



Sponsorship of parents and grandparents

Comments on the proposed change to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations

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The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is strongly opposed to the proposed regulatory change, which would require sponsors to show a higher income over a longer period before they can sponsor and would increase the sponsorship period from 10 years to 20 years.

The following are the CCR's principal reasons for opposing the proposed change.

- The proposed change undermines one of the objectives of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, which is to reunite families.
- The increased financial requirements will mean that only the wealthy can sponsor their parents. Family reunification should not be a privilege reserved to the wealthy.
- The changes will disproportionately affect racialized communities and women, as they are economically disadvantaged in Canada, and therefore will be less likely to meet the higher income thresholds.
- The focus on economic contributions ignores the many other contributions newcomers make to our societies. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act recognizes in its objectives that newcomers make many types of contributions. The first objective, with respect to immigration, is "to permit Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration". The second is "to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society". Keeping families together is an important social benefit for the country.
- Parents and grandparents often support the members of the family who are earning a salary, for example by providing childcare. For lower income immigrants, bringing a parent may mean that the immigrant can work fulltime because someone is available to care for young children.
- Immigrants who are contributing to Canada may leave if they can't bring their parents here.
- Refugees who arrive in Canada as unaccompanied minors do not have the right to family reunification with their parents and siblings. The proposed changes would greatly delay, and likely prevent, their ever being able to sponsor them once they are adults.
- Twenty year sponsorships increase the risk of serious hardships for families, in the case of illness or accident. Immigrants are paying the same taxes as Canadians: it is not fair that they should be deprived for decades of the services paid for by those taxes.
- Longer sponsorships increase the risk of abuse because the relationship of financial dependency makes it more difficult for parents and grandparents to leave the home if the relationship is becoming abusive.