

Le Québec gagne

à voter **Bloc**.



English version



 **BLOC**
QUÉBÉCOIS

The Bloc Declaration of Principles

The Bloc Québécois is a sovereigntist political party which, though based solely in Québec, will remain on the federal scene until Québec sovereignty becomes a reality. It thus restores consistency and legitimacy between the vision of a people and that of its federally-elected representatives. The Bloc affirms the existence of the Québec nation, demands that it be recognized and defends its right to choose its future freely.

Excerpt from a statement adopted by the party convention in January 2000

Defending Québec's Interests successfully

You are about to read the results of the Bloc's 10-year presence in Ottawa. For a long time now, Quebecers have always considered the Québec government to be their national government and have felt rather distant from federal concerns. During their years in Ottawa, Bloc MPs have developed abilities that enable Québec citizens to understand adequately how their interests are handled in Ottawa, to comprehend the issues that have an impact on their society and their collective future, and to be better equipped to deal with the choices the federal government will be making in their name.



You will notice that Bloc Québécois MPs form an experienced team that knows how to defend Québec's interests successfully. We have worked tirelessly to understand, analyze, study and examine what has been happening in Ottawa and, above all, to report on the decisions and choices that are being made in the federal capital.

What you will read constitutes our contribution to the democratic debate during this general election. It also offers proof of the solid commitment of Bloc candidates in favour of Québec, its interests and its citizens.

Enjoy your reading.

The leader of the Bloc Québécois,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gilles Duceppe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gilles Duceppe

Québec is already winning by voting **Bloc**

The Bloc has contributed in finally getting the Liberal government to accept increases in transfer payments to the provinces.

For two years, the Bloc fought for an agreement that was acceptable to Québec on the question of the Millennium Scholarship Fund, which the federal government finally negotiated.

The Bloc succeeded in preventing the adoption of a law (the Young Offenders Act) aimed at putting 14-year-old children in prison.

The Bloc obtained the adoption of measures against criminal groups, in particular by requiring financial institutions to report any transaction of more than \$10,000 and withdrawing the \$1,000 bill.

The Bloc brought the Official Languages Commissioner to inquire into the place of French in amateur sport.

The Bloc revealed

the patronage

practices of the

Chrétien

government.

The Bloc got several criminal inquiries started into the illegal use or procurement of federal subsidies.

The Bloc destabilized the Liberal propaganda campaign by denouncing initiatives that run contrary to governmental ethics.



Québec wins

by voting Bloc

A BETTER ALLOCATION OF BUDGET SURPLUSES

The federal government has \$147.9 billions in surpluses to allocate for the next five years.

The federal government's financial situation is not the result of healthy management provided by public administrators nor the consequence of responsible work by the federal finance minister.

These surpluses come from the pockets of the unemployed and from cuts to transfer payments for Medicare and education.

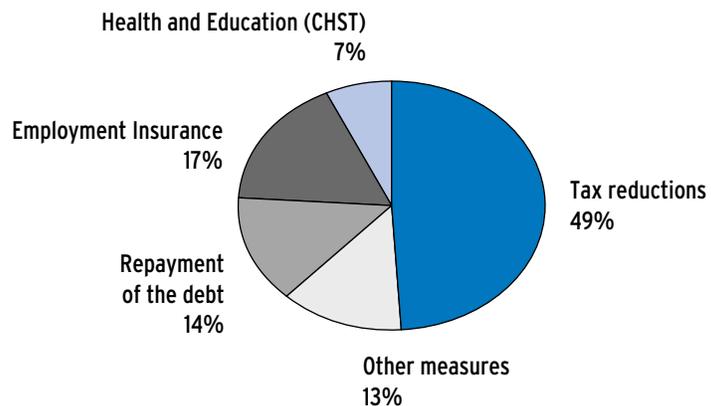
Furthermore, the Chrétien government collects far too much in taxes compared to its real needs.

The Bloc considers that budget surpluses should go first to those who have paid the cost of eliminating the deficit.

