November 1, 2018

Office of Senator René Cormier
c/o Sylvain Bérubé
Room 331, East Block
111 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0A4

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Senators:

On October 26, 2018, I had the honour of appearing before you to present our brief on the modernization of Canada’s Official Languages Act.

During my presentation, Senator Cormier asked me to explain why section 16.1 of the Charter should be included in the OLA.

In response, I stressed the symbolic importance of including such a constitutional principle in the OLA. However, that is only one aspect of the issue. As we pointed out in our brief (see paragraphs 47-56), the incorporation of section 16.1 into the OLA will ultimately support its practical application by including sections specific to our province. These sections will guide government officials in planning and delivering official languages programs and services intended for New Brunswickers. In other words, the incorporation of section 16.1 into the OLA will ensure the application of the principle of equality between our two linguistic communities. We provided a few examples in our brief, including immigration policies and practices. We believe that the OLA should contain provisions intended to maintain our province’s linguistic balance in compliance with section 16.1.

You will of course understand that my answer was only a partial response and that our position goes far beyond the purely symbolic nature of this section and is intended to help us achieve the worthy goal of equality.

I trust that the above is of help.
In conclusion, thank you again for allowing me to present our position while you were in Moncton.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Michel A. Cartier, Q.C.
Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick