anti-dropout measures, and continued broad and diversified offer of training outside urban centres.*
- *Develop a continuum of services for seniors with reduced independence.*



STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Québec population's disillusionment with politicians is troubling and undermines democratic life. The political parties certainly aren't helping. Their programs and promises often don't last beyond an election campaign.

That being said, an elected representative government remains an important pillar of our democratic system. Unfortunately, from one election to the next, voter participation is declining. Apart from cynicism, one of the reasons that encourages voters to abstain is

the certainty that their candidates have no chance of winning in the voters' ridings. Our first-past-the-post voting system causes major distortions between the popular vote and the number of seats won by each political party.



Furthermore, participation in democratic life can't be reduced to casting a ballot once every four years. Québec has always had a tradition of consultations and concerted action. The involvement of ordinary people and civil society groups is crucial to democratic vitality. Wouldn't our democracy be better off if we encouraged the involvement of a plurality of participants and the expression of viewpoints that are all too often absent in public debate and the decision-making process?

WHAT SOCIETY DO WE WANT TO LEAVE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS?

The idea is not to take away the government's role of being responsible for the general interests of society. In fact, this role must be strengthened if we are to avoid power being hijacked for the benefit of an elite defending its special interests. One of the factors facilitating the excesses, collusion and corruption revealed by the work of the Charbonneau Commission has certainly been the loss of expertise within government. Years of contracting-out, deteriorating working conditions and hiring restrictions have drastically reduced the government's capacity for action and weakened the defence of the interests of the population as a whole.

At the same time, a dogged insistence on balanced budgets and paying down the debt is subjecting us to an austerity program that is taking control of public debate and obscuring the real issues: What kind of society do we want to live in? What society do we want to leave for future generations?

Faced with what could lead to the destruction of our public services, we need a broad debate on government revenue and our tax system.

TELLING STATISTICS

- According to a survey published in La Presse in May 2010, 47% of voters described themselves as cynical or disillusioned.
- Voter turn-out in the last general provincial election on September 4, 2012 was 75%.
- In the last election, the (PQ) got 54 MNAs with 31.9% of the popular vote. The Liberal Party (PLQ) and Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) had 50 and 19 MNAs elected with 31.2% and 27.05% of the vote respectively.
- Program spending went up by an average of 5.6% annually from 2006 to 2010, 3% in 2010-2011, 2.5% in 2011-2012 and 1.9% in 2012-2013. In order to achieve a balanced budget in 2013-2014, the PQ government has undertaken to limit spending growth to 1.8% in 2013-2014 and 2.4% in 2014-2015, while giving tax breaks to companies that invest in major projects without tying them to any conditions for job creation.
- According to the ISQ, the rate of pay for a job in the public sector is an average of 11.2% lower than for the same job elsewhere. When overall remuneration (pay, hours worked, pensions and other benefits) is compared, unionized employees in the public sector earn an average of 13% less than unionized workers in the private sector.
- 28% of government revenue comes from individual income tax, 24% from consumption taxes, 22% from federal transfer payments, 9.3% from the health services fund (FSS, for Fonds des services de santé) and 6.5% from corporate taxes.

OUR PROPOSALS FOR STRONGER DEMOCRACY

- *Establish a mixed proportional representation system so that election results are aligned as closely as possible with the popular will expressed Québec-wide.*
- *Foster government that values and strengthens the participation of individuals and groups representative of civil society.*
- *Take back and preserve expertise within the government apparatus.*
- *Begin broad debate about government revenue and our tax system.*

