

# WILLIAM JOHNSON



candidate for the

## Presidency of Alliance Quebec

980306 I propose to run for the presidency of Alliance Quebec, because I believe that English Quebec needs a strong voice, a clear voice, a voice of reason, a voice of conviction, a voice that can rally hundreds of thousands of English-speaking Quebecers of all ethnic origins, races or religions, a voice that can sway governments in Ottawa and Quebec City because it mobilizes all the forces of English-speaking Quebecers, a voice that can prevent the secession of Quebec because we, the citizens, will not permit it. Alliance Quebec must be, must become, that voice. English-speaking Quebec must be empowered. Alliance Quebec must become the vehicle and instrument of that empowerment. And I think I can help bring it about if many, many, English speaking Quebecers join up with me to renew and transform and energize Alliance Quebec.

If I run for the presidency, it is to advance a platform, a set of principles, which I hope all English-speaking Quebecers will endorse. I want to capture the conscience of English Quebec. I want to leave a legacy to the English-speaking community, a permanent gift of six principles. Those principles are so powerful that, if they come to form a bedrock consensus in our community, we will never have to fear secession again.

**First Principle:** English is one of the two official languages of Quebec. English in Quebec is not just "une autre langue," as the Charter of the French Language mendaciously states. English is an historic language of Quebec. English is part of Quebec's constitution, its substance, its very identity. We are not here as foreigners in an alien land. We are here at home, the English language is here at home. We will not tolerate that English be banished from stores in the West Island, in Gatineau, in locations where English-speaking people shop. And we will fight back effectively against French supremacists who try to reduce English to insignificance. We will not accept that the proportion of English-speaking Quebecers in the public service be 0.7 percent.

**Second Principle:** We will not accept or tolerate that Quebec violate international standards of human rights. We will go to court, and to the United Nations if necessary. One example: Quebec

has been in violation for many years of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which holds that the child has a right to schooling, where public schooling is available, that does not depend on the characteristics of the parents. At present, Quebec admits children to English schools or excludes children from English schools, according to the characteristics of the parents, not the internationally recognized rights of the child. That must be challenged before the world.

**Third Principle:** The rule of law is not negotiable. Overthrowing the constitution is not negotiable. Contempt of court, riding roughshod over court judgments, is not negotiable. We insist that the only civilized, and therefore peaceful way, to resolve our conflicts, is for all to respect the rule of law. The alternative is the law of the jungle, where might is right. If a Quebec government should attempt a coup d'état, a revolution, then we must resist, resist peacefully but effectively. We will succeed if we have formed a consensus in our community to resist an outlaw regime, by the classic methods developed by Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

**Fourth Principle:** The right to self-determination applies to all, or it applies to none. The federal government has said it will not hold Quebecers within the union against their clearly expressed will. We English-speaking Quebecers must require the symmetrical guarantee that we will not be hijacked into secession against our will. Our federal government has a responsibility towards the Canadian people of Quebec and all first nations, including the Crees, the Inuit, the Montagnais and the Mohawks, not to allow the use of force to imprison us in a secessionist Quebec. We will demand the clear and firm guarantee that we will not be taken hostage.

**Fifth Principle:** Alliance Quebec must become a very large tent, in which there is room for everybody. In the past, Alliance Quebec has not reached out sufficiently to take in all elements of Quebec's very diverse English-speaking community. That's how it cut itself off from the grass roots and from many vital currents and movements in our community. Here's one example: though I've been fighting for minority rights in Quebec and other provinces for years, the leaders of Alliance Quebec never once invited me to meet with them, to exchange ideas, to work together. They never once tried to bring me into the tent.

That has to change. Alliance Quebec must become a very large tent in which everyone with something to contribute is welcome. We say today to Alliance Quebec: open your doors and open your hearts and let us in. We want, not to destroy Alliance Quebec, but to renew and increase its membership, make it strong and relevant.

**Sixth Principle:** We must achieve a long-overdue historic reconciliation with French Quebec. There's a schism which has divided the communities of Quebec for generations. At the grass roots level, we get along admirably. We work together, play together, make love together. More than one married Anglo in four is married to a francophone. But at the level of collective mythologies, we are perceived as *les Anglais*, descendants and reincarnations of those who fought New France on the Plains of Abraham. This perception is utterly false. Only 22 per cent of English-speaking Quebecers are of British origin. By our origins, we are French, Irish, native aboriginal, Jewish, Italian, Afro-Canadian, Greek, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Jamaican, Egyptian, Mexican, Hindi.... That is the contemporary reality of English-speaking Quebec. Many English-speaking Quebecers have ancestors who were here

long before the Plains of Abraham, and thousands of years before they discovered a lost Jacques-Cartier, who had blundered his way into their lands and waterways.

If I become president of Alliance Quebec, my first priority will be to set up a speaking tour in all the mid-sized cities from Rouyn-Noranda to Gaspé, from Thetford Mines to Chicoutimi. I want to explain our reality, in French, to the Chambres de Commerce, les Lions, les Moose, les Kiwanis, les Clubs Richelieu, les Sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste - to everyone who will have me and hear me. Reconciliation will be my first priority.

These are the six principles that I will be proposing to Alliance Quebec. If you support these principles, and want me as your spokesman, I urge you to make your voice and your presence felt. If you join Alliance Quebec before March 18, you will have the right to vote for the board of directors of your local chapter at its annual meeting in the second half of April, and to be one of the delegates who will choose the president of Alliance Quebec at its convention, May 29 to 31.

These are not ordinary times. We know, now, that it is dangerous to be weak: weak in numbers, weak in unity, weak in understanding, weak in conviction, weak in resolve, weak in tactics and strategy.

For the past 11 years, the English-speaking community has been diluted and dispersed, confused, nearly invisible, frightened and weak. But the time for disunity, confusion and weakness is over. The time has come for decisive leadership, conviction, clear ideas, and collective strength. We are weak politically. But we can be strong as consumers, we can be strong as depositors, we can be strong as investors, we can be strong as taxpayers, we can be strong as citizens, able to speak of Quebec to the world. We are weak individually, but we can be strong collectively, if only we unite, coalesce, concentrate and target our individual strengths. We must bring ourselves together to form a united force. We must speak with the conjoined weight and gravity of hundreds of thousands of English-speaking Quebecers. We must do it for our children, for ourselves and for all Quebecers and all Canadians.

Let our voice be heard. So I say to all English-speaking Quebecers, of whatever ethnic, racial, religious origin you might be: give me your hand; come and walk with me. Come and work with me. We will create in Alliance Quebec a strong, resolute, united voice for the English-speaking community of Quebec. Give me your hand and your heart. Let us together bring about a new reconciliation and peace in Quebec between all our peoples.

The Six Principles in [the form of resolutions](#) suggested adoption by AQ Chapters

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