

C-4 Parliamentary Tracker

Thursday, December 1

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Status of C-4

Despite being on the Projected Order of Business yesterday – Thursday, December 1 - Bill C-4 was not debated, and is not on the Projected Order of Business for today, Friday, December 2. Yesterday, all time for debate of government bills was taken up by C-26, the *Citizen's Arrest and Self-defence Act*, which was ahead of C-4 on the agenda. Questions about appointments to the IRB continued to come up during Statements by Members and Question Period, and a Conservative MP made a statement in support of the new Super Visa (text below). Meanwhile, the Public Safety Committee continued its study of Drugs and Alcohol in Prisons.

Today, the House will finish debating C-10, the *Safe Streets and Communities Act*, at Third Reading, and in all likelihood will vote on this bill on Monday. The Government House Leader, Peter Van Loan, has indicated that next week's debate will focus on the government's agenda for democratic reform – including C-7, the *Senate Reform Act*, and Bill C-21, the *Political Loans Accountability Act*. **It remains to be seen in C-4 will reappear on the Projected Order of Business next week.**

Super Visa

Mr. Kyle Seebach (Brampton West, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure today to inform the House that starting today Canadians can apply for the new parent and grandparent super visa. This convenient 10-year, multiple entry super visa allows parents and grandparents to visit their loved ones in Canada for up to two years at a time, and the applications will be processed in only eight weeks.

No one should just take it from me. The super visa is earning rave reviews from Canadians across the country and from all parties. Whether it is the Liberal and NDP critics, immigration experts, like Richard Kurland, or presidents of associations, like Success and the Chinese Canadian Community Alliance, they all agree that the parent and grandparent super visa is super great.

I am proud to be part of a government that keeps its commitments by introducing this new super visa. Our Conservative government has kept its commitment to provide a more convenient way for families to be reunited with their loved ones.

Immigration and Refugee Board

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration has so many friends that he cannot keep track. He said that only two Conservative friends sit on the Immigration and Refugee Board but the facts tell a different story.

[Translation]

Following the Prime Minister's example of making Senate appointments, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism has now put at least 16 Conservative supporters on the Immigration and Refugee Board: defeated Conservative candidates Rose Andrachuk, Douglas Cryer, Gilles Guénette, Atam Uppal and Harriet Wolman; former Conservative employees Normand Forrest and Paul Beaudry; and at least eight Conservative donors.

Canadians are much smarter than the minister thinks. Canadians know that the Conservatives always give preferential treatment to friends of the party.

[English]

The Conservatives came here to change Ottawa, instead Ottawa changed them. Six years and sixteen IRB appointments later, they have become everything they used to oppose.

Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, the immigration minister's story keeps changing on his patronage appointments to the IRB.

First, he claimed that only two appointees to the IRB had Conservative connections, but when faced with the facts about the many patronage appointments Conservatives actually made, the minister claimed he was not aware.

The minister brags about the pre-screening process, but if the pre-screening process was so rigorous, how could the government have appointed 16 Conservative insiders, including five former candidates, without the minister knowing?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, that is nonsense. I said that since I have been minister I was aware of two people whom I have recommended for appointment with a connection to the Conservative Party out of about 169 appointments and reappointments that I made.

According to the list that he has come up with, it includes one-time donors to a provincial party 25 years ago. So basically, it includes anyone who has ever voted Conservative, which constitutes about 5% of the people appointed to the IRB by this government.

Under the new system that we put in place in July 2007, we have received 2,400 applications, only 240 of whom were recommended as being qualified for appointment. We have the most rigorous system in the history of the IRB.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives refuse to clean up their act. They have refused to appoint a public appointments commission. They are as addicted to patronage as the Liberals were.

Even the screening committee is stuffed with partisan appointments, including—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker:

Order. The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway has the floor.

Mr. Don Davies:

Mr. Speaker, even the screening committee is stuffed with partisan appointments, including a former aide to a Conservative minister. Peter Showler, the former chair of the IRB, is describing the Conservative appointments process as secretive and political. He is saying there is no political accountability.

Why will the Conservatives not stop forcing their partisan immigration system—

The Speaker:

The hon. Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, it is really a shame to hear this member denigrating what the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says is the fairest and most independent asylum determination process in the world.

It is unfortunate to hear him denigrating the people of quality who managed to come through a screening process where only one out of every 10 applicants were accepted. What is even more disappointing is to hear the Liberals, including a former immigration minister over there, talking about this.

I have four pages of names of people appointed to the IRB who were former Liberal campaign managers, spouses of MPs, and spouses of senators. We have cleaned up their mess.