

**An Appeal to Change the Name of Proposed Bill No. 383
from "An Act Establishing French Canadian American Day,"
to "An Act Establishing Franco-American Day"**

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To the Committee on Government Administration and Elections,

I am making an appeal for your committee to change the name of the proposed bill, S.B. No. 383, currently entitled "An Act Establishing French Canadian American Day," to a name simpler and more historically accurate, "An Act Establishing Franco-American Day." Here are my reasons for the change in the name of the proposed bill.

First, the term "Franco-American" has been used by at least four organizations in the State of Connecticut to mean "French-Canadian-American."

The organization called "Les Canadiens-Américains du Connecticut" held its first convention in Willimantic in 1885, and it published its meeting minutes in the book, *Histoire et Statistiques des Canadiens-Américains du Connecticut, 1885-1898*, a book that is available at the Connecticut State Library.¹ At its 16th convention in 1902, the organization started to use the name, "Union des Franco-Américains du Connecticut," as reported by the French-language newspaper from Woonsocket, Rhode Island, *L'Union*.² At its 17th convention in 1905, the *Norwich Bulletin* used the term "Franco-American" in its report of the organization, "Franco-American Convention: Opening Day of State Meeting in Danielson."³ At its 23rd convention in 1917, the organization formally adopted the name "Union des Franco-Américains du Connecticut," as reported in the *Willimantic Chronicle*, the *Norwich Bulletin*, *L'Union* of Woonsocket, Rhode Island and *L'Opinion Publique* of Worcester, Massachusetts.⁴ One of the officers of Union des Franco-Américains du Connecticut, Alphonse Chagnon, wrote about the formal adoption of the name in 1917 in a history that he published in 1930 for another Franco-American organization based in Willimantic.⁵ On June 13, 1956, the organization formally incorporated in the State of Connecticut as "Union of Franco-Americans of Connecticut, Inc."⁶ On Sept. 21, 1983, the same organization re-incorporated under its French name, "L'Union des Franco-Américains du Connecticut, Inc."⁷

Three other Franco-American organizations that are active and incorporated in Connecticut are the Franco-American Civic and Social Club in Willimantic, the Franco-American Social Club in Waterbury, and the Franco-American War Veterans, Post 26 in New Britain.⁸

Conversely, the only organization with "French-Canadian" in its name of incorporation is the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut, Inc., which incorporated in the State of Connecticut on July 17, 1981.⁹ I have been active with the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut for nearly 20 years, for I have been a member since 1992, and a director since 1997.

Second, the term “Franco-American” is in current use to mean “French-Canadian-American” outside of the State of Connecticut. During the third week of June, there is “La Semaine Franco-Américaine,” meaning “the Franco-American Week,” celebrated in the City of Lowell. In Manchester, N.H., the Franco-American Center at 52 Concord Street is still in existence, but is currently in the process of relocating to St. Anselm College in Manchester. There is another Franco-American Center on the campus of the University of Maine at Orono, where the semi-annual journal is published, *Le Forum*. In 1899, La Société Historique Franco-Américaine was legally incorporated in the State of Massachusetts, and the organization is still in existence. In 2007, the board of directors of La Société Historique Franco-Américaine contributed \$10,000 for the erection of a monument just outside of Quebec City, known as the Franco-American Monument, since it commemorates the migration of French-Canadians into New England.¹⁰

Third, there are at least sixteen book-length histories and biographies on the “French-Canadian-Americans” that use the term “Franco-American” in the title. In 1957, Rosaire Dion-Levesque published his collection of 287 biographies in his 933-page book, *Silhouettes Franco-Américains*, meaning “Franco-American Profiles.”¹¹ In 1958, Robert Rumilly published his 552-page history on the subject with the title: *Histoire des Franco-Américains*, meaning, “History of the Franco-Americans.”¹² In 1985, C. Stewart Doty published his 163-page compilation of biographies, *The First Franco-Americans: New England Life Histories from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1938-1939*.¹³ In 1990, Yves Roby published his 434-page history, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1776-1930*.¹⁴ Also in 1990, Dr. Claire Quintal edited and published through the Institut français at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts the 363-page collection of essays entitled *Les Franco-Américains et leurs institutions scolaires*, meaning “The Franco-Americans and Their Educational Institutions.”¹⁵ In 1991, Armand Chartier published his 436-page history, *Histoire des Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1775-1990*.¹⁶ In 1992, Dr. Quintal published the 185-page collection of essays, *La Littérature franco-américaine, écrivains et écritures: Franco-American Literature, Writers and Their Writings*.¹⁷ In 1993, Robert Bisailon published a compilation of 1,235 biographies in a 239-page book, *Franco-American Biographies of the Greater Waterbury Area*.¹⁸ Also in 1993, Dr. Quintal published a 202-page collection of essays, *Religion catholique et appartenance franco-américaine: Franco-Americans and Religion, Impact and Influence*.¹⁹ In 1994, Dr. Quintal published the 216-page collection of essays, *La Femme Franco-Américaine: The Franco-American Woman*.²⁰ In 1996, Dr. Quintal published the 683-page collection of essays, *Steeple and Smokestacks: A Collection of Essays on the Franco-American Experience in New England*.²¹ In 1999, Armand Chartier published a second edition of his earlier history in English, *The Franco-Americans of New England: A History*.²² In 2000, Yves Roby published his 526-page history, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et Réalités*.²³ In 2002, Gregoire J. Fluet, (who a Roman Catholic priest at St. Bridget of Kildare Parish in Moodus, Conn.), completed his doctoral dissertation in history at Clark University in Worcester, Mass. His dissertation is a study of immigration from French Canada into Putnam, Conn., and the title is: *From French-Canadian to Franco-American: Cultural Survival and Reinvention of Nationality in a Connecticut Yankee Town, 1855-1895*.²⁴ In 2004, Roby’s later history was translated into English, *The Franco-Americans of New England: Dreams and Realities*.²⁵ In 2010, Robert B.

