

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE RACIST BILL C 50?

WHAT IS BILL C50? Recently the Conservative government introduced a series of amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act buried in Bill c-50, the budget bill. This undemocratic move sneaks in critical changes to immigration policy without proposing any of those changes before Parliament.

Under the proposed changes, even if someone meets the necessary- already stringent- criteria for a visa (such as permanent resident, visitor etc), the Minister and her department can reject the application without any Court review. The Minister will also have the power to issue quotas and restrictions on the category (including Family Class and Economic Class immigrants) and country of origin of people. Humanitarian and Compassionate applications no longer have to be examined if the applicant is outside Canada. Finally, the Minister will have the power to decide the order in which applications are processed, regardless of when they are filed.



WHAT IS WRONG WITH BILL C 50? This series of amendments places more power in the hands of the Immigration Minister to make arbitrary decisions and sanctions racial bias by allowing for different quotas from different countries like the historic Chinese-Exclusion Act and other racist measures. The government says there will be no discrimination as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be respected. But the Charter does not apply to potential immigrants. The government says these changes will not give them power to intervene in individual cases. However, the very nature of these changes is to allow for an officer's discretion in rejecting individual applications. The

government has said that the changes "are not intended to affect our objectives for family reunification". However, the bill includes powers for restrictions in the Family Class category (including sponsorships) and overseas Humanitarian and Compassionate claims.

The main reason the government is giving for Bill C50 is that it will fix the backlog problem. However, instead of getting rid of the inexcusably long waiting list by easing immigration bureaucratic controls, the governments' solution is to have the power to simply kick some people off the waiting list. Furthermore, the government is advising people they have 'good intentions', however intentions will not protect anyone. Indeed, while testifying before a Parliamentary Committee, the Minister admitted that what she is doing is to "limit the intake."

WHY DO GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATIONS LIKE BILL C 50? The major lobby for Bill C50 comes from employer organizations and business lobbies who want immigration policy to meet labour market needs, meaning immigrants are disposable other than their value as labour. The Conservative government says they are "welcoming record numbers of newcomers", however the reality is that the percentage of permanent residents is decreasing while there is an increase of vulnerable temporary migrant workers without basic rights. The favouring of migrant workers as commodities in indentured labour programs (similar to guest worker programs in the US) is taking place in an increasingly hostile climate to family class immigrants and refugees, who are perceived as security threats and/or foreigners who are being too accommodated.

WHAT CAN I DO? Concerned? You should be! Challenge Bill C50 and the notion that some migrants are more desirable or worthy of dignity than others. Do not be fooled by the Conservatives opportunistic announcements like the pending Komagatamaru apology and their unprecedented multimillion dollar advertisement campaign geared towards ethnic media only. Contact Stephen Harper and key MP's such as Stephane Dion, Ujjal Dosanjh, Hedy Fry, Raymond Chan, Nina Grewal, Sukh Dhaliwal, Peter Julian, and David Emerson.