EXCESSIVE BUDGET SURPLUSES COME FROM :

1. Collecting too much taxes;
2. Robbing the Employment Insurance fund;
3. Cutting transfer payments intended for Medicare and education.

The Bloc proposes that budget surpluses be allocated for:



Québec shouldn't

pay as much in taxes

The Bloc proposes \$73.4 billions in tax cuts that would benefit 9 out of 10 taxpayers rather than general measures that would benefit essentially the wealthiest. Low-income and middle-income families should be the first to benefit from tax relief.

Before creating all sorts of new programs that generate big bureaucracies and lead to fights over jurisdictions, we should make sure the most disadvantaged in our society don't pay any more taxes to Ottawa. It is absurd to take thousands of dollars in taxes from a family and then return the money in various forms. This creates useless costs and complicates life for ordinary citizens.

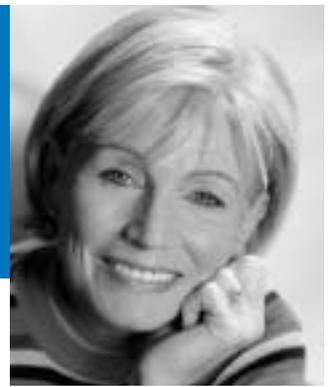
The Bloc proposes a tax reform that will make the system simpler, more efficient and fairer.

The poor and families win by voting Bloc

THE BLOC PROPOSES THAT :

- a single-parent family with two children and who has an income below \$35,000 should no longer pay any federal taxes;
- this tax relief should decline as taxpayer's revenue rises;
- the \$500 tax exemption for scholarships should tripled to \$1,500;
- a basic personal credit should be established, varying according to income, with the amount going down as a taxpayer's revenue goes up, just as it does with the GST credit;
- personal taxation should be reformed to make tax statements simpler and the tax system fairer;
- corporate taxation should be reformed to help small and medium-sized companies become more competitive on international markets;
- instead of a deduction for contributions to a registered retirement savings plan (RRSP), there should be a tax credit based on a fixed fiscal rate.

Québec wins by voting Bloc

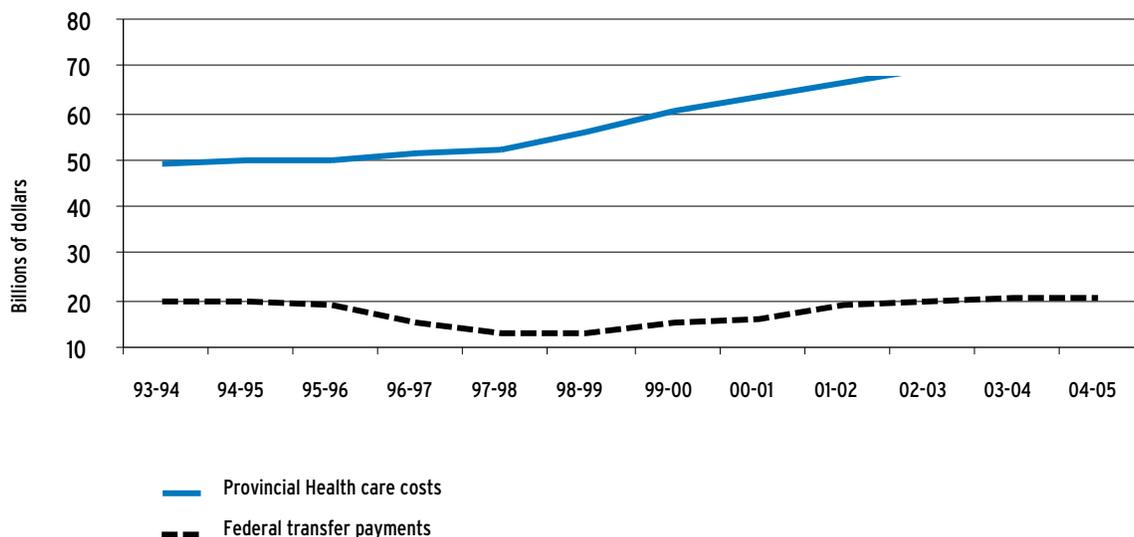


MORE IN HEALTH CARE

According to the Canadian Constitution, health care is an exclusive provincial responsibility and not the federal government's. This is why the main federal responsibility with regard to health care is to transfer money to the provincial governments as it has done historically through the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).

