

November 30, 2020

Dear Members of the Committee for Immigration:

Re: Spousal Sponsorship Impact on Canadians

We are the Voices4Families Facebook group comprised of over 500 members. We are providing an account of the impact of the IRCC process during Covid-19. We have been stalled in the spousal sponsorship application process for the past 1 to 7 years. See, <https://datastudio.google.com/reporting/4dfa0378-b4fa-48a4-9654-d68740c14481/page/5LrnB>

The inability of the government to resolve the problems of reunification during this pandemic is negligent and after 9 months of inaction appears to be a deliberate disregard for our family unit.

The Minister implemented policy changes to facilitate the process to reunite spouses of foreign workers, unmarried couples and spouses of students. He even provided a pathway to permanent residency for out-of-status construction workers and a policy to benefit Canadian employers allowing for visitors to apply for a work permit without having to leave the country, in January 2020 and August 2020 respectively, [Application for Temporary Public Policy: Out-of-status construction workers in the Greater Toronto Area \(GTA\) - Canada.ca](#).

This shows the Minister has continuously adapted immigration policy for mercenary means. The disregard of tax-paying, hardworking Canadian Citizens/Residents and their children's human rights to grow up with both parents is especially irresponsible. This is causing irreversible mental, emotional and financial hardship. A solution for an immediate reunification by a Ministerial Instruction is required, which is within the powers of five ministers, primarily Minister Marco Mendicino.

A response to our survey, "Family Impact Statement form", identified lengthy and unlawful discriminatory practices. Two major barriers for immediate reunification include:

1. The interview process which violates two primary elements of procedural fairness; processing without undue delay and the right to fair and impartial decision-making. Our members have been flagged for interviews for undisclosed reasons. The interviews remain unscheduled. There is no virtual forum secured to conduct these interviews. Countries have lockdowns and restricted movement of their citizens, in person interview are essentially impossible. For these reasons the interview process needs to be waived.
2. Spousal Sponsorship Applications have been sent to overseas visa offices. Many of the offices remain closed and others are open with limited capacity, therefore halting the processing of applications since March 2020. The visa offices that are open are focused on processing economic immigration stream, not family class. Also, many of our members expressed concerns of the

assessment of their applications being reviewed by local visa staff vs trained Canadian decision makers. See, <https://visa.vfsglobal.com/geo/en/can/news/ministerial-instructions-by-ircc>

We recommend the Minister to implement a special policy for spousal sponsorship applications allowing the issuance of permanent resident visa where; the applicant provided a clear police certificate, the Canadian sponsor has been granted eligibility, and the application has already passed the 12-month processing time.

This process would require the immigration officer to review the application for the following:

- Evidence of Sponsor Eligibility
- Evidence of clear Criminal Record Check
- Evidence of legal marriage certificate

We would be happy to provide additional statements from other members and any further information.

Sincerely,

Voices4Families

voices4families@gmail.com

List of attachments:

1. November 26, 2020, Open Letter to the Leaders of our Country and the World - Family Reunification
2. November 26, 2020, Exemption for all deferred spousal sponsorship applications
3. Blank copy of the Family Sponsorship Impact Statement form
4. References
5. Description of the group



November 26, 2020

Open Letter to Our Nation's and Global Leaders -Family Reunification

Voices4Families would like to bring to your attention the exhausted efforts of Canadians in hopes to reunite with their families via the Spousal Sponsorship program. Our applications have surpassed the 12-month timeline and we have spent the pandemic alone without the support and love of our families.

The announcements made on June 8th, September 24th, and October 8th of this year by the Minister of Immigration, Marco Mendicino have not facilitated the process of reunification for us. We remain separated since the lockdown in March, and for some, many months/years prior to the pandemic. Each passing day continues to be filled with anxiety, discouragement, or depression as our hopes to see our families dwindle. Therefore, a solution for an immediate reunification by a Ministerial Instruction is sought, which is within the powers of five ministers, primarily Minister Marco Mendicino.