Perreault published his 144-page history, *Franco-American Life and Culture in Manchester, New Hampshire: Vive La Difference*.²⁶

In fairness, it must be noted that the term "French-Canadian" is also used for the ethnic group in the United States, as found in the following histories. In 1986, Gerard J. Brault published his 282-page history, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*.²⁷ In 1995, Rene L. Dugas Sr. of Norwich published a 235-page local history with many very good photographs, with the convulsed title: *The French Canadians in New England, 1871-1930: Taftville (The Early Years)*.²⁸ In 2001, he published a 162-page sequel history, *Taftville, Connecticut and the Industrial Revolution: The French Canadians in New England, Book II*.²⁹

Fourth, the term "Franco-American" to mean "French-Canadian-American," has been used by writers to identify themselves and their literature. Jack Kerouac in his novel, *Lonesome Traveler*, identified himself in his "Author's Introduction," as: "Nationality: Franco-American."³⁰ In 1981, the National Materials Development Center for French and Creole in Manchester, N.H., published a nine-volume set of novels, short stories and plays with the title, *Anthologie de la littérature franco-américaine de la Nouvelle-Angleterre*, meaning "Anthology of the Franco-American Literature of New England."³¹

To conclude, I have shown that the term "Franco-American" has been used for more than 100 years to mean "French-Canadian-American." Also, I have shown that numerous historians and writers have used the term in the definition as found in the previous sentence. Also, I have shown that the term has been used by at least four organizations in the State of Connecticut, and at least in one in each of the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. Therefore, I have shown there is sufficient evidence that the proposed name of S.B. No. 383, currently named "An Act Establishing French Canadian American Day," to be changed to "An Act Establishing Franco-American Day."

¹ Arthur O. Baribault, editor. *Histoire et Statistiques des Canadiens-Américains du Connecticut, 1885-1898. L'Opinion Publique*: Worcester, Mass., 1899.

² "Nos Compatriotes du Connecticut: La seizieme convention des Franco-Américains du Connecticut..." *L'Union* (Woonsocket, RI), 1 novembre 1902, p. 17, col. 2.

³ "Franco-American Convention: Opening Day of State Meeting at Danielson – One Hundred and Thirty Delegates in Attendance..." *Norwich Bulletin*, Wed. Sept. 20, 1905, p. 6, cols. 1-2; p. 8, col. 2.

⁴ "Franco-American Societies Holding Convention Here: About One Hundred Delegates Attended the Session at St. Mary's Hall Today," *Willimantic Daily Chronicle*, Tue. Sept. 18, 1917, p. 1, col. 4. "Franco-American Convention Today: Final Session Was Held at St. Mary's Hall This Afternoon," *Willimantic Daily Chronicle*, Wed. Sept. 19, 1917, p. 3, cols. 1-2. "Franco-American Delegates Continue Convention," *Norwich Bulletin*, Wed. Sept. 19, 1917, p. 2, cols. 1-2. Franco-American Delegates Elect Executive Committee," *Norwich Bulletin*, Thurs. Sept. 20, 1917, p. 2, col. 4. Baribault, Larue et Roy, "Les Franco-Américains du Connecticut: Important congres tenu a Willimantic," *L'Union* (Woonsocket, RI), octobre 1917, p. 3, cols. 1-2. "Le Congres des F.-A. de l'Etat du

Connecticut," *L'Opinion Publique* (Worcester, Mass.) mercredi, 19 septembre 1917, p. 1, cols. 4-5.

⁵ Alphonse Chagnon, "An Historical Outline of the Societe St. Jean Baptiste de Willimantic," *Programme Souvenir du Cinquantenaire de la Societe de Ste[sic]-Jean-Baptiste de Willimantic, Inc., 1880-1930, Les 16, 17, et 18, Juin 1930*. Translated by Albert J. Marceau, and reprinted in the *Connecticut Maple Leaf*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pages 381-7.

