

CSL will fight any attempt to remove bilingual status

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Côte St. Luc will fight any attempt by the Legault government to remove its bilingual status “every step of the way,” Mayor Mitchell Brownstein told *The Suburban* Friday.

Bilingual status enables municipalities and boroughs to offer services in both English and French. That status used to be granted to cities where a majority did not use French as their main language, but the PQ changed that in 2000 to mother tongue — affecting, especially, many older members of the Jewish community whose first language may have been Yiddish, Hungarian or others.

As it happens, Canadians have filled out the latest federal census this past week, and one question involves mother tongue.

Brownstein was contacted in light of media reports that the CAQ government, pressed by the PQ’s Pascal Berubé, is looking into doing another evaluation of the bilingual status of various municipalities.

Media reports differ whether French Language Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette is going to review the bilingual status of municipalities or is open to the idea. He is directly quoted in reports as saying the re-evaluation “merits reflection” and is “something I will think about.” *The Suburban* has contacted his office for clarification. The CAQ government is gen-

erally planning an expansion of Bill 101, the province’s language law.

Berubé, the PQ MNA responsible for the French language, is the one quoted as calling for another look at the bilingual status of such cities as CSL, Dollard des Ormeaux, Dorval, Town of Mount Royal, as well as Otterburn Park, part of Jolin-Barrette’s riding.

Contacted by *The Suburban*, Brownstein pointed out that “in 2014, when the PQ tried to create a mechanism where it could revoke bilingual status, Côte St. Luc led the fight against it and almost every bilingual city in the province supported us.

“Our former Mayor Anthony Housefather joined TMR Mayor Philippe Roy in presenting our case to the National Assembly and I was very involved in that battle. We convinced the CAQ, including Premier Legault and their former language critic Nathalie Roy, that attacking the bilingual status of municipalities was a violation of the rights of the English-speaking community and the autonomy of municipalities, and so Mr. Jolin-Barrette would need to convince his colleagues to reverse themselves completely since they opposed this idea in 2014.”

Brownstein said he is hopeful Premier François Legault is “too smart to go in this direction.

“If they try, we will fight them every step of the way.” ■

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