



Support Bill C-280 compelling the implementation of the Refugee Appeal Division

1. Plan the meeting

- Plan your remarks carefully and be selective. You can't hope to communicate everything. It is better for the MP to go away with a clear message, than to be confused by too much information.
- If possible, find out in advance a bit about what the MP has done or said relating to refugees in general, or the Refugee Appeal Division in particular (you can do a search on the Parliamentary website at: www.parl.gc.ca)

2. During the meeting

Here are some suggestions to keep the MP or their assistant engaged and interested during the first minutes of your meeting, by phone or in person. Keep your comments brief to leave time for an engaging discussion with the MP and ask them for their commitments, instead of presenting to the MP for the entire meeting. Insist on a straight answer. Does your representative agree or disagree with you?

This structure is meant to serve as a guideline, not as a rigid and only approach to your meeting with the MP.

a) Introduction / Ice Breaker (1 minute)

- Thank the MP for the opportunity to speak to them. Present yourself and if you live/work in the constituency.
- Explain that you are part of a nation-wide organization representing over 180 organizations, the Canadian Council for Refugees, dealing with refugee and immigration issues who are visiting MPs to discuss the importance of implementing the Refugee Appeal Division. This bill has already been debated in the House of Commons, but because of amendments made to the Bill by the Senate, it must return to the House of Commons for approval. The amendments to Bill C-280 will be debated in the House of Commons when it reconvenes in the fall of 2008. According to the regular schedule, it could weeks before the vote, but if there is unanimous consent, it can go through more quickly.

b) Identify the Issue (1 minute)

- Despite the changes to the original Bill, you are asking your MP to approve the amendments to Bill C-280 and its quick passage through the House of Commons. This bill calls for the implementation of the Refugee Appeal Division (RAD), as outlined in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)*. To date, the sections of IRPA on the Refugee Appeal Division have not been implemented and further delays put the lives of refugees at stake.
- If you can, link the importance of the implementing the refugee appeal to the local community.

c) Present what is at stake (5 minutes)

- *Refugee lives are in the hands of a single person* - In 2002, the government went ahead with sections of the IRPA that reduce the number of board members hearing a claim from two to one member. This means that a single person decides the fate of a refugee claimant, even though a wrong decision may mean that a claimant is sent back to face persecution, torture and even death.
- *Any decision-making process will make mistakes* - As human beings, we are all bound to make mistakes from time to time, however hard we try. An effective system, which includes a refugee appeal, recognizes this and provides a mechanism to correct errors.
- Cite some local examples of the need to implement the RAD, or refer to the cases highlighted in the 'Refugee Appeal Backgrounder', available online at: www.ccrweb.ca/RADbackgrounder.pdf

d) Questions from your MP

- Your MP may have questions about the Refugee Appeal Division and its importance. Refer to the 'Refugee Appeal Division Backgrounder' for possible answers to Frequently Asked Questions, available online at: www.ccrweb.ca/RADbackgrounder.pdf
- If you are meeting with the MP in person, give the MP the one-pager and backgrounder outlining the issue. Offer to send the MP a copy of the one-pager and backgrounder by email, if preferred.

e) Solutions/Requests to MP (1 1/2 minutes)

- Ask for the MP's support and vote in favour of Bill C-280, calling for the implementation of the Refugee Appeal Division, and for its speedy passage through the House of Commons.
- *Try to leave the meeting with a straight answer from the MP.*

f) Thank You and Follow-up (1 minute)

- Thank the MP for his/her time. Recap the commitments made and promise to follow up with their office.
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