



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA**

**RECOGNIZING SUCCESS:
A REPORT ON IMPROVING FOREIGN
CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION**

**Report of the Standing Committee on
Citizenship and Immigration**

**David Tilson, MP
Chair**

**NOVEMBER 2009
40th PARLIAMENT, 2nd SESSION**

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

has the honour to present its

THIRTEENTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), your Committee has conducted a study on *Foreign Credentials Recognition*.

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RECOGNIZING SUCCESS: A REPORT ON IMPROVING FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION

Introduction

Foreign credential recognition is the process of verifying that the education and job experience obtained in another country are equal to the standards established for Canadian professionals.¹ It is a core element of immigrants' labour market integration and a significant factor in determining immigrants' employment success, particularly success in their field of training or expertise.

Fair recognition of education and job experience obtained in another country is important for a variety of reasons. Being unable to fully use prior learning and experience is frustrating for newcomers to Canada who find themselves underemployed in jobs far below their expectations. Failure to recognize credentials costs immigrants and taxpayers; for instance, both may contribute to tuition costs that duplicate courses already taken. On a macro scale, the cost of untapped potential is estimated to range between \$2.4 and \$5.9 billion annually.² Finally, the failure to recognize foreign credentials may become a competitive disadvantage, affecting Canada's attractiveness as a destination to highly skilled and educated workers. For all of these reasons, ensuring credential recognition is fast, fair, effective, and accessible is of great concern to this Committee. It is a matter of national interest.

Roles and Responsibilities for Foreign Credential Recognition

Credential recognition is a complex process, involving a multitude of players working in collaboration. Under Canada's constitutional division of powers, the provinces and territories are responsible for licensing trades and professions, with the latter being self-regulating. The Committee recognizes that Quebec has complete responsibility for credential and skills recognition for new immigrants who establish themselves in Quebec. Under provincial and territorial umbrellas, "there are more than 440 regulatory bodies across Canada governing approximately 55 professions. There are also more than 200 accredited post-secondary institutions that assess educational credentials for academic placement, as well as five provincially mandated assessment agencies that

1 Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, *Overview Foreign Credential Recognition*, April 11, 2008 [HRSDC Overview — FCR].

2 Mr. Jean-Francois LaRue, Director General, Labour Market Integration Skills and Employment Branch, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting no. 30, October 27, 2009, 9:10.

evaluate educational credentials for the purposes of both academic placement and workforce entry.”³ Assessments provided by these agencies may be used, in turn, for entry to a trade or for employment in non-regulated occupations. Regulated occupations account for 15% of the Canadian workforce.

The federal government has a leadership role to play with respect to foreign credential recognition, acting as facilitator, reference point, and convener of stakeholders. As one witness said with respect to a federal government program: “it has served as a vehicle for the federal government to influence, shape, and inform research and action”.⁴ Given the ongoing responsibility of the federal government for immigration and its impact on the Canadian labour market and economy, it would be inappropriate to stand by. There is clearly a lot the federal government has done, and can and should do.

Finally, witnesses urged the Committee not to overlook the important role played by employers. In the words of one witness, “employers are key stakeholders in this issue as it is they who ultimately recognize or reject the credentials and skills of immigrants.”⁵ Indeed, thousands of individual decisions are made on a daily basis based on an employer’s assessment of prospective candidates’ previously acquired education and experience.

Federal Government Initiatives

The federal government is aware of the challenges of foreign credential recognition and, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and other stakeholders, has taken a number of measures to address them. The two major multi-sectoral programs offered by the federal government are the Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCR program) and the Foreign Credential Referral Office (FCRO). To address the particular shortage of health care professionals in Canada, Health Canada offers the Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative (IEHP) in collaboration with the provinces and territories.

3 Ms. Corinne Prince-St-Amand, Executive Director, Foreign Credentials Referral Office, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting no. 30, October 27, 2009, 9:05.

4 Mr. Timothy Owen, Director, World Education Services, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting no. 29, October 22, 2009, 9:05.

5 Ms. Elizabeth McIsaac, Executive Director, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council [TRIEC], *Committee Evidence*, Meeting no. 29, October 22, 2009, 9:30.

