

Présent!

pour le Québec

POLICY STATEMENT | 2008 ELECTION

A Matter of Respect

Dear Quebeckers,

Stephen Harper has called an early election and done the exact opposite of what he had promised you on May 26, 2006: "...[F]ixed election dates stop leaders from trying to manipulate the calendar simply for partisan political advantage.." That statement is worth remembering in the polling booth.

The Bloc Québécois will make the most of the Conservative leader's decision to

force an election in order to discuss fundamental issues and ultimately ask you to make a fundamental choice for Québec's future by choosing between Canadian parties and the Bloc Québécois, Québec's only voice in Ottawa.

Can the Conservative Party be trusted?

Can the Canadian parties and their leaders be trusted to represent Québec in Ottawa? Can the Conservative Party be trusted, when Stephen Harper unhesitatingly goes back on his word, flouts the rules of democracy and tries to muzzle the media, the opposition and even his own MPs?

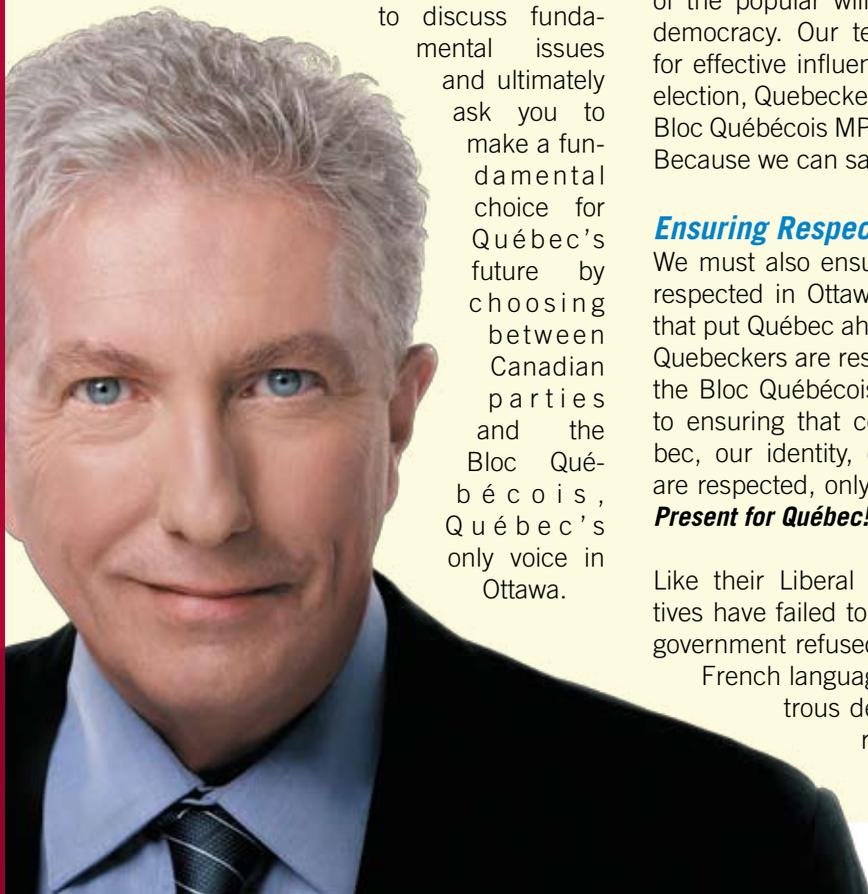
The Bloc Québécois: Rock-solid Opposition with Real Influence

The Bloc Québécois represents the expression of the popular will, a key characteristic of any democracy. Our team delivers solid opposition for effective influence. That's why, election after election, Quebeckers choose to send a majority of Bloc Québécois MPs to represent them in Ottawa. Because we can say: ***Present for Québec!***

Ensuring Respect for Québec in Ottawa

We must also ensure that the Québec nation is respected in Ottawa. Only a team and a leader that put Québec ahead of all else can ensure that Quebeckers are respected in Ottawa. That's what the Bloc Québécois is all about. When it comes to ensuring that consensuses reached in Québec, our identity, our values and our interests are respected, only the Bloc Québécois can say: ***Present for Québec!***

Like their Liberal predecessors, the Conservatives have failed to respect Québec. The Harper government refused to take action to protect the French language and has made some disastrous decisions for our economy, our regions and Québec culture.