⁶ State of Connecticut, Secretary of the State Office, Commercial Recording Division, Business ID No.0060798. <http://www.concord-sots.ct.gov/CONCORD/online?sn=InquiryServlet&eid=99>

⁷ State of Connecticut, Secretary of the State Office, Commercial Recording Division, Business ID No. 0147561.

⁸ State of Connecticut, Secretary of the State Office, Commercial Recording Division: Franco-American Civic and Social Club in Willimantic (Business ID 0051697), the Franco-American Social Club in Waterbury (Business ID 0054581), and the Franco-American War Veterans, Post 26 in New Britain (Business ID 0943520).

⁹ State of Connecticut, Secretary of the State Office, Commercial Recording Division, French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut, Inc., Business ID 0120560.

¹⁰ Albert J. Marceau, "The Three Franco-American Monuments in the Promenade Champlain, Quebec," *Le Forum* (Le Centre Franco-Américaine, l'Université de Maine a Orono), Printemps/Spring 2010, pages 13-15.

¹¹ Rosaire Dion-Levesque. *Silhouettes Franco-Américains*. Publications de l'Association Canado-Américain: Manchester, N.H., 1957. 933 pages.

¹² Robert Rumilly, *Histoire des Franco-Américains*. Montreal: l'Union St-Jean-Baptiste d'Amerique, 1958. 552 pages

¹³ C. Stewart Doty. *The First Franco-Americans: New England Life Histories from the Federal Writers' Project, 1938-1939*. University of Maine at Orono Press: Orono, Me., 1985. 163 pages.

¹⁴ Yves Roby, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1776-1930*. Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 1990. 434 pages.

¹⁵ Claire Quintal, Editor. *Les Franco-Américains et leurs institutions scolaires*. Institut français, Assumption College: Worcester, Mass, 1990. 363 pages.

¹⁶ Armand Chartier. *Histoire des Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1775-1990*. Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 1991. 436 pages.

¹⁷ Claire Quintal, Editor. *La Littérature franco-américaine, écrivains et écritures: Franco-American Literature, Writers and Their Writings*. Institut français, Assumption College: Worcester, Mass, 1992. 185 pages.

¹⁸ Robert Bisailon. *Franco-American Biographies of the Greater Waterbury Area*. 1993. 239 pages.

¹⁹ Claire Quintal, Editor. *Religion catholique et appartenance franco-américaine: Franco-Americans and Religion, Impact and Influence*. Institut français, Assumption College: Worcester, Mass, 1993. 202 pages.

²⁰ Claire Quintal, Editor. *La Femme Franco-Américaine : The Franco-American Woman*. Institut français, Assumption College: Worcester, Mass, 1994. 216 pages.

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- ²¹ Claire Quintal, Editor. *Steeple and Smokestacks: A Collection of Essays on the Franco-American Experience in New England*. Institut français, Assumption College: Worcester, Mass, 1996. 683 pages.
- ²² Armand Chartier, translated by Claire Quintal and Robert J. Lemieux. *The Franco-Americans of New England: A History*. ACA Assurance: Manchester, N.H.; Institut français, Assumption College: Worcester, Mass, 1999. 537 pages.
- ²³ Yves Roby. *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Rêves et Realites*. Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 2000. 526 pages.
- ²⁴ Gregoire J. Fluet. *From French-Canadian to Franco-American: Cultural Survival and Reinvention of Nationality in a Connecticut Yankee Town, 1855-1895*. Dissertation, Clark University, Worcester, Mass., 2002. 454 pages.
- ²⁵ Yves Roby, translated by Mary Ricard. *The Franco-Americans of New England: Dreams and Realities*. Sillery (Québec): Septentrion, 2004. 543 pages.
- ²⁶ Robert B. Perreault. *Franco-American Life and Culture in Manchester, New Hampshire: Vive La Difference*. The History Press: Charleston, S.C., 2010. 144 pages.
- ²⁷ Gerard J. Brault. *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*. University of New England Press: Hanover, N.H., 1986. 282 pages.
- ²⁸ Rene L. Dugas Sr. *The French Canadians in New England, 1871-1930: Taftville (The Early Years)*. Rene L. Dugas, Sr.: Taftville, Conn., 1995. 235 pages.
- ²⁹ Rene L. Dugas Sr. *Taftville, Connecticut and the Industrial Revolution: The French Canadians in New England, Book II*. Rene L. Dugas, Sr.: Taftville, Conn., 2001. 162 pages.
- ³⁰ Jack Kerouac. *Lonesome Traveler*. Jack Kerouac, 1960: Grove Press, 1988. 183 pages.
- ³¹ Richard Santerre, Editor. *Anthologie de la littérature franco-américaine de la Nouvelle-Angleterre*. National Materials Development Center for French and Creole: Manchester, N.H., 1981. Nine volumes.