We have sent thousands of letters, protested numerous times across Canada and protested outside the Minister's office since mid-October. We have filed 2 petitions with the House of Commons. In November 2020, months after the House of Commons Petition e-2747 was tabled, we received a vague response from the Minister that reiterated applications for Temporary Resident Visas would not be denied. However, we are routinely denied as we are required to provide an explanation that satisfy an immigration officer of section 179(b) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulation, the intent that our spouses will leave after the "visit". The officers do not accept the simple reason of wanting to be with our loved ones as a satisfactory reason to approve visitor visas. We must provide evidence that our families have "greater ties" to their country than to the relationship with the Canadian spouse. The criteria treats our families in the same manner as a tourist visiting Canada, it keeps us separated from our loved ones. It does not support the fundamental human right to allow families access to each other for the purpose of temporary reunification. We are left helpless and our lives left in limbo.

Everywhere we turn we are faced with roadblocks to reunification; travel restrictions across the globe, lengthy processing times and delays, visa offices operating at partial capacity and denials of tourist visas. Our Minister has offered little or no consideration to the realities of the pandemic.

Hence, before the end of this year, we are looking for a compassionate and supportive solution from all Members of Parliament, Senators, Canadian human rights organizations, religious institutions, community leaders and the United Nations during these unprecedented times. We would appreciate your support to push for immediate reunification via exemption from some identified lengthy, unjust and unlawful discriminatory practices of this outdated immigration system, saving us from enduring any further mental/emotional distress and financial loss.

We therefore urge the Minister of Immigration to implement a special policy for spousal sponsorship applications allowing the issuance of permanent resident visa where; the applicant provided a clear police certificate, the Canadian sponsor has been granted eligibility, and the application has already passed the 12-month processing time. Thank-you.

Voices4Families, voices4families@gmail.com

Enclosures:

1. Exemption for all Delayed Spousal Sponsorship Applications
2. Family Sponsorship Impact Statement Form

November 26, 2020



EXEMPTION FOR ALL DELAYED SPOUSAL SPONSORSHIP APPLICATIONS

We, Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents are requesting immediate issuance of permanent resident visas for spousal sponsorship applications where; the principal applicant has provided a clear criminal record check/ police certificate; the Canadian sponsor has been granted eligibility, and the application has passed the 12-month processing time.

While we encourage Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to pursue a thorough policy review related to spousal sponsorship, this request is being made during a crucial time period whereby a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is still in effect and many of us have been forcibly separated since before the pandemic was declared in March 2020. In the interim we must be reunited with our loved ones by means of a permanent resident visa for immediate travel to Canada.

Granting an exemption would quickly complete the approximately 150,000 pending spousal applications and provide reparation of the time lost and harm done to Canadians. The focus of the program on the search for small percentage of fraudulent marriages does not warrant the suffering experienced by the approximately 150,000 Canadians awaiting a decision.

- ❖ According to the September 24, 2020 news release to *“speed up” the process*, “IRCC aims to accelerate, prioritize and finalize approximately 6,000 spousal applications each month from October until December 2020. Combined with processing to date, this rate will lead to about 49,000 decisions by the end of this year.” News release September 24, 2020—Ottawa- [IRCC speeding up processing for spousal applications - Canada.ca](#) Our calculation is, if IRCC is able to complete 6,000 applications a month, it will take an additional 24 months for Canadians to receive a decision, adding another 2 years to the 8 months lost during the pandemic.

The program’s sole focus on outliers (marriage of convenience) is discrediting the vast majority of honest, hardworking Canadians. Canadians and their spouses have provided the documentation requested by the IRCC promptly and professionally, needed for the completion of our applications. The delays in the process have caused the expiration of our documents. There is also evidence that demonstrates the misuse of our information which we provided in good faith. In particular, the interview process has been used to make personal inferences that has led to delays and denials. These denials result in appeals going to the federal courts, then we end up submitting a new application and starting the lengthy arduous process again which has the greatest impact on our daily lives and causes emotional, physical and financial stress that has long-term traumatic effects on Canadians, their spouses and their children.

“There’s no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation.” - Pierre Elliot Trudeau, 1967

Since Pierre Trudeau's famous quote, laws have been passed to reflect the progressive attitudes and behaviours of Canadian society. Canada has a growing interdependence with the world's economies, cultures and populations, brought about by cross-border trade, technology, and flows of investment, people and information. Canadians have adapted to the interactions between different regions and populations around the globe resulting in meeting and marrying from different countries. Canada was built on multiculturalism.