The ideological vision of Stephen Harper's Conservatives is inspired by that of George W. Bush

We are compelled to raise a crucial issue that concerns the society in which we wish to live. The ideological vision of Stephen Harper's Conservatives is inspired by that of George W. Bush. It's a vision that conditions all of their decisions. It is important to remember that Stephen Harper wanted to drag Canada into the war in Iraq back in 2003. Like George W. Bush, Stephen Harper wanted to sabotage Kyoto; he stood up for the oil industry rather than for the environment.

And Stephen Harper would like to impose this ideology without reservation on Canada and Québec at a time when our American neighbours are getting ready to rid themselves of the Bush Administration. Stephen's party is on the wrong side of history – his party is living in the past.

Blocking a Majority for Stephen Harper's Conservatives

If we are to impose respect for Québec in Ottawa, we cannot let Stephen Harper's Conservatives win a majority.

We are living in the present and acting pragmatically in harmony with Québec.

A strong contingent of Bloc Québécois MPs in Ottawa is the best possible outcome of this election for Québec.

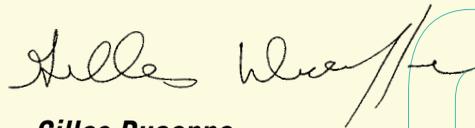
A Team Firmly Committed to Sovereignty

Our team strongly believes that sovereignty is the only possible avenue for a nation such as Québec that aspires to political freedom.

We also know that we must move Québec forward immediately so that we can continue the work done by our predecessors and guarantee future generations a boundless and promising future.

That's what the Bloc Québécois is offering you. The only team that can say it is:

PRESENT FOR QUÉBEC!



Gilles Duceppe
Leader of the Bloc Québécois

Our Values

Québec is based on fundamental values that mirror those of all nations, and the Bloc Québécois is the only party in Ottawa that promotes those values. Although the House of Commons has recognized that Québec is a nation as a result of a Bloc Québécois initiative, no concrete action has been taken to date to give substance to that recognition. Clearly, the Conservative Government and the other Canadian parties primarily defend Canadian values.



When it comes to ensuring that our identity values, the French language and Québec culture are respected in Ottawa, only the Bloc Québécois can say:

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QUÉBEC!**

Values that Unite Us All

In Québec, we share values that unite and define us, including the primacy of French as the common public language, the crucial role that culture plays in our national life and a Québec approach to integration.

Stephen Harper's Conservatives have shown a lack of respect for these values that unite us all by opposing the application of Bill 101, slashing cultural funding and refusing to let Québec opt out of Canadian multiculturalism.

Unlike the other parties which all too often reject Quebecers' values, the Bloc Québécois champions those values in Ottawa.

The Primacy of the French Language in Québec. In Ottawa, only the Bloc Québécois demands that Bill 101 be enforced to ensure the rights of 200,000 Quebecers who are currently not covered by it.

Québec culture is vitally important for our people who represent only 2% of North America's population. Other parties consider Québec culture a regional component of Canadian culture; consequently, the Bloc Québécois is the only true ally of Québec culture.

A Québec Approach to Integration. In recent decades, Québec has developed an approach to integrate immigrants into the Québec nation. This open approach goes against Canada's multiculturalism ideology, which encourages various communities to live in isolation. The Bloc Québécois is the only party that defends Québec's approach, while the other Canadian parties defend Canadian multiculturalism.

When we have to fight for our social values of sharing wealth, for the equality rights of women, for the dignity of our seniors, for the right to education for our youth or for solidarity among Québec's many regions, Gilles Duceppe and his team can say:

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Our Kind of Values

Over the years, Québec has successfully developed a social policy regime that makes it possible to share wealth and ensure social cohesion. Solidarity among Québec's regions and equality between women and men are key social values for Quebeckers. Breaking with efforts made for several decades, the Conservative Party of Canada broke its word by attacking women's rights and adopting policies designed to break social cohesion, all the while turning its back on Québec's regions, namely by cutting off funding to economic development organisations.

Equality Between Men and Women. This fundamental value is not unique to Québec. What is unique, however, is our way of turning it into concrete reality, with pay equity and affordable daycare that makes it possible for many women to participate in the labour market. The Bloc Québécois defends this fundamental value in Ottawa despite attacks by the Harper government, which cut off funding to women's groups and would like to reopen the debate on abortion.