On September 11, 2000, the premiers of Québec and the provinces signed an agreement with Jean Chrétien on health care which will have the effect of raising federal government transfer payments for health care. These funds are not nearly enough to bring transfer payments back to their 1993-94 level in relation to health care spending.

This graph clearly shows that provincial costs for health care are rising much faster than federal transfer payments.



Québec wins

by voting Bloc



INCREASED FUNDING FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

In 1999-2000, the federal financial effort for post-secondary education hit a 30 years low. The Bloc demands an increase in federal transfer payments intended for post-secondary education through the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).

Québec's fair share for public housing

\$2 billion has to be invested to build new public housing in the next five years. The federal government has to give the Québec government the money for public housing so that it can fully exercise its responsibilities. Furthermore, the Bloc suggests that money saved on debt payments should be invested in public housing.

Negotiating an agreement on parental leave

The Bloc demands that the federal government resume negotiations with Québec so that young Québec families can benefit from better parental leave.

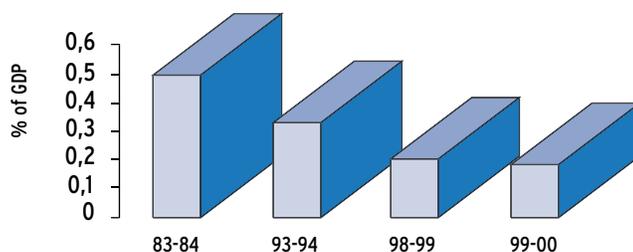
Eliminating discriminatory "orphan" clauses in federal legislation

The Bloc will propose a law aimed at prohibiting the use of discriminatory clauses against young workers in areas under federal jurisdiction.

Equity for women

The parliament adopted a Bloc motion on March 8, 1994, to recognize the principle of economic equality between women and men and to set up measures aimed at providing equity in employment, salaries and living conditions to women working in areas under federal jurisdiction.

The Chrétien government has been transferring less and less money for education. The Bloc will be a strong voice for increased transfer payments for education.



Women win

by voting Bloc

Inaccessible programs

Pregnant women working under federal jurisdiction who want to benefit from preventive leave have a hard time qualifying. Even if they do qualify, they receive only 55% of their insurable earnings. This places women in an agonizing situation: they have to choose between their health and their income. Similarly, the federal parental leave program is not generous enough and too hard to qualify for.

Bloc Québécois proposals would guarantee that all women who so desired could benefit from parental leave and that pregnant or breast-feeding women would benefit from paid preventive leave.

The World March of Women: 13 requests to the federal government

Women have been asking the federal government to act against poverty and violence. These requests — for example, for public housing, health care, parental leave and child care — are reasonable. Considering the enormous budget surpluses in Ottawa, the federal government has the means to respond.

The Bloc proposes responding to all the requests that women have put to the federal government, acting within precise deadlines and financial guidelines.

Stop stealing from the Employment Insurance fund

Since 1994-95, the Chrétien government has grabbed more than \$38 billion from the Employment Insurance fund. The Bloc proposes that the Employment Insurance account be set up independently to put an end to the robbery. This way, any surplus would be used only for Employment Insurance.

In April 2000, the Bloc made a comprehensive proposal aimed at correcting the main loopholes and injustices found within the current Employment Insurance system.

This proposal wants to reinstate the real meaning of the term “insurance” and includes the following measures:

- an increase in the number of weeks of admissible payments;
- an end to discriminatory clauses against women and young people;
- the establishment of an improved program for older workers;
- the creation of a voluntary system for self-employed workers.

