



Vote 2015- Refugee Talking Points

www.crcna.org/vote2015-refugees

The various parties' commitments to increasing the numbers of Syrian refugees to resettle to Canada are very important and appreciated.

However, I am concerned that increased commitments of Syrians will be at the expense of other refugee populations. It is important that Canada allocate the necessary resources to process Syrian refugees to ensure resettled Syrian refugees will be additional to ongoing government and private sponsorships from other countries. Given the gravity of human suffering in Iraq, Syria, and many places around the world, the commitments to Syrian and Iraqi refugees must be *over and above* Canada's planned resettlement targets.

In the recent past, Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) like World Renew and communities involved in resettlement have struggled with complicated application procedures, long processing times, and unexplained delays. These complications have been dangerous for refugees waiting to be resettled, disempowering for community groups committed to sponsorship, and frustrating for SAHs. These administrative complications need to be addressed if SAHs and their community partners are to rise to the challenge of meeting these important commitments.

One deeply significant issue for refugees and sponsors has been the cancellation of the Interim Federal Health Program. Canada formerly carried drug, vision, dental and prosthetic benefits for privately sponsored refugees but removed these benefits as a cost cutting measure. This puts the health of refugees at risk and raises the spectre of high cost health care liabilities for sponsoring communities.

I believe it is important that the government work collaboratively, as it has so often in the past, with Sponsorship Agreement Holders like World Renew, to strengthen the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, which has brought so many refugees to this country and enriched the lives of both refugees and other Canadians.

Question: How will your party address the concerns of Sponsorship Agreement Holders so that refugee resettlement in the current crisis is as smooth as possible in this urgent time?

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