Social Solidarity. Seven-dollar daycare, the Parental Leave Program, affordable tuition, our numerous cooperatives and our progressive labour laws are just some of the elements of social solidarity that makes it possible to share wealth equitably. In Ottawa, the Bloc Québécois is the strongest proponent of wealth-sharing as we see it in Québec.

Solidarity Among Québec's Regions. Québec needs its regions so that Quebeckers can be free to decide to live there if they so desire. The Bloc Québécois is the only party in Ottawa that has made the fate of people living in Québec's regions a fundamental priority.

When the time came for us to vehemently oppose the likes of Stephen Harper who wanted to send us off to war in Iraq, Gilles Duceppe could say, along with our team:

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Universal Values

In 2003, in lock step with the Bush Administration, Stephen Harper wanted to drag Canada into the war in Iraq and tear up the Kyoto Protocol. He thought it more important to stand up for the oil companies than for the environment. Once in power, Stephen Harper effectively advanced the Bush policy, going against the universal values that Quebeckers share with numerous nations around the world.

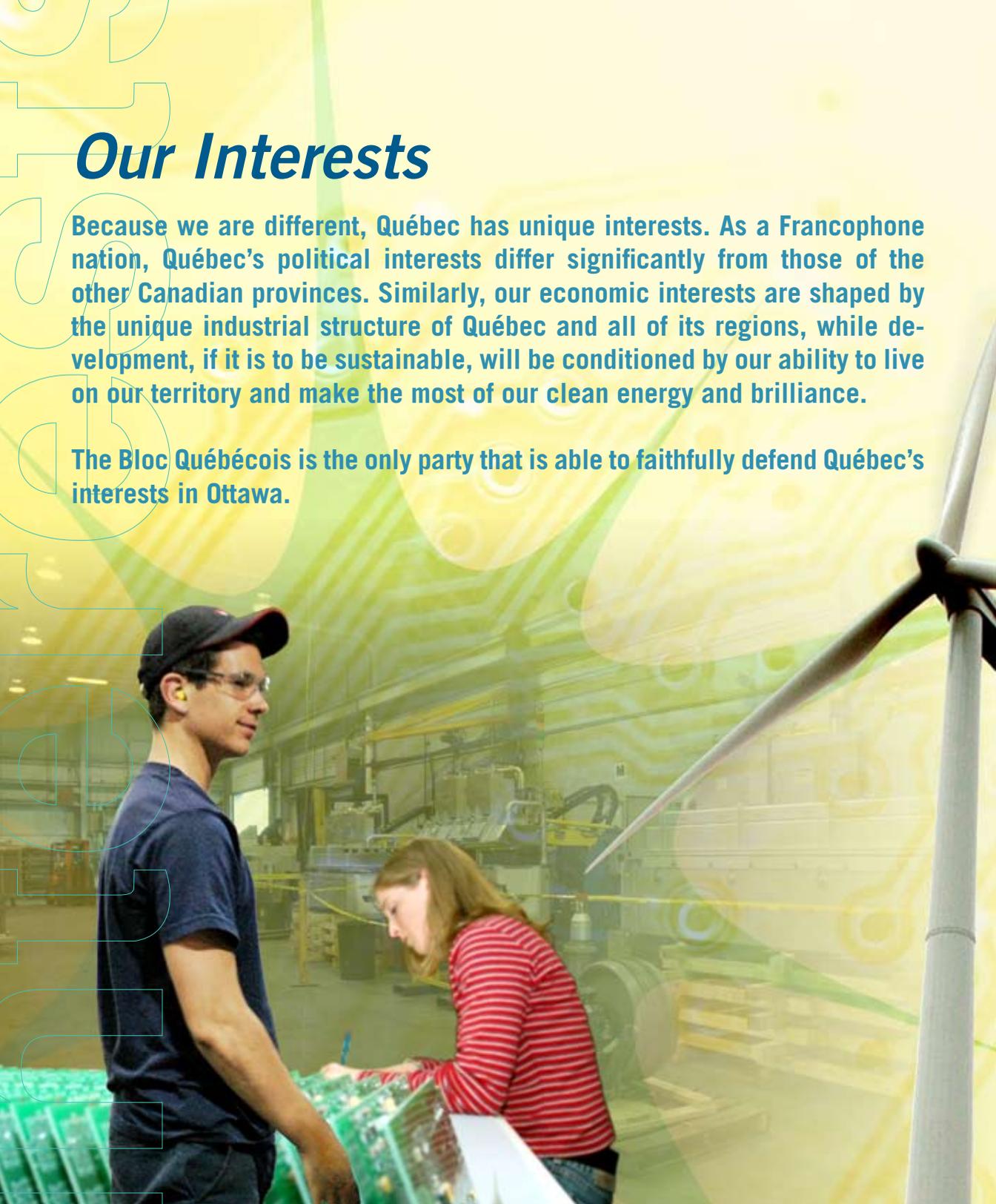
Environmental Advocacy. This value is shared by an ever-increasing number of individuals and nations around the world. Tackling climate change has become a fundamental issue for all of humanity and Québec is determined to make its contribution, in its own way. In Ottawa, the Bloc Québécois, respecting Québec's choices, is leading the fight to enforce the Kyoto Protocol.