Foreign Credential Recognition Program

The foreign credential recognition program is administered by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) as a key plank in the department's focus on barriers to immigrant labour market integration. Through this program, the federal government provides strategic financial support to a range of bodies involved in credential recognition, such as sector councils, regulatory bodies, immigrant-serving organizations, assessment agencies, professional associations, post-secondary educational institutions, and employers.

Since the program's inception in 2003, the FCR program has provided support to 123 projects in 27 different occupations, with a total investment of \$71.2 million.⁶ Budget 2009 allocated a further \$50 million over two years for the development of a national foreign credential recognition framework in partnership with the provinces and territories.

Projects funded for the regulated occupations have focused mainly on the priority occupations of physicians, nurses, and engineers. For example, the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers received funding to implement an action plan and develop tools to more quickly and efficiently integrate international engineering graduates into the Canadian labour market.

Projects targeted to non-regulated professions, or those professions and trades with no legal requirement or restriction on participation, are also funded through the FCR program. Witnesses from HRSDC told the Committee about a successful partnership with BioTalent Canada, as an example of FCR program support in this area.⁷ BioTalent Canada is creating internships in the biotechnology sector that connect immigrants with employers and provide coaching on finding work in the sector. BioTalent Canada has also developed a national practical assessment and training program.

Foreign Credentials Referral Office

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office was launched in 2007 and is administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Whereas the FCR program addresses systemic labour market issues, the FCRO provides information to individual immigrants, referring them to appropriate credential recognition services. Services are offered through the Website (<http://www.credentials.gc.ca>), in person overseas (see below) and in Canada through Service Canada Centres, outreach sites, and toll-free telephone.

6 LaRue, 9:10.

7 Ibid., 9:15.

The FCRO also plays a coordinating role, “to work with provinces/territories, regulatory bodies and employers to coordinate federal/provincial/territorial efforts, share best practices across the country and avoid overlap and duplication”.⁸

The FCRO initiative was initially allocated \$37.2 million over five years by the Government of Canada, with \$6.4 million in ongoing funding.⁹ Some of the funding from Budget 2009 was also allocated to the FCRO to initiate foreign credential recognition overseas for high-priority regulated occupations. The focus of this work will be on the development of harmonized standards and clear pathways to foreign credential recognition for the targeted occupations and the Pan-Canadian Information Centre, a website that will showcase promising practices in foreign credential recognition across Canada.¹⁰

The second aspect of the FCRO’s overseas initiatives builds on the Canadian Immigrant Integration Project, a pilot project conducted by HRSDC and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. The pilot project offered in-person orientation sessions—including credential recognition information—to federal skilled workers in India, China, and the Philippines. In the coming two years, CIC plans to expand this program to provincial nominees coming from the same three countries and to create a fourth location in the United Kingdom. CIC estimates that, with these enhancements in place, overseas services will be offered to 75% of federal skilled workers and 44% of provincial nominees.¹¹

Working in Canada Tool

Also managed by HRSDC, the Working in Canada Tool is an Internet site housed at the FCRO targeted to prospective immigrants. The tool helps potential immigrants determine the name for their occupation in Canada and, if it is regulated, the name and contact information for the regulator. It also enables prospective immigrants and newcomers to review information from six national labour market databases and obtain a report tailored to a specific occupation in a city or region.

Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative (IEHPI)

In 2005, the government of Canada committed \$75 million over five years to the Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative, administered by Health Canada. The initiative is focused on addressing barriers to the integration of health professionals,

8 Prince St-Amand, 9:05.

9 Foreign Credentials Referral Office, *Progress Report 2007–2008*.

10 Prince St-Amand, 9:05.

11 Ibid.

with investments in seven priority occupations. Ninety percent of the funding for this program is directed to provincial and territorial governments through bilateral agreements with Health Canada, while 10% supports pan-Canadian projects. An example of projects funded through this program is the on-line orientation program for internationally educated health professionals developed by the University of Toronto called “Orientation to the Canadian Health Care System, Culture and Context”.

