



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nò:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

Community expresses outrage and concern over Bill 96, meeting Monday

For immediate release

(Kahnawà:ke – 6, Onerahtohkó:wa/May 2022) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) wishes to inform the community that it continues to stand with the Kahnawà:ke Education Center (KEC) and Kahnawà:ke Combined Schools Committee, along with several other community organizations, in expressing its outrage and concern regarding far-reaching Quebec legislative changes that will have a major impact on English-language CEGEPs and, especially, many Kahnawà:ke students who would be attending these schools.

Meetings have been taking place in Kahnawà:ke with the various stakeholders to analyze the potential effects of Bill 96, and to plan a course of action. Concerns brought to these meetings from the leadership of the community organizations, traditional bodies, parents and community members has made it increasingly clear that the proposed legislation will have far-reaching effects well beyond education – it gives the French language more importance over other rights recognized in provincial legislation. Onkwehón:we people will not be exempt from the far-reaching impacts the law will inflict.

Because of the urgency and complexity of the situation, a Special Community Session on the matter is scheduled at the **Knights of Columbus Hall at 7pm on Monday evening**. Information on the expected impacts will be presented and a decision on community actions will take place. Representatives from the KEC and the Combined Schools Committee, along with the other stakeholders, will present important information on key features of Bill 96 and its expected impacts. A fact sheet is being prepared for the community and will be made available shortly. The MCK will continue to support Education and the community in all facets of this issue.

A huge concern is the uncertainty of the far-reaching impacts that the Bill may have in the future to accessing government services in English.

“In a previous statement, the MCK indicated its shared concern regarding Bill 96’s requirement of additional courses offered in French language only, as well as a freeze in the number of students attending subsidized English-speaking colleges – along with other issues,” said Ohén:ton Í:iente ne Ratitsénhaienhs (Grand Chief) Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer. “While that was concerning enough, we have learned that this law has far more insidious intent. While we usually remain “in our canoe” in matters of outside governments’ laws, Kahnawà:ke cannot sit idly by as the rights of our people are threatened. We must remain united and strong as we face this challenge. The time to stand together is now.”

“What Bill 96 makes clear is the fact that the Legault government is committed to a course of action that clearly demonstrates that systemic racism is alive and well in Quebec,” Ratsénhaienhs (elected Chief) Ross Montour said earlier. “In spite of their claims of honoring and respecting our Peoples’ cultures and languages, Premier François Legault and (Education Minister) Simon Jolin-Barrette’s refusal to reconsider this dreadful direction is clearly evident of colonial mindsets that will no doubt have devastating effects upon our students, and their goals and dreams of attaining higher education.”

As the Kahnawà:ke Education Center said in an earlier statement, “Bill 96 law perpetuates colonialism and linguistic assimilation, violating the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

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