Foreign Policy Based on Cooperation, Diplomacy and Peace-keeping. We convey Québec values of solidarity during our relations with the rest of the world. Quebeckers prefer such instruments as cooperation, diplomacy and peace-keeping. Conversely, the Harper government's aggressive foreign policy, based mainly on force and inspired by Bush Administration policies, is unacceptable. The Bloc Québécois is the only credible advocate of an approach based on Québec values.

Our Interests

Because we are different, Québec has unique interests. As a Francophone nation, Québec's political interests differ significantly from those of the other Canadian provinces. Similarly, our economic interests are shaped by the unique industrial structure of Québec and all of its regions, while development, if it is to be sustainable, will be conditioned by our ability to live on our territory and make the most of our clean energy and brilliance.

The Bloc Québécois is the only party that is able to faithfully defend Québec's interests in Ottawa.



When it took Quebeckers in Ottawa to put forward the consensus reached in Québec, like those on fiscal imbalance, parental leave and the transfer of training budgets, only one team, the Bloc Québécois, came through:

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Economic Interests

The Québec economy, driven by the manufacturing and forest industries, research, culture and high tech, requires specific policies and government support. Québec's regions and major centres have worked painstakingly for years to develop highly effective economic development tools. By slashing funding to the organisations at the very heart of this hard work, the Harper government unhesitatingly trampled on the economic and social interests of the Québec nation.

The Role of Government. The Harper government's laissez-faire policy is a sign of dangerous ideological blindness. The federal government must develop an adequate policy that supports our economy. All of our competitors, including the United States, have such a policy. The Bloc Québécois is taking action to obtain such support, by being the most vocal advocate in Ottawa of policies that promote research and innovation and provide strong support for Québec industries and Québec economic promotion organisations.

Promote Québec Businesses. Half of Québec's taxes go to Ottawa. In exchange, the federal government is required, by all of its policies, laws and spending on goods and services, to promote Québec and Canadian businesses that employ our workers, while respecting international agreements. The Bloc Québécois ensures that Québec businesses get their fair share.

When there is a constant need to ensure that Québec's political interests are respected, to defend our freedom to make decisions in areas that fall under our jurisdiction and to retain our political clout, Bloc Québécois MPs and Gilles Duceppe, our leader, say:

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Political Interests

Reneging on his promise to sincerely accept Québec and completely eliminate the fiscal imbalance and the federal government's supposed power to spend, Stephen Harper ignored our political interests.

Québec's Clout. Québec is a nation whose interests require that we have the freedom to make our own decisions in areas that fall under our jurisdiction. To that end, the fiscal imbalance and the *federal government's power to spend* must be eliminated completely and Québec must be given the possibility to truly speak on its own behalf around the world. In Ottawa, the Bloc Québécois tirelessly advocates for Québec's political clout, its freedom of action.

Political Clout. The Harper government has several bills that threaten to significantly diminish Québec's weight in Canada, and that fly in the face of the recognition of Québec as a nation. To the Conservatives, Québec is just an ordinary province. The Bloc Québécois will fight any such decrease in Québec's political clout in Ottawa.

When special interests such as those of the oil industry sabotage efforts to fight climate change and when we have to fight for universal values, such as environmental advocacy, which we share with many nations, the Bloc Québécois can say:

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Sustainable Development Interests

To ensure its sustainable development, Québec must make a major shift by reducing its dependence on oil and ensure harmonious and sustainable land use across Québec. But land use in Québec is not an issue for the Conservatives and the other Canadian parties.

Land Use in Québec. Development in Québec must not be concentrated in its major urban centres. Québec is a vast territory whose development hinges on land use throughout Québec. As long as Québec is part of this regime, Ottawa must respect this will. Although this concern is being ignored by the other parties, it remains ineluctable for the Bloc Québécois.

