

PRESS RELEASE

More Electoral Candidates support Abdelkader Belaoui Point St Charles support grows

Press Conference: 19 January 2006, 11 a.m.

Maison St-Charles, 1945 Mullins St., room 155, 2nd floor, Montreal

Montreal, Qc. – Bloc and NDP candidates for Jeanne Le Ber have come forward to endorse Mr. Abdelkader Belaoui's struggle to remain in Canada. Mr. Belaoui took sanctuary in St. Gabriel's church in the Jeanne Le Ber riding on 1 January 2006, to avoid a deportation slated for 5 January. The backing of Mr. Thierry St-Cyr and Mr. Matthew McLaughlin adds to the support the Point St-Charles resident has already received from the Liberal incumbent, the Honorable Liza Frulla.

Matthew McLaughlin, NDP Candidate in Jeanne-Le Ber described the case as "another example of the deplorable state of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The arbitrary, unappealable refugee board hearings; the poor training of refugee officials; the failure to take his situation into account; the barriers imposed on him in finding work; the discrimination he suffered because of his blindness; and in general, the institutional culture in which everything seems to be set up to exclude people from Canada rather than welcome them and see that they take their place in our society." Senior NDP member Alexa McDonough has already spoken out on Mr. Belaoui's behalf.

Increasing numbers of community groups in Point St. Charles are supporting Mr. Belaoui, including the Table de concertation Action-Gardien de Pointe St-Charles, Services Juridiques Communautaires de Pointe St-Charles, the Clinique Communautaire de Pointe Saint-Charles and the Welfare Rights Committee of Point St. Charles.

Jean Lalande, Coordinator of Welfare Rights stated, "Mr. Belaoui is well integrated to the life of our community; he participates in numerous community activities and has made many friends in the local population. Abdelkader is now one of ours; this is why so many people here are concerned about his safety." Point St-Charles is an historic community of Montreal, known for its solidarity and tradition of struggle for the rights of the oppressed.

Since his arrival in Canada in 2003, Mr. Belaoui has worked hard to build a new life for himself and achieve the autonomy, dignity and security he was striving for. He has become a full and active member of his community in Point St-Charles. He has put down roots; this is his home.

-30-

Source: Committee to support Abdelkader Belaoui
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