

## Bill C-13 at a glance

Bill C-13 *An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts*

**Short title:** *An Act for the Substantive Equality of Canada's Official Languages*

**Introduced:** March 1, 2022, House of Commons (Government bill)

**Status:** This bill received royal assent on June 20, 2023

### Synopsis:

This bill updated the *Official Language Act* and created the *Use of French in Federally Regulated Businesses Act*.

### Highlights of debate:

This legislation passed the House of Commons at third reading on May 15, 2023, with a vote of 301 yeas, 1 nay (Liberal MP Anthony Housefather). It was similarly passed by the Senate at third reading, with 5 yeas, and 5 abstentions.

### Why QCGN is concerned:

The [QCGN's brief to the House Standing Committee on Official Languages](#) (June 6, 2022) summarized our concerns with C-13.

- The purpose of the Official Languages Act has been changed. The Act now asymmetrically addresses Canada's two official languages, with an emphasis on the protection and promotion of French.
- The OLA makes specific mention of Quebec's *Charter of the French Language*, the only provincial language regime so mentioned. C-13 incorporates the Charter of the French Language into federal law through the *Use of French in Federally Regulated Businesses Act*.
- The modernization of Part VII did not go far enough to ensure legally enforceable obligations on federal government institutions. Moreover, the protection of French is now a statutory goal of positive measures. Other changes to Part VII threaten the direct relationship and support English-speaking Quebec receives from the federal partner.
- The *Use of French in Federally Regulated Businesses Act*, created – for the first time in Canadian history – language rights at the federal level for only one official-language group (Francophones). When implemented, federally regulated businesses operating in Quebec (and parts of Canada with a significant Francophone presence) will have no rights-based language obligations toward English-speaking customers and employees.