Future priorities for the IEHPI include strengthening assessment processes; building academic, clinical bridging, and exam preparation programs; enhancing preceptor and faculty development programs; further development of workplace integration programs; strengthening knowledge and information on alternate careers, and advancing coordination among jurisdictions and professions.¹²

Recognizing Success: Committee Recommendations

Witnesses who appeared before the Committee suggested that much progress has been made in foreign credential recognition over the last number of years. They were supportive of current federal government programs; however, they also identified gaps and the need for improvement in the following areas:

- Consistency and portability of foreign credential recognition across the country;
- Foreign credential and skill recognition for temporary foreign workers and international students;
- Use of foreign credential recognition assessments by licensing bodies, academic institutions, and employers;
- Barriers to participation in foreign credential recognition programs, such as costs and foregone income;
- Understanding how credential recognition differs for different groups of immigrants;
- Providing incentives for employers to hire immigrants;

12 Ms. Kathryn McDade, Director General, Health Care Policy Directorate, Health Canada, *Speaking Notes*, Meeting no. 30, October 27, 2009.

- Incorporating credential recognition into the way points for education are measured for federal skilled workers;
- Expanding opportunities for recognition of foreign credentials and integration of international medical graduates; and,
- Broadening successful programs that can accommodate only limited numbers, may not be financially sustainable without federal government support, and are inaccessible to smaller employers.

After hearing this testimony, the Committee is satisfied that the federal government response to foreign credential recognition is largely on the right track—what remains to be done is to address some of the gaps in implementation. The Committee’s recommendations for improvement address the following five areas: expanding pre-departure foreign credential recognition services, expanding opportunities to gain work experience, access to foreign credential recognition programs, employer-targeted measures, and credential recognition for international medical graduates.

Pre-departure Foreign Credential Recognition Services

Provision of foreign credential services pre-departure appears to be a growing emphasis in the federal government initiatives, described above. It has also been the focus of private sector initiatives, as described by Ms. Wendy Swedlove of the Alliance of Sector Councils: “several councils have certification programs and access to those programs online so that a Canadian credential can be acquired abroad, giving the potential immigrant an advantage when looking for a job in Canada”¹³. Ms. Swedlove specified that the environment and tourism councils have well developed programs in this area.

However, witnesses suggested that more pre-departure foreign credential recognition could be done. Mr. Tim Owen, from Ontario’s recognized foreign credential evaluation service (World Education Service, Canada), reported that 10% of applications they receive for credential recognition come from overseas, which is “too low a number”. He believes that “many more should be able to start the process of having their credentials assessed before they start to come to Canada.”¹⁴

13 Ms. Wendy Swedlove, Chair, Working Group on Immigration and Foreign Credential Recognition, Alliance of Sector Councils, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting no. 29, October 22, 2009, 10:05.

14 Owen, 9:05.

The Committee agrees that getting an early start on credential recognition greatly assists immigrants, as they could arrive in Canada employment ready. As such, the overseas work of the FCRO is very promising and should be expanded. For instance, pre-departure services could also be expanded to include family class immigrants, many of whom come from regulated professions or with valuable skills and education. Between 1991 and 2003, 63% of teachers migrated to Canada through family or humanitarian immigration classes, along with 62% of nurses, and 42% of doctors.¹⁵

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada offer pre-departure foreign credential recognition services to all immigration classes at the priority locations of China, India, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom.

Opportunities to gain work experience

Work experience in Canada can serve as a doorway to lasting employment in an immigrant's field of expertise. Elizabeth McIsaac of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) explained that work experience programs are successful interventions because they "provide immigrants with their first job in Canada, as well as professional references, both of which reassure risk-averse employers."¹⁶ She also cited the statistic that more than 80% of participants find full time work in their field upon completion of work experience programs.

The Committee heard that the demand from immigrants to participate in work experience programs exceeds the number of participating employers and positions. Several witnesses suggested that the federal government should provide an incentive to employers to offer workplace initiatives such as internships or practicums. Incentives in the form of financial support would enable employers of all sizes to offer these opportunities, which small and medium-sized businesses may lack the capacity to establish.

An incentive program for employers to offer work experience opportunities could be implemented in a number of ways. Suggestions raised by witnesses before the Committee include tax credits, wage subsidies, or direct funding to employers. The Committee believes that the best mechanism would be easy for its end users, the employers; would be

15 Leslyanne Hawthorne, "Foreign Credential Recognition and Assessment: An Introduction," *Canadian Issues*, Spring 2007, p. 3-4.

