

A COUNTRY WITH SECOND CLASS CITIZENS? COULD IT HAPPEN IN CANADA?

ACTION ITEMS

- Sign the petition at [Change.org/BillC-24](https://change.org/billc-24)
- Contact us for more info and hard copy of petitions: actionteambc@gmail.com
- Call your local MP, and tell them to oppose Bill C-24
- Join our Facebook group: Action Team



Canadian Council for Refugees
Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés

**ACTION
TEAM**

CONTEXT OF BILL C-24

On February 6th, 2014, the Conservative government introduced a new Bill C-24—that attempts “to strengthen the value of Canadian citizenship” and with the purpose of “streamlining the application process” the bill constructs myths that both generalize and discriminate against prospective citizens. The proposed bill would make the process of obtaining citizenship much more difficult for various reasons. This bill would make citizenship more expensive by tripling the cost. It would replace judges as decision makers with immigration officers, and would give the minister of Immigration and Citizenship new powers to remove or grant citizenship arbitrarily.

AREAS OF CONCERN

- Permanent residents would have to live **4 of the last 6 years** in Canada before applying for citizenship, compared to **3 of last 4 years** under the current law. Immigrants will have to wait longer before being able to participate fully in **Canadian society and enjoy all the rights of full membership**.
- The cost of the Canadian citizenship would increase without explanation from **\$100 to \$400** with the new bill. The government wants prospective citizens to pay for the backlog the current administration created in the streamlining of citizenship applications.
- **The age range to take the language test for Canadian citizenship would also be extended from 18- 55 years of age to 14-67 years of age.** The elderly and youth in most cases are vulnerable members of society, therefore, we should ease the process of getting citizenship for those aged 55 up and 18 under, so that they can secure full status.
- The minister of immigration will have the power to revoke or grant citizenship status without an adequate or **transparent administrative or judicial process**.
- **If you are only a permanent resident, and you are guilty of minimal offences, you would be forbidden to apply for citizenship.** It is wrong to use citizenship rules to punish people for minor wrong-doings. The criminal system is the proper way to deal with crimes.
- **There would be no language interpreter offered for applicants during their citizenship interviews and an advanced understanding of language would be needed** (either English or French) with this new law, which means that Canada would not be recognizing the difficulties of learning a new language that some immigrants may face.
- Permanent residents who become citizens would be forced to sign an “intend to reside”, and their citizenship can be denied, or revoked if immigration officers assume that their intentions to reside in Canada are false. This violates the freedom of mobility that every Canadian is entitled to as stated in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms from 1982.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Exclude from the legislation powers to revoke or grant citizenship, and assure that this power remains with impartial citizenship judges.
- Keep language and knowledge test requirements within the current age bracket (18-54 years), and avoid its extension without prior consultation with stakeholders.
- Re-store citizenship fees and language requirements to 2006 levels .
- Remove the rule that permanent residents would not be allowed to apply for citizenship if convicted of minimal offences.
- Keep the right to an interpreter if needed during citizenship interviews.
- Engaged the settlement sector, Immigrant and Refugee advocacy groups, and other community stakeholders in the construction of a new proposal that addresses the real gaps in the citizenship act.