In 2016, over 250 ethnic origins or ancestries were reported by the Canadian population. Our chosen spouses overseas are reflected in the nationalities that make up Canada. The lack of acknowledgement of the change in Canadian society by the IRCC is a barrier to our rights as Canadians. The rights of Canadians and their children have been declared by the United Nations and UNICEF and are expected to be protected by the Canadian federal government. The current spousal sponsorship process has caused grave disruption to Canadians, halting the conception of children, separating parents from their children and increasing financial hardship. The use of immigration for economic prosperity is one aspect of the IRCC, the spousal sponsorship program is based on the health and wellbeing of the Canadian family. Spousal sponsorship benefits the economy and Canadian society. We ask for these values to be respected.

We appreciate the ongoing work of the *Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration* to address the concerns of discrimination inherent in the process. However, implementation of this exemption will protect Canadians from the current shortcomings of the program while it is being evaluated. Canadians have been waiting in excess of 12 months to be reunited with their families and this needless separation of Canadians from their families due to unreasonable IRCC delays now accompanied by COVID-19, requires an urgent solution. The factors for consideration are:

- The government has stated its need for immigrants to fulfill quotas and labour shortages. Our spouses are immigrants with family and established networks, ready to integrate into Canadian society.
- The 12-month approximate timeline was exceeded or will surely exceed because of the delays we are facing with COVID-19.
- The 12-month approximate processing timeline was ample time to complete our applications, even considering background checks, parallel provincial processes, or previous status issues.
- We have been subjected to emotional, psychological, and financial hardship because of this lengthy process which has worsened, being alone, during the first and second wave of the pandemic.
- Countries around the world such as Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Switzerland Austria, Iceland, Luxemburg, and the Czech Republic took measures to reunite couples at the beginning of the pandemic demonstrating compassion for their citizens.
- It is essential to our well-being as married couples to be living in the same home together. It is important for the healthy development of our children, for those couples wishing to start a family and for the overall health and well-being of our relationships.

- We are born Canadian citizens, sworn citizens and permanent residents who are taxpayers, who live, work, study, and participate in Canadian society.
- We paid our application fees to the IRCC in full- in advance, and provided all documentation requested as genuine married couples believing it was a fair and reasonable process.
- We have been unjustly subject to scrutiny and mistreatment because of the small few who may have abused of this program in the past.
- There is no transparency explaining the reasons why applicants are suspect and require interviews, or why their eligibility is doubted which is equated to being found “guilty until proven innocent,” which is contrary to Canadian law.
- Applicants were promised the implementation of virtual interviews during COVID-19, however months later, nothing has been delivered. This process already raises concerns about the discretion and biases of immigration officers and needs to be suspended to protect the applicants.
- Our marriage is a bi-national union which requires an understanding of the values, cultures and laws instilled in each of us by our respective country. Approximately, 90 % of our spouses have not lived in Canada and should not be penalized by the officer using Canadian values. Likewise, Canadians are being evaluated by privately contracted visa offices which employs locals causing a variance in standards.
- The IRCC training criteria to judge the validity of a marriage based on “cultural consistency” is highly inappropriate. Nations encompass many ethnicities, traditions, beliefs that vary from household to household. We cannot all be painted with the same brush.
- The autonomy of a single immigration agent to make decisions on the assessment of an application is a liability to the lives of Canadian families.
- The lack of an entity like an Ombudsman leaves us open to abuses, dishonesty, rejections and delays with no recourse. The onus is on us to rectify the situation which costs us time and money.
- The protocols of biometrics and medical evaluation can generate revenues here on Canadian soil, as they incur fees and will create employment for Canadians.
- We hear of imposters/fakes/manipulators who arrive in Canada across all immigration programs which puts in question the heavy scrutiny placed on spousal sponsorships. This also attests to the fact that the filter and criteria is not foolproof and needs revision.