Québec's regions wins

by voting Bloc

Putting an end to regional fiscal imbalances

The Chrétien government takes tax money from residents of outlying regions while providing less and less services. This money could be put to better use if it stayed in certain areas. This is why the Bloc wants a tax credit for the residents of outlying regions.

Assuring affordable regional air service

Since it decided to transfer regional airports to local communities, safety, maintenance and improvement of airport infrastructure has greatly suffered from lack of federal funds. The federal government has also failed to assure that affordable regional air service is available.

The Bloc considers that it is necessary:

- to establish a cooperative of local airlines for Québec's regions;
- to reinvest in air transport safety, mainly by hiring air traffic controllers and providing outlying regions with modern equipment;
- to increase the budgetary allocation for the maintenance and improvement of regional airports.



Changes are required to Employment Insurance provisions that hit the regions hard

It is necessary:

- to prevent the exodus of young people by putting an end to discriminatory clauses that exclude two out of three unemployed;
- to broaden access to Employment Insurance for seasonal workers;
- to create an improved assistance program for workers aged 55 and over;
- to establish a voluntary system that would enable self-employed workers to benefit from Employment Insurance.



Youth wins

by voting Bloc



Education: a fundamental tool

Education remains the finest heritage that a society can offer its youth. The Chrétien government has been multiplying programs and visibility initiatives in an area where responsibility belongs to the government of Québec. The Millennium Scholarship Foundation, the Chairs of Excellence, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Youth Employment Strategy are virtuous-looking gestures that, in reality, hide a counter-productive cynicism.

The Bloc proposes that the federal government index the Canada Health and Social

Transfer (CHST) by \$10-billion over five years so that the Québec government can inject the funds needed for the operation and improvement of its education system.

The Bloc continues to demand that Québec's exclusive jurisdiction in education be respected so that the Québec government can invest in the areas and sectors it has judged as high priority for the development of Québec society.

Give Québec the job training budgets

The Bloc demands that federal budget items allocated for job training be transferred entirely to the Québec government.

Eliminate discriminatory "orphan" clauses

The Bloc proposes prohibiting the use of discriminatory clauses against young workers in areas under federal jurisdiction.

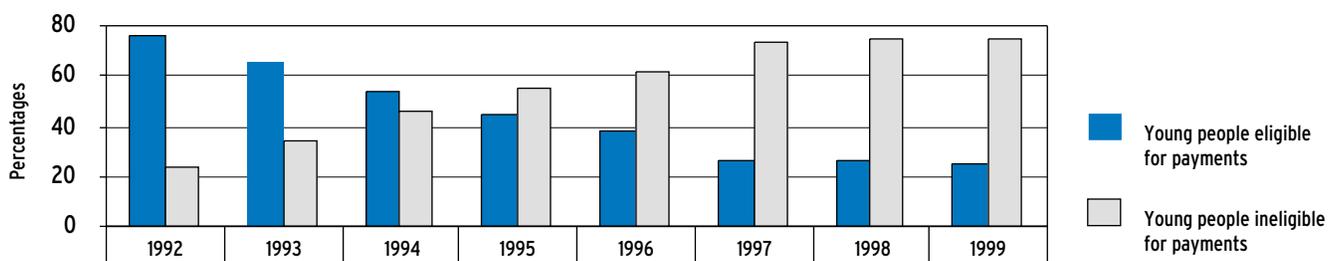
End age-based discrimination in Employment Insurance

The Bloc will fight to put an end to this discriminatory clause.

More protection for self-employed workers

The Employment Insurance program should also offer a voluntary participation system for self-employed workers.

Young people aged 20 to 24 receive fewer and fewer Employment Insurance payments because they are victims of discrimination.



Québec wins

by voting Bloc

A FAIRER JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Young Offenders Act

In the House of Commons, the Bloc has upheld the view of the wide majority in Québec in its fight against youth crime and has demanded the withdrawal of a bill on young offenders that would put 14-year-old children in prison. Québec's current system has given it North America's lowest rate of youth crime by choosing rehabilitation over repression.

