



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-01640**

BY: **MR. BARSALOU-DUVAL (PIERRE-BOUCHER — LES PATRIOTES — VERCHÈRES)**

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 19, 2017**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HON. AHMED HUSSEN**

Response by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Immigration

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government's ability to provide quality, timely and efficient service is central to ensuring a high-performing immigration system that maintains the confidence of Canadians and is reflective of the Government's goal to continue welcoming those who want to contribute to the future of Canada.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is a service-focused Department that operates a vast service delivery network, interacting with millions of clients in Canada and across the globe every year, including applicants for electronic travel authorizations, visas, permanent residence, asylum and resettlement, citizenship and passports, as well as Canadian sponsors, employers and schools, amongst others.

In recent years, coordinated efforts to increase levels space, invest in technology, and re-engineer existing processes have resulted in: the Express Entry application system for economic immigration; reduced inventories and faster processing times for spousal and citizenship grant applications; and, increased availability of electronic application forms and online tools to check application processing times and access case status information.

Despite these significant modernization gains, the Government acknowledges that clients are also concerned about how we engage with them over the course of their wait time. The Department's services touch on very important decisions and milestones in people's lives, and it is imperative they are delivered in a way that reflects the very best of what Canada has to offer.

In 2017, the Government mandated the Department to work on reducing processing times and to improve its service to clients. Service excellence is a key tenet of the new client service approach implemented at the Client Support Centre in January 2017. The Department is focused on resetting the relationship with the client to be more welcoming and assuring, and geared towards building trust with each interaction. The Department is also increasingly focused on providing agents with advanced training, guidance and support to ensure their soft skills are perfected and aligned with best practices across the network.

In addition to training in the processing of applications in various categories, such as the Family Class, officers also receive broader training in legal and other principles applicable to all cases. This training includes, but is not limited to, cross-cultural sensitivity; interviews; working with interpreters; values and ethics; code of conduct; exceptional circumstances: use of humanitarian and compassionate consideration (the discretionary provision of section 25 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* permitting exemptions justified on humanitarian and compassionate considerations); and temporary resident permits. An example is the training module on Procedural Fairness and the Act which outlines the requirements of administrative law principles of procedural fairness and the Government's human rights obligations.

IRCC staff must abide by our Departmental Code of Conduct, including all elements of the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector. Values and ethics are at the heart of IRCC decisions. Officers abide by high ethical standards and have the delegated authority to assess and make positive and negative decisions which take into account legislative and regulatory provisions related to eligibility and admissibility. Functioning within the legislative framework of IRPA, the Department is bound to principles of procedural fairness.

Different mechanisms are in place to monitor work performance and quality of decisions, including periodic employee performance evaluations and quality assurance exercises. Performance audits may also be conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada to assess how well activities, responsibilities and resources are being managed.

Where an application is refused, the Department issues refusal letters which identify which legislative or regulatory requirement(s) have not been met. There are mechanisms in place for applicants who disagree with a decision. Applicants for temporary residence may opt to reapply if they have new information to provide or if their situation has changed such that it would address the issue with their initial application. In permanent residence streams, sponsors in the Family Class may generally appeal a refusal of their relative's permanent residence application to the Immigration Appeal Division at the Immigration and Refugee Board. In addition, under Canadian immigration, citizenship and passport law, applicants have recourse to the Federal Court to seek judicial review or judicial review with leave and writ of mandamus to compel the Department to render a decision. Applicants may also file a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.