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Bumpy start to constitution hearings

Collective-rights group backs CAQ while PQ presents its own plan

PHILIP AUTHIER

QUEBEC Legislative hearings on Quebec's proposed new constitution got off to a bumpy start Thursday with the Quebec Liberals calling for the legislation to be scrapped outright, Québec solidaire saying the bill is illegitimate

and the Parti Québécois proposing its own plan, which it says would have more credibility. But some of the first groups to appear, including Droits collectifs Québec, expressed their support for Bill 1 and argued it takes nothing away from anyone. In fact, Droits collectifs Québec said

such a law would act as a shield for important Quebec laws within the Canadian system. Under questioning from Justice Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette, who is the author of Bill 1, Droits collectifs Québec lawyer François Côté said the Coalition Avenir Québec government has all the legitimacy in the world to adopt such a law because it was democratically elected. The comment was good news for the CAQ, which has been accused

of drawing up the constitution in secret without consulting anyone for electoral reasons. Côté urged politicians sitting on the committee studying the bill to not miss the chance to create the constitution because of partisan concerns. "It would be a terrible error," he told the legislative committee as the hearings began. "I think this law is more important than partisan interests." SEE HEARINGS ON **A3**



ALLEN McINNIS

TIME FOR RE-EDUCATION

Lauryn Hill has been called unreliable, but following her return to Place des Arts, *T'Cha Dunlevy* argues he's never seen the soul/hip-hop icon have an off night. **A4**

Anglos' lower employment and pay costing Quebec: study

RENÉ BRUEMMER

The ongoing employment and income gaps between English- and French-speaking Quebecers are costing Quebec an estimated \$1.5 billion in lost income annually, a new study shows. The report — The State of Employment Among English-Speaking Quebecers — expands on data from the 2021 census that indicated English-speaking Quebecers continue to face higher unemployment

and lower incomes than their French-speaking counterparts. Researchers combined those findings with monthly labour market statistics to put a dollar figure on how those disparities affect the Quebec economy. The hope is that the findings will spur decision-makers to invest in more employment initiatives and training for the anglophone community. "We think if we can get the message out that there's this highly skilled, bilingual workforce that is underutilized and represents a great untapped potential, we can mobilize industry and government to see our community as a resource," said Nicholas Salter, executive director of the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT), which focuses on the employment challenges of Quebec's English-speaking community. SEE ANGLOS ON **A4**

'Clock is ticking' to save clinics as Bill 2 talks collapse again

Point of no return comes next week



ALLISON HANES

The future of primary care rests on a knife's edge in Quebec after negotiations that had resumed last week between the govern-

ment and the medical federation representing family doctors broke down again Thursday over a new remuneration model being imposed on physicians. More family medicine groups, known as GMFs in French, announced this week they are closing because they won't have enough funds to keep the doors open under Bill 2, while other clinics warned they will reach the point of no return next Friday if the law is not retracted or substantially changed before it comes into effect on Jan. 1. SEE HANES ON **A2**



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