We believe Canada must respect the human rights of Canadians and their children:

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|--|---|
| <p>Under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16, Article 16 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.</i> 2. <i>Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.</i> 3. <i>The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.</i> | <p>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees research paper by Frances Nicholson pages 7 & 10. 5a8c40ba1.pdf (unhcr.org)</p> <p>“The right to family life and family unity of refugees and others in need of international protection and the family definition applied” says: <i>“ensure that the best interests of the child are taken fully into consideration in immigration law, planning, implementation and assessment of migration policies and decision-making on individual cases, including in granting or refusing applications on entry to or residence in a country...”</i></p> <p>In the same paper, the author quotes K. Jastram and K. Newland, “Family Unity and Refugee Protection”, in Refugee Protection in International Law: UNHCR’s Global Consultations on International Protection, (Feller et al eds), Cambridge University Press (CUP), 2003, stating:</p> <p><i>“As the foundation, there is universal consensus that, as the fundamental unit of society, the family is entitled to respect and protection. A right to family unity is inherent in recognizing the family as a ‘group’ unit: if members of the family did not have a right to live together, there would not be a ‘group’ to respect or protect. In addition, the right to marry and found a family includes the right to maintain a family life together...”</i></p> |
| <p>United Nations Expert Group Family Policies for Inclusive Societies Family Migration Policies and Social Integration</p> <p><i>“Family members are not only a source of support, migrants also want to fulfil their responsibilities to their kin, therefore their proximity is vital. Prolonged familial separation can have deleterious effects on family members, adding stress to intimate and parent-child relationships and creating or exacerbating economic difficulties.”</i></p> <p>Microsoft Word - Family Oriented Migration Policies and Social Integration.docx (un.org)</p> | <p>UNICEF working paper Family Unity in the Context of Migration</p> <p><i>“All children, regardless of their or their parents’ refugee, temporary protection or migration status, have the right to grow up with their families.”</i></p> <p><i>“Family unity protects children’s lives, their development and their well-being. By physically being together, migrant and refugee families thrive and contribute more productively to host communities, thereby encouraging their acceptance and integration.”</i></p> <p><i>“In the context of migration and displacement, respect for family unity and the right to family life involves; allowing families to move together; for separated families to reunify; and to take into account family unity and the best interests of the child when considering returns.”</i></p> <p>Working paper: Family unity in the context of migration UNICEF</p> |

We expect the government to protect Canadian families and children’s rights at all times, but precisely because of the health crisis and economic situation of the COVID pandemic, we plead that you act compassionately and with urgency. We request an immediate exemption, because we need our families, given the traumatic circumstances associated with the pandemic and the immigration process itself. It will restore the health and well-being of Canadians and their families.

Sincerely,

Voices4Families

Email: Voices4families@gmail.com

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Twitter: @V4Families

Family Sponsorship Impact Statement Form

DETAILS SPECIFIC TO OUR PARTICULAR FILE:

As a legally married couple, we are requesting the immediate granting of the “Landing Confirmation of Permanent Residency (CoPR)” for the Principal Applicant’s Spousal Sponsorship Application submitted on (DD/MM/YY):

_____.

*If you are still waiting for an AOR, please fill in the date your file was submitted on (DD/MM/YY): _____ .

**note: for second and third applications after refusals waiting for new AOR please write the original application date and new application date(s)*

I am the Canadian Sponsor and my spouse is the Principal Applicant for Permanent Residence. I, hereby speak for both of us as one person, and as a Canadian Citizen or Permanent resident, hereby request the CoPR be expedited immediately, **by the end of 2020** for the following reason(s):

(PLEASE READ CAREFULLY and ONLY CHECK BOXES THAT APPLY, THERE IS A SECTION AT THE VERY END FOR SPECIAL SITUATIONS TO BE EXPLAINED IN WRITING)

CANADIAN SPONSOR

- I am an eligible sponsor; I have been accepted by the IRCC.
- I am a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident.
- I am a hard-working, tax-paying, law-abiding person.
- I am a good and well-intentioned person.
- I am legally married and have documents to prove it.
- I applied as a sponsor honestly, and swear my marriage is genuine.

ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE (THE APPLICANT)

- My spouse is a law-abiding citizen in his/her country.
- We have provided biometrics as required by the IRCC (circle one) ONCE | TWICE | 3x +++
- We were never required to have biometrics the year we applied.
- We would have provided biometrics if visa offices were open.
- We have provided a clear police report to the IRCC (circle one) ONCE | TWICE | 3x | 4x | 5x +++
- We originally had provided a clear police report and we have had to disprove a fake criminal record and falsified documents created by the overseas Visa office, and I have the original police record to prove it.
- We would have provided a police report if offices were open.
- We have provided a passed medical evaluation expiring/expired on (DD/MM/YY): _____ (circle one) ONCE | TWICE | 3x | 4x | 5x+++
- We are waiting for a positive answer for an extension for the accepted passed medical evaluation.
- We were requested to make arrangements to re-do our medical evaluation as requested by the IRCC, as it has expired because of tardiness, embassy closures, travel restrictions or COVID.
- We have the intention to work, invest, and make our lives together in Canada as law-abiding, tax-paying, hard-working married people.

SPECIAL PRIORITIES (THE COUPLE)

CHILDREN

- I have a child or children who are the offspring of this marriage.
- I have a child or children who consider my spouse their parent/step-parent.
- I have a child or children (our offspring) who reside with my spouse in their country.
- I have a step-child/child who reside with my spouse in their country.

REFUSALS/RE-APPLICATIONS WITH SAME SPOUSE

- We have applied and been refused and have re-applied with the same spouse, same marriage.
- We have re-applied (circle one) ONCE | TWICE | 3x | 4x | 5x+++

This process has taken _____ months since the first original submission.

REFUSALS/APPEALS

- We have applied, been refused, appealed, and won the appeal.
- We have applied, been refused, appealed, and lost the appeal.

This process has taken _____ months since the original submission.

RETURNED FILES

- Our file was returned for missing documents/signatures after waiting _____ months time with no information and no file number.
- Our file was returned but there was nothing missing and no reason to return it.
- Our file was returned by the IRCC for missing documents/signatures while other people’s files were not, to the best of my knowledge.

LOST DOCUMENTS

- We still have no file number, but we have proof of our original application dated: _____ .
- We received a temporary file number.
- We have had to provide the same receipts/documents/forms more than once, as they appear to have been lost or not accounted for.

Please specify for Federal IRCC / Quebec (MIFI) or Both: _____

Please specify which documents were not accounted for that needed to be re-submitted: (IRCC payments/medical evaluation/change of Representation/CSQ payment, etc.)



RECOMMENDED OR REQUIRED INTERVIEWS:

We have provided sufficient evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt that our marriage is authentic.

- We have provided direct, credible proof of our _____ years as a couple before/during and after our marriage through photos.
- We have provided letters from family/friends that were written on our behalf as proof of our genuine relationship.
- We have provided concrete proof including plane tickets, receipts, phone bills, and conversations/emails/screenshots/etc.
- We have provided names of family members, addresses, relations, legal and/or religious ceremony certificates.
- Despite the above evidence, we have been recommended or required an interview without being given any reason as to why.

Note: To our knowledge, the interview restricts the questions to the Principal Applicant, when relationships grow and develop in a family context, and not in isolation. The interview is based on the original application, it does not take into consideration the years of a developing relationship. This practice is increasing the risk of a “distorted” understanding of the relationship, as it is out of context. If people have spent several years in a relationship, how can a short interview of 15 minutes or even 2 hours, do justice to the time invested in a committed marriage, especially if it involves the principal applicant, who is only one side of the equation.

- I believe the IRCC process is interfering in our marriage based on discriminatory and outdated criteria.
- I have written proof, that I will provide here: (please provide in quotations the written GCM notes or other written communications with the IRCC)
- I have physical proof of dates and phone calls or conversations in person with the IRCC which demonstrate discrimination or bias: (please provide details as to conversations)
- I have reason to believe our marriage has been flagged because:

(PLEASE CIRCLE ANY THAT MAY APPLY)

Ethnicity /Religion/ Race/Age /Socio-economic situation/ Country of birth/Citizenship/Sexual preference/Gender preference/Difference of physical ability (able-bodyism)/Civil wedding/ Informal Wedding/ Contemporary Religious Wedding/Cultural Bias/Stereotypes / Divorcee/Anonymous hotline/Previous immigration status/Deportation/internment.

