



CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES

THIERRY ST-CYR, ing.
Député de Jeanne-Le Ber

Montréal, February 4, 2009

Dear Sir or Madam:

Today, I tabled in the House of Commons Bill C-291, which aims to implement the Refugee Appeal Division (RAD). This bill builds on Bill C-280, tabled by Bloc Member of Parliament Nicole Demers, which died on the order paper last session following the actions of Liberal and Conservative senators.

In 2001, when the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) was drafted, the members of the Committee on Citizenship and Immigration had agreed that claims filed by refugee protection claimants would be heard by only one member, instead of two. Prior to that, two members were assigned to each case, and the claimant needed the support of only one of the two members in order to be granted refugee status. The Liberal government reduced the number of members assigned to hear a case by half in an attempt to reduce the backlog of claims.

To compensate, an appeal mechanism was to be implemented to ensure a minimum of natural justice and to prevent arbitrariness as much as possible. This mechanism was set out in the legislation, but the Liberal government implemented the IRPA without the sections on the RAD. Consequently, claimants have no recourse for challenging the basis of a member's decision.

My bill, C-291, aims to remedy this situation by giving refugee protection claimants the right to appeal set out in the IRPA. We need your help to have Bill C-291 adopted, so that the RAD will be implemented at last.

I am therefore seeking your assistance by inviting you to complete the attached form, which asks all Members of Parliament to be in the House for the votes on C-291 and to support the bill. I also encourage you to forward this form to your contacts and partners.

Thank you for your support.

Thierry St-Cyr
Member of Parliament for Jeanne-Le Ber
Critic for Citizenship and Immigration
Bloc Québécois

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