

Oppose new immigration Act (Bill C-49)

The proposed new 'anti-human smuggling' law announced last week by the Harper government will be dangerous for women who experience violence.

Using the arrival of Tamil asylum seekers off the coast of BC in the summer, the feds have crafted a law that further punishes refugees and does little to end human smuggling.



Some features of the new amendment to Canada's *Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act*:

- Refugees coming in within a "group" can be designated as an "irregular arrival" and incarcerated for up to a year. A "group" is undefined with respect to numbers and could be anything from two on.
- At the end of the year, a "designated" person can then be held up to six-month periods without review.
- So-called "designated" arrivals will not be able to apply for permanent residency in Canada for five years, whether or not they are eventually determined to be in need of protection under the *Act*.
- During this period they cannot leave Canada, access health services (other than limited necessary medical intervention) or apply to have family members join them.
- "Designated" refugees must report to authorities for five years before applying for permanent residency and can have their refugee protection reversed if conditions in their home country change or they breach any conditions on them under the 'anti-human smuggling' provisions. They will be deported.
- Decisions regarding "designated" refugees under the *Act* cannot be appealed.

In a clear attempt to paint these refugees as criminals and terrorists, the government had the Minister of table the bill.

This law endangers women who experience violence.

For women who flee violence in their home country—from abusive partners, warlords or other men who prey on women—or who are trafficked into Canada, this is a destructive new page in an already unfriendly Canadian refugee and immigration law.

Women often have to flee without papers or identification and have paid enormous sums to the smugglers in an effort to save their lives and those of their children. They are not "customers" of the smugglers, as some proponent of the legislation

suggest. They are the victims of smugglers and traffickers, desperate to find a safe place for themselves and their children, whether or not they arrive in a “group”.

The *Bill* is now at the second reading stage. From there it goes to a committee for review. You can take action to support refugees and women struggling to end the violence in their lives by opposing the legislation now and throughout the process until it has been read three times in Parliament.

Here’s what you can do in only minutes today:

Write expressing your opposition to the Bill to the following contacts in Ottawa:

Minister of Public Safety:

Vic Toews Cons Toews.V@parl.gc.ca (613) 992-3128

Minister of Citizenship and Immigration:

Jason Kenney Cons Kenney.J@parl.gc.ca (613) 992-2235

Party leaders:

Stephen Harper Cons Harper.S@parl.gc.ca (613) 992-4211
Michael Ignatieff Lib Ignatieff.M@parl.gc.ca (613) 995-9364
Jack Layton NDP Layton.J@parl.gc.ca (613) 995-7224
Gilles Duceppe BQ Duceppe.G@parl.gc.ca (613) 992-6779

From the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration:

David Tilson Cons (Chair) TilsoD@parl.gc.ca (613) 995-7813
Thierry St-Cyr BQ (Vice-Chair) St-Cyr.T@parl.gc.ca (613) 995-6403 (critic)
Borys Wrzesnewskyj Lib (Vice-Chair) Wrzesnewskyj.B@parl.gc.ca (613) 947-5000

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Brent Rathgeber	Cons	Rathgeber.B@parl.gc.ca	(613) 996-4722
Ben Lobb	Cons	Lobb.B@parl.gc.ca	(613) 992-8234
Maria Mourani	BQ	Mourani.Ma@parl.gc.ca	(613) 992-0983 Critic

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or twitter/email your local radio and TV station (or any nearby). Make others aware of the potential harm to women and children fleeing violence.

Visit/call your local MP's office and let them know you oppose this Bill because of its potential harm to all refugees and especially to women who are trafficked into Canada or are fleeing violence. Get others to do the same. You can find your MP on this Action page under Find your representative.