An intensified anti-gang fight

For the last few years, the Bloc has been concerned with the increase in criminal gang activity. The facts are alarming. The time has come to act.

Membership in criminal organizations must be made illegal so that they can be dismantled.

As well, the federal government must invest additional resources in the fight against illicit activities, in particular the planting of marijuana on Québec agricultural lands that greatly endangers the security of farmers and their families.

Food and Agriculture

Solid support must be provided to the food and agriculture sector, making sure that it is well integrated within international markets, strengthening its competitive position.

The federal government must stop weakening the position of Québec and Canadian producers in relation to their main competitors by increasing its financial support for the farm sector while respecting provincial areas of jurisdiction and commitments within the framework of the World Trade Organization.

The government should also increase budgetary allocations for revenue security, lending a more appropriate hand to the farm sector.

Québec wins

by voting Bloc

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Atmospheric pollution

The 13% rise in greenhouse gas emissions is cause for concern: air quality continues to deteriorate. The Chrétien government must respect its international commitments in greenhouse gas reduction. It must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6% as it agreed to do under the Kyoto protocol.

Biodiversity

The Bloc Québécois will continue to pressure the federal government for an endorsement of the precautionary principle and its signature of the Cartagena protocol on biosecurity as soon as possible.

The importance of MOX

The Bloc Québécois will continue its efforts in decrying the federal government's undemocratic decision to import MOX. The Chrétien government wants to import this plutonium-based mixture to use as fuel in CANDU reactors.

The energy question

The Bloc Québécois wants the federal government to end all financing to the nuclear fission industry. The \$150 million spent on this industry each year should be redirected to research and development on "green" energy.

Genetically modified organisms: concerned consumers, a silent government

The Bloc wants to put an end to the government's lax attitude in the approval of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), as well as the lack of resources and the absence of detailed studies on the long-term effects of gene flows on fields and the environment in general.

The Bloc will fight for the labelling of GMOs because consumers have the right to know and to choose what they eat.

The Bloc is committed to reviewing the policy of covering up costs to evaluate the financial impact on farmers and to help them remain competitive.

Québec wins

by voting Bloc

in a globalized world

Québec's place in the world

Whether in the areas of culture, economy, health or education, anyone wanting to promote their values and defend their interests must be present on the international stage. Québec is lacking the international presence it needs where it counts: in international forums. Only sovereignty will enable Québec to take its rightful place in the world.

Québec must be able to negotiate at the international level in its areas of jurisdiction

Until sovereignty is achieved, the Bloc proposes that the Québec government be represented officially during trade negotiations so that it can negotiate in its own name in its exclusive areas of jurisdiction.

More power for citizens

The Bloc is asking the federal government to include environmental and social clauses within trade agreements, particularly regarding the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), for which negotiations are expected to end in 2005.

The Bloc demands that the federal government make public the basic texts of each negotiated agreement, obviously well ahead of the signing of these agreements.

The Bloc proposes that parliamentarians take part in the negotiating process for any trade agreement, including agreements within the World Trade Organization (WTO), before Parliament formally approves or rejects any agreement.

Clearer rules in the banking sector

There should be no difference between the treatment given to major Canadian banks and to major Québec banks in terms of ownership regulations.

Furthermore, the Bloc wants to make sure that poor people can have access to an efficient banking system at modest costs.

Banks should also be required to reinvest in underprivileged neighbourhoods or regions.

The prevention of world gasoline price increases through better competition

The increase in gasoline prices creates impacts that are hard to bear. For some people, a price rise can make the difference between earning their living and going bankrupt. The Bloc proposes strengthening the Competition Act to guarantee consumers competitive market prices.

Suspend the excise tax temporarily

To give truckers, taxi drivers and farmers some breathing space, the Bloc proposes the temporary suspension of the federal excise tax.

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This document which condenses the main themes of the Bloc's electoral platform is also available in Spanish. The original of this document is available in French on our Web Site as well as the full platform.

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