

## **Rhéal Sabourin**

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**De :** "Reevely, David (ott)" <dreevely@ottawacitizen.com>  
**Date :** 18 août 2014 12:15  
**À :** "Rhéal Sabourin"  
**Objet :** Re: Bilingualism...

Thanks very much for your elegantly expressed thoughts, M. Sabourin. As an Anglo, I'm conscious that I'm writing about bilingualism from a position of privilege.

I'm not sure, though, that a legal designation of official bilingualism would solve the problems you've encountered. I don't think it would force stores to require their clerks to speak both English and French fluently, or restaurants to provide French-language menus. The rude treatment you describe is appalling but if it didn't come from a government employee, I don't think it would be affected by legislation.

Thank you again for reading, and for writing.

All the best,

David Reevely

**From:** Rhéal Sabourin  
**Date:** Sunday, August 17, 2014 at 9:33 AM  
**To:** "Reevely, David (ott)" <dreevely@ottawacitizen.com>  
**Subject:** Bilingualism...

Dear Mr. Reevely,

I read your article this morning, twice in fact to be sure that I understood well your thoughts, and I'm still not sure where you stand on the matter, if you are in fact in favour of having a city officially bilingual or not, OR, if you think that the actual policy is sufficient and serves the French community well enough as it is now. But still, I would like to share a few thoughts with you, if I may.

It's ironic that we, as French Canadians, still have to argue to defend the necessity of such a basic right that would recognize us as equal partners. In section D, page 10 of the *Ottawa Citizen*, Ian Capstick wrote an article, just besides John E. Trent's article which defends the case for official bilingualism, titled : *Gay Pride's progress and its potential* (subtitle : *We need to keep talking about equal rights for all Canadians*). EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL CANADIANS ! It's funny, when it gets to OUR rights, we seem to forget that. I would be accused very rapidly of discrimination if I were to criticize the gays' rights. And Mr. Capstick adds : *We're proud of who we are, even if the rest of society isn't ready to accept us yet*. Now, this quote could well be for us too. We will celebrate next year 400 years of French presence in what is now Ontario. 400 years ! and we are still considered a foreign language !

The City of Ottawa is more than the City Hall which has the responsibility to offer services in French 'where there's any real demand'. It goes much beyond the possibility 'to register a kitten in French' ! A city officially bilingual would be more than a mere symbol, it would send a clear message to all, not just to the bureaucrats who have to make sure that the basic and rightful services are delivered. We all pay the same taxes. The message would be clear to all that there are rights and there should be no compromises on that matter, as it is in Ian Capstick's case. Not long ago, I had an experience in a store that illustrates how far we still have to go