



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 2, 2018

Nationalist Party Wrests Control of Legislature From Liberals in Quebec

The [Coalition Avenir Québec \(CAQ\)](#), which is usually described as a center-right party, won the vote in Quebec on October 1 with a clear majority, winning 74 of 125 seats in the National Assembly of Quebec, the province's legislative body.

This represented a defeat for the incumbent Liberal Party, which has held power for 13 out of the last 15 years, but will now have just 32 seats in the National Assembly. The Québec Solidaire party picked up seven seats and will now have 10. It is a leftist party describing itself as sovereigntist, green, alter-globalizationist, and feminist. The Parti Québécois, which advocates national sovereignty for Quebec and independence of the province from Canada, lost 19 seats and will now have just three.

"It's a landslide, and a surprise," Hugo Cyr, dean of the School of Political Science and Law at Université du Québec à Montréal was quoted by Bloomberg as saying. "In a fight between the CAQ and the Liberals, those who were looking for a change went to the CAQ."

Coalition Avenir Québec was founded in 2011 by millionaire businessman François Legault (shown) and is regarded as a "pro-business" party. It also proposes limits on immigration to Quebec. Legault campaigned on a plan to admit 10,000 fewer immigrants a year and to expel new residents who fail tests on French and Quebec values within three years.

Legault could be described as a fiscal conservative who told the media, "My message to the markets is that we will be responsible."

The CAQ has pledged to reduce the size of the province's budget by about C\$1.2 billion on a total budget of about C\$124 billion by 2023. It also plans to pay off the province's debt with a one-time payment of C\$10 billion by the end of March, which could reduce annual interest payments by C\$300 million.

Bloomberg noted that Quebec has become the second major province in recent months to upset a Liberal government and cited Ontario as an example. Doug Ford's Progressive Conservatives won the vote in Ontario in June. The report observed that these conservative victories represent growing opposition to Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau's goals for Canada at the provincial level. Of the last five incumbent Liberal governments to face the electorate, four have either lost or failed to win conclusively.



Image: screenshot from CAQ website



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