



Reforming the Citizenship Act: Bill C-6

Bill C-6, currently before Parliament, will make important changes to Canada's Citizenship Act. The bill mostly reverses changes made under the previous Bill C-24, which took effect in 2015.



Under Bill C-6

- ✓ Refugees and others can count time spent in Canada before becoming a permanent resident towards the 3 years needed to apply for citizenship (currently they cannot).
- ✓ People need to live in Canada for 3 out of past 5 years to qualify for citizenship (currently 4 out of 6 years).
- ✓ Language and knowledge tests apply only to people aged 18 to 54 (instead of those aged 14-64 years, as currently).
- ✓ People cannot lose their citizenship in cases of "treason" or "terrorism"
- ✓ Applicants for citizenship do not need to show an "intent to reside in Canada".

Earlier access to citizenship means better integration of newcomers.

Promoting citizenship for young and older applicants!

All citizens must be treated equally

More changes needed

Bill C-6 contains many good measures but other changes are needed.

Equal access to citizenship

- > Create a right to apply for citizenship for youth under 18 who do not have a parent or legal guardian in Canada.
- > Create a system to exempt people from citizenship fees if they can't afford them.

Adult citizenship fees are now \$630

- > Provide better accommodation for applicants with disabilities.

Equal access to citizenship: remove the barriers faced by some!

Fair treatment of applicants for citizenship

- > Prevent long wait times by requiring the government to process applications within a reasonable time.
- > Stop the use of citizenship applications to launch a process to strip status from former refugees (through cessation).

Since 2012, some former refugees who apply for citizenship end up facing loss of all status in Canada because the government argues that they are no longer refugees.

Rules about gaining or losing citizenship must be based on rights. The process must be fair.

Reducing statelessness

- > Restore Canadian citizenship to second generation born abroad to Canadian citizens. In the alternative, at least give citizenship for those who would otherwise be stateless.

Since 2009, the second generation of children born abroad to a Canadian citizen are not Canadian citizens, even if this means that they are stateless.

Welcoming newcomers as citizens helps them become full participating members of our society.

Fair process for loss of citizenship

- > Provide better procedural rights for loss of citizenship based on fraud or misrepresentation.

There should not be lesser rights for citizens than for permanent residents facing loss of status!

Citizenship = a status from which rights derive.

Citizenship is good for mental health! Having secure status reduces stress and helps newcomers feel fully part of the Canadian family.