16 McIsaac, 9:25.

effective at increasing the number of work experience spots; and would preserve important labour market principles such as fairness and qualified workers. Accordingly, the Committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider the implementation of a financial incentive program for employers to create short-term work experience opportunities. The appropriate delivery mechanism(s) for such a program should take into account the circumstances of employers of different sizes, industries, and locations.

Witnesses suggested that the federal public service could be a model employer in offering workplace experience opportunities. One witness highlighted the Young Newcomers Internship Program at CIC and the Immigrant Internship Pilot Program at HRSDC as good examples that should be expanded.¹⁷ Initiated in 2008, CIC's Young Newcomers Internship Program offered 12 new Canadian citizens and permanent residents four month internships within the department over the last year.¹⁸ HRSDC's Immigrant Internship Pilot Program successfully placed 15 foreign trained professionals with employment last year, and is targeting 20 for this fiscal year. The Committee believes that the federal government should lead by example and mainstream these workplace experience programs in the public civil service.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada implement workplace experience programs such as the Young Newcomers Internship Program and the Immigrant Internship Pilot Program in all federal departments and that the targets for these two programs be expanded.

17 Mclsaac, 9:25.

18 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Minister Kenney celebrates CIC's award winning Young Newcomers Internship Program," 2009-06-08, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2009/2009-06-08.asp>.

Access to foreign credential recognition programs

Witnesses who appeared before the Committee identified access to existing foreign credential recognition programs as an area for improvement. They explained that immigrants may not be able to afford the costs of enrolment in training programs or licensing exams. Further, foregone income from taking time off work poses an additional barrier to participating in training or unpaid work placements for some immigrants.

Elizabeth Mclsaac talked about an innovative private sector response to this problem: a loan program started by TRIEC and the Maytree Foundation for immigrants to access credit of up to \$5,000 for tuition, licensing exams, or income support during foreign credential recognition activities.¹⁹ She explained that the program addressed the vacuum of credit options for immigrants and had a very high repayment rate. Mclsaac identified this program as something that could be replicated and taken to scale so that it is available nationally.

Another witness suggested that, while the loan program has been a success, such programs are out of reach to low income immigrants.²⁰ She reminded the Committee that recent immigrants are over-represented in their experience of poverty in Canada. She suggested that the Committee consider a pilot project to offer income tested grants to low income immigrants who wish to apply for funding to enrol in credential recognition related activities.

The Committee urges the government to remove barriers to immigrants' access to foreign credential recognition programs, which would help them to realize their potential and contribute to society. However, the Committee is also concerned about fairness between immigrants and the Canadian-born. Existing federal government loan programs, such as the Canada Student Loans Program and the Immigration Transportation Loans Program, provide interesting models that address fairness and access and may provide some lessons on how a loan program for immigrants to access foreign credential recognition programs could be developed.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada work with the provincial and territorial governments to create a loan program for immigrants to access foreign credential recognition programs.

19 Mclsaac, 9:50.

20 Ms. Amy Casipullai, Coordinator, Policy and Public Education, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), *Committee Evidence*, Meeting no. 29, October 22, 2009, 10:20.

Employer-targeted measures

Given that employers are key stakeholders in helping immigrants take the step from recognized credentials to employment, some of the foreign credential programs focus on this group. Employer-targeted measures are especially important in non-regulated professions where there may be fewer intermediaries between the worker and employer. These efforts aim to raise employers' awareness of what immigrants have to offer as employees, what tools and organizations are available to help employers equate and compare the skills and education immigrants bring, and provide tips on effectively integrating immigrants into the workforce.

One tool developed by the Alliance of Sector Councils in partnership with CIC is the Employer's Roadmap, a "step by step guide for employers in small to medium sized enterprises interested in hiring internationally trained workers for their organizations."²¹ The Alliance has also produced a tool that helps employers' deconstruct what they are really looking for when they demand "Canadian experience".²² Another example of employer-targeted measures is the award program run by TRIEC that highlights leadership and innovation in hiring immigrants.

Studies have found that discrimination occurs in the early stages of hiring, before an applicant has even had an interview. With an anonymous curriculum vitae (CV), personal identifiers such as the applicant's first and family names, place of education, location of previous employers, and address are removed before the CV is given to