A CAMPAIGN OF IDEAS

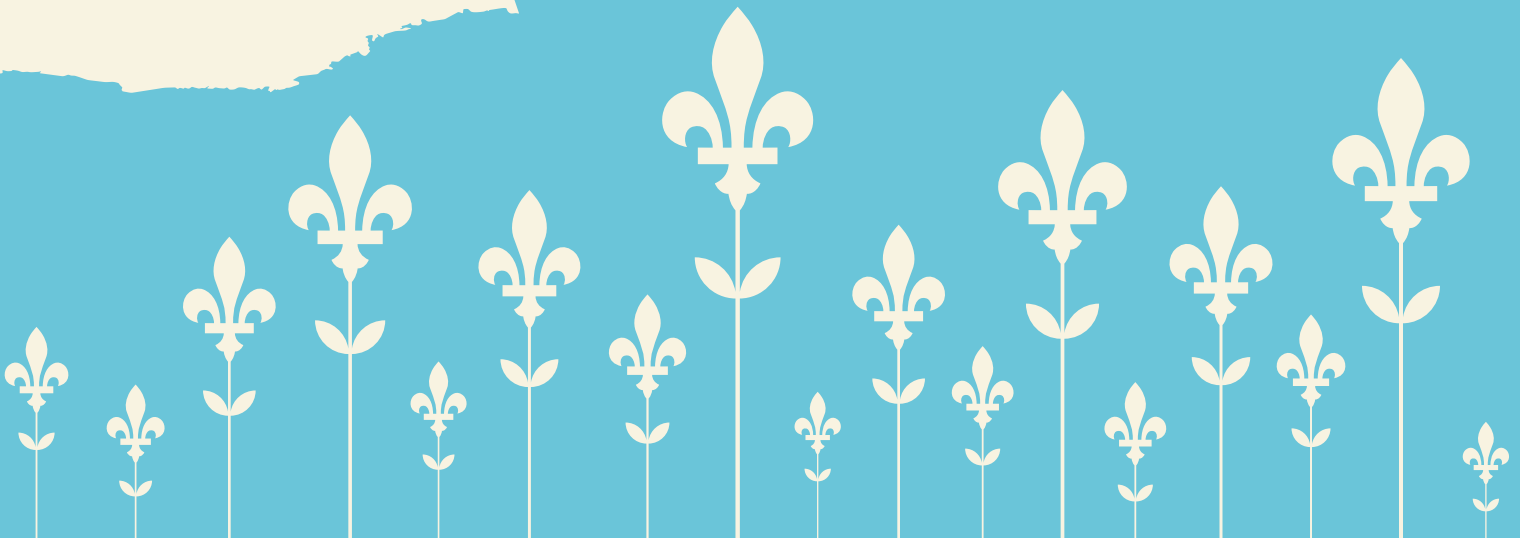
Right-wing ideas and neo-liberal ideology are the source of a simplistic vision of the role of government. Yet there is no denying that these ideas are taking root in Québec as well. This campaign must be an opportunity to demystify what the right says but also to be attentive to each other's concerns. It must help us discuss and debate economic, social and political issues that affect our members as well as Québec society in general.

We want political parties in Québec to take positions on the proposals contained in this document around four themes: lifelong income security, sustainable economic development, access to public services, and democracy and citizen participation. Together, we must put forward and advocate for these demands.





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PORTRAIT OF THE REGIONS OF QUEBEC

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN QUÉBEC REGIONS SINCE THE 2008 ECONOMIC CRISIS

Regions	Jobs in 2008	Jobs in 2012	Gains or (losses)
Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	35,700	36,500	800
Bas-Saint-Laurent	94,000	93,900	(100)
Capitale-Nationale	358,100	382,100	24,000
Chaudière-Appalaches	206,700	213,600	6,900
Estrie	149,100	146,300	(2,800)
Centre-du-Québec	115,100	105,500	(9,600)
Montérégie	718,900	754,600	35,700
Montréal	950,000	941,900	(8,100)
Laval	204,100	213,200	9,100
Lanaudière	223,500	240,500	17,000
Laurentides	270,000	299,700	29,700
Outaouais	196,100	196,500	400
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	68,600	69,900	1,300
Mauricie	116,700	112,900	(3,800)
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	124,100	126,000	1,900
Côte-Nord et Nord-du-Québec	49,800	51,200	1,400
Total for Québec	3,880,400	3,984,400	104,000

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN QUÉBEC REGIONS IN 2012

Regions	Full-time jobs	Part-time jobs	Part-time jobs as a proportion of total number of jobs
Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	30,000	6,400	17.5 %
Bas-Saint-Laurent	76,000	17,900	19.1 %
Capitale-Nationale	308,700	73,400	19.2 %
Chaudière-Appalaches	178,100	35,500	16.6 %
Estrie	114,900	31,400	21.5 %
Centre-du-Québec	84,800	20,700	19.6 %
Montérégie	618,400	136,200	18.0 %
Montréal	759,300	182,600	19.4 %
Laval	172,500	40,700	19.1 %
Lanaudière	193,300	47,500	19.8 %
Laurentides	238,700	61,000	20.4 %
Outaouais	164,300	32,200	16.4 %
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	58,800	11,100	15.9 %
Mauricie	90,800	22,200	19.7 %
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	100,100	25,900	20.6 %
Côte-Nord et Nord-du-Québec	42,400	8,800	17.2 %
Total for Québec	3,230,700	753,700	18.9 %

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey



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