Please explain:

TARDINESS/INEFFICIENCY

- The IRCC has failed to complete our file and it has been _____ months.
- The IRCC is has completed the following steps:
 - Sponsor eligibility
 - Applicant acceptance
 - Biometrics
 - Medical
 - Interview
 - Pre-arrival
- My file was originally submitted to _____ (visa office).
- It took _____ #months to transfer to _____ (visa office).
- The last correspondence I received was from the _____ visa office on _____ (DD/MM/YY)

IN GOOD FAITH

- We have provided all documents/payments/evidence promptly and professionally.
- We have provided ample proof (photos/communications/bills/letters/plane tickets etc.)
- We have complied with all requests or decisions to the best of our knowledge, given our legal counsel, and to cooperate with the IRCC and immigration laws.

TRVs

- I have applied for a TRV ONCE | TWICE | 3x | 4x | 5x | 6x | 7x | 8x +++
- I have not bothered to apply for a TRV, because the rate of refusal using section 179(b).
- I have applied but section 179(b) was used to refuse my TRV.
- I have not bothered to apply because the processing time is _____ #days.
- I have presented the legal intention of Dual Intent, provided ample proof of funds, and all the documentation necessary for my TRV, and still been refused.
- I have been accepted for a TRV on the _____ attempt. (write 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc...)
- I have been refused a TRV.

Please provide proof of the other reasons written on the refusal letter or explained to you by phone if you were refused for one or more TRVs:

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

- I have contacted my MP regarding my application and the problems I have encountered with the IRCC
 - My MP seems to want to help, but says they are unable to do so.
 - My MP officially inquired about our file (using our signed consent form to request access to IRCC)
 - My MP has not helped me at all, although I have requested their help.
 - My MP has told me to wait until 12 months are up.
 - My MP has written a letter to the IRCC on my behalf.
 - My MP's office has stopped answering my calls/emails.
 - My MP's office has been unsupportive of me in the following ways, please provide details and dates of emails or conversations if possible:
-
-

IRCC:

- We have looked on the website to see the status of our file.
- We have submitted webforms to understand what is happening with our file.
- We have submitted legal submissions via webform.
- We have called the IRCC by telephone.
- We have complained or left suggestions on the website complaints/compliments form.

HEALTH CONCERNS

- This process, the delays, the discrimination, the inefficiency is causing health problems for one or the other, or *both* of us.

Please specify:

- Mental/Psychological health problems including depression, anxiety, insomnia, irritability, problems concentrating, very absentminded or distracted, panic attacks, suicidal ideations.
- Physical Health issues including insomnia of sleep problems, hair falling out, diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, stomach problems, hormonal issues or other physical stress responses.
- Emotional responses such as despondency, crying spells, feelings of helplessness, workaholism, angry outbursts, reclusiveness, or impatience.
- I have seen a doctor about these issues (mental/psychological/physical)
- I have been prescribed medication during and due to this process.
- I have started taking medication
- I have started therapy or psychiatry during this process and due to this problem.

WORK/FINANCES/RESIDENCY

- Under this process I have incurred additional financial expenses.
- Under this process I have experienced employment issues.
- I have lost jobs/promotions/money as I have left the country for long periods of time.
- I have lost jobs/promotions/money as I have left the country frequently for short periods.

- I have spent much more money than I normally would have spent in Canada in my spouse's country or neighbouring countries where we have met.
- I am the sole provider in this process because of the wage difference/exchange/socio-economic conditions of my spouse's country.
- I am *currently* under financial stress related to this program, its tardiness, and its shortcomings.
- I am *currently* the sole provider for my ____ child/children.

Since the beginning of this process I have spent (approx.) _____ CAD in _____ months.