Reduce our Dependence on Oil. Québec is one of the jurisdictions that is the least dependent on oil. Norway is another. Nevertheless, oil is seriously draining Québec's resources, as the trade deficit deepens with each passing year. Therefore, Québec has a strategic and sustainable interest to reduce its dependence on oil in order to ensure its prosperity and protect the environment. Since the Canadian parties are tied to Canada's oil economy, only the Bloc Québécois advocates a clear vision in Ottawa to reduce our dependence on oil.

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pour le Québec

18 Years of Gains for Québec

Since its inception, the Bloc Québécois has always been synonymous with rigour and innovation. Our campaign proposals are based on Québec's values and interests and are designed to make life easier for all Quebeckers.

Over the past 18 years, the Bloc Québécois has won numerous gains for Québec. The Bloc Québécois' presence in Ottawa has helped to win recognition for Québec as a nation, partially eliminate the fiscal imbalance, obtain billions of dollars for healthcare and social programs, pass an anti-gang law, return control over labour training to Québec, transfer the means necessary to develop Québec's parental leave program, obtain hundreds of millions for the aeronautical industry and re-establish a student hiring program, and the list goes on.



Proposals that Benefit Quebecers

The Bloc Québécois is the only political party that's geared to Québec's interests and values. The Bloc Québécois will make several proposals during the 2008 election campaign. Here is a sampling:

The Future of the Québec Nation

- Pass an act that allows for the application of Bill 101 throughout Québec – to protect our language
- Pass an amendment allowing Québec to opt out of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* – to ensure our integration model is respected
- Reach an agreement to transfer control over telecommunications to Québec – to control our cultural tools
- Completely eliminate the fiscal imbalance and eliminate the spending power that the federal government has arrogated to itself¹
- Examine all federal programs that could affect individuals' right to live in Québec's regions and use the land

Québec Culture

- Re-establish cultural programs
- Remove the GST on books
- Permit income averaging for artists' income

The Québec Economy

- Re-establish the funding of economic and social development organisations
- Develop a comprehensive support plan for the manufacturing and forest industries
- Implement one tax return
- Take various measures to reduce Québec's dependence on oil

The Environment and Reducing our Dependence on Oil

- Fight climate change – apply the Kyoto Protocol, with a true carbon market, based on a territorial approach
- Provide tax incentives to help families convert their home heating system from heating oil to electricity, which is mainly produced from renewable energy
- Provide a refundable tax credit for transit passes
- Re-establish and improve the ecoAUTO Rebate Program for fuel-efficient vehicles

1. The power to spend in areas that fall under the jurisdiction of Québec that the federal government has unilaterally arrogated to itself has been denounced for many decades by all Québec governments.

Help for Families, Seniors, Women and Youth

- Implement a ten-year, interest-free loan program for first-time home buyers
- Provide financing to maintain and build social housing
- Adopt a federal pay equity act
- Maintain the rights acquired by women, particularly with respect to abortion
- Increase payments under the Employment Insurance system
- Implement an income support program for older workers
- Provide an \$8,000 tax credit for new graduates who return to the regions to work and live there
- Transfer \$3.5 billion for post-secondary education
- Immediately increase the monthly benefits for the least wealthy seniors by \$110
- Provide full retroactivity of benefits for seniors who suffered serious financial harm at the hands of the Conservative government during the Guaranteed Income Supplement scandal

Justice

- Keep the Gun Registry
- Oppose capital punishment
- Oppose toughening the *Young Offenders Act* which boils down to imprisoning children with hardened criminals
- Step up gang enforcement efforts:
 - Make it illegal to wear insignia associating an individual with a criminal gang
 - Confiscate goods acquired by criminal means by reversing the onus
 - Implement a series of measures to provide police forces with the means to fight street gangs
- Abolish release after $\frac{1}{6}$ of a sentence has been served
- Eliminate the almost automatic statutory release (release after two-thirds of a sentence has been served)
- Abolish the double credit practice which involves giving double the amount of credit for time spent in custody awaiting trial

True to form, the Bloc Québécois will be making these proposals which are in Québec's interest. Building on our 18 years in Ottawa, we will achieve numerous gains for Quebeckers by using our influence and our will to ensure that Québec is respected in Ottawa.

To learn more about our proposals and positions on all of the issues, please see the “2008 Election Platform”, at: www.presentpourlequebec.org

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