



NEWS RELEASE

The Honourable Senator Claudette Tardif, Ph.D.

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Unilingual judge appointed to the Supreme Court

OTTAWA – Senator Claudette Tardif comments on the appointment of two new judges to the Supreme Court, one of whom is unilingual.

“Regardless of the personal and professional abilities of the appointed judges, these nominations are a step in the wrong direction for bilingualism in the Supreme Court,” she said. “As of today, at the highest court in our nation, there are two judges who do not understand French, instead of just one.”

Senator Tardif pointed out that we should not overlook the principle of true equality outlined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which gives Canadians the right to be heard and understood in the language of their choice. This right means that Canadians should be able to appear before the Supreme Court of Canada without needing an interpreter.

“At the Supreme Court, cases that are argued in French require simultaneous interpretation services, unlike cases argued in English. It has been proven that interpretation errors can occur. Therefore, comprehension of the two official languages should be a requirement for judges appointed to the Supreme Court. Furthermore, our laws are drafted in both English and French: this is yet another reason that it is imperative for Supreme Court Justices to be bilingual,” said Senator Tardif. “I am very disappointed by this decision, but hopefully in the near future the issue of bilingualism in the Supreme Court will move forward.”

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