Please explain:

❖ **Family Reunification – One of the three pillars of Canadian Immigration and government**

Policies

As mentioned in the Evaluation of the Family Reunification Program document of the Evaluation Division of IRCC, published on the Government of Canada website,

Family reunification is one of the three pillars of CIC's immigration program. Canadian immigration policy and legislation have a long tradition of supporting family reunification, which permits both recent immigrants and long-established Canadians to be reunited with members of their family. Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR), family living abroad may be sponsored as well as spouses or common-law partners living in Canada with their sponsor. Today, reuniting family members continues to be enshrined as one of the fundamental principles and objectives of Canadian immigration policy and legislation. Beyond family reunification, the FRP is also expected to produce social and cultural benefits, without incurring undue costs to the Canadian public.

"As per IRCC's operational bulletin entitled "Procedural Fairness," "Applications should not be subject to unnecessary delays. A delay that cannot be justified is a denial of procedural fairness."

- To adhere to its own policy, we deem our file has been treated unfairly by the IRCC, not because of COVID delays but because of inefficient processing from the beginning, as we have seen some files entirely completed within this year of 2020 despite COVID. We have not been accorded this "procedural fairness."
- We believe IRCC, the liberal government and the Minister of Immigration has had sufficient warning time to find practical solutions for the effects, concerns and safety during COVID and can grant an exemption for spousal applications in a prompt and responsible way.

I hereby consent Voices4Families to submit this information on my behalf for the approval of the exemption. If you require any further information, please contact me by email.

Full Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____
 Canadian Citizen /Permanent Resident

Canadian Postal Code: _____ **Email:** _____

References:

Exemptions made by the Minister of Immigration

[New temporary public policy will allow visitors to apply for a work permit without having to leave Canada - Canada.ca](#)

[Canada: COVID-19: Government allows for reunification with extended family members, unmarried partners - B A L | Berry Appleman & Leiden LLP \(balglobal.com\)](#)

[International Mobility Program \(IMP\): Public policy, competitiveness and economy - Canada.ca](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): International students - Canada.ca](#)

[Travel restriction measures: COVID-19 program delivery - Canada.ca](#)

Media coverage

CityNews Montreal, June 23, 2020

<https://montreal.citynews.ca/video/2020/06/23/canadian-man-separated-from-colombian-wife-amid-covid-19/>

The Globe and Mail, July 7, 2020

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/amp/politics/article-covid-19-slows-visa-processing-leaving-many-families-separated/>

CTV News Saskatoon, July 7, 2020 <https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/we-did-everything-correctly-covid-19-creates-delays-for-saskatoon-woman-hoping-to-reunite-withhusband-1.5014910>

CityNews Montreal, July 10, 2020

<https://montreal.citynews.ca/video/2020/07/10/married-couple-waiting-to-reunite/>

Global News Toronto, July 13, 2020

<https://twitter.com/globalnewsto/status/1282676154130763777?s=20> Red FM

Calgary, July 14, 2020 (no link available) 650 CKOM Saskatoon, July 17, 2020

<https://iono.fm/e/893944>

CityNews Toronto, July 20, 2020

<https://toronto.citynews.ca/video/2020/07/20/nothing-we-can-do-families-waiting-for-spousal-visas-left-in-limbo/>

CityNews Montreal, July 20, 2020

<https://montreal.citynews.ca/video/2020/07/20/families-fighting-to-be-reunited/>

The Canadian Press, July 20, 2020

<https://www.nationalobserver.com/2020/07/20/news/thousands-lives-hold-immigration-system-stalled-out> Le Journal de Montréal, July 21, 2020

<https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2020/07/21/privée-de-son-papa-depuis-4-mois>

BOOM 104.1 FM Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, July 21, 2020

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Description of the group

The fundamental principles of Voices4families are above all: Respect, equality, responsibility, transparency and inclusion. This group is a continuation of the group founded in May 2020 called "Canada Spousal Sponsorship Applicants Affected by COVID-19". However, the current pandemic situation is pushing us to expand our fight to represent more people who are being abused through the immigration system. We represent issues in the following areas (including lobbying for the opening of liaison offices and veterans centers around the world) : -spousal sponsorships (in and out of the country), -parents/grandparents - we will also fight for engagement visas as well as for countries that require visit visas. In the U.S., the K1 visa is issued - why should Canada be different? If you are concerned about the VO and ACC closures, you are also welcome to join our fight. We are an open group.