

From: Alison Wynne Cumbaa (PCLS) [cumbaaa@lao.on.ca]  
Sent: May 13, 2010 6:19 PM  
To: Kennedy, Gerard - M.P.; Ignatieff, Michael - M.P.; Bevilacqua, Maurizio - M.P.; Coderre, Denis - M.P.; Karygiannis, Jim - M.P.  
Cc: ~Citizenship & Immigration/Citoyenneté et immigration  
Subject: Bill C-11 concerns

Good evening, elected representatives:

I am writing out of sincere concern for the proposed changes to Canada's immigration and refugee laws, changes as proposed in Bill C-11. I am also quite disturbed to hear that this Bill is being fast-tracked, effectively denying ordinary Canadians as well as community groups and stakeholders, their rightful opportunity to meaningfully respond to the proposed changes.

The proposed changes are discriminatory and a disastrous step backwards for Canada. The changes will put women and children at risk, endanger the lives of persecuted and unprotected peoples, undermine international human rights guidelines and progress, and result in untold suffering and deaths for persons managing acute and chronic health conditions. Vulnerable individuals will be left stranded, without recourse and oftentimes without the advocacy they need to reasonably navigate the system. They will ultimately be victimized again, but this time by Canada itself, a supposedly great nation, recognized across the globe for its enlightened and reasonable policies and practices.

There are several practical reasons why the proposed changes are problematic or worse. Refugee claimants will not have enough time to prepare for their hearings or seek the competent legal assistance they require. They will not have their claims heard by independent decision makers -- and not heard at all in some cases, simply by originating from a certain country. Finally and callously, refugee claimants will be barred from applying to remain in Canada under Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds, regardless of their circumstances.

Meanwhile, none of the proposed changes will impact the efficiency or reliability of the system. And with refugee and H&C applicants comprising such a small percentage of Canada's immigrants, there is no excuse, whether fiscal or political or ideological, for a targeted campaign against them. In fact, to ordinary Canadians and the international community, these changes will be seen as nothing more than a desperate attempt to single out, and drive out, refugees, perhaps racially motivated, at best misguided.

Please remember that you were each elected to represent Canadians and give a voice to our concerns; this carries with it quite a responsibility. You are charged with the task of communicating our opinions and wishes to the wider government bodies to which we cannot personally appeal. I ask you to truly hear, and heed, the cries from so many Canadians, cries in support of the vulnerable few.

Thank you for your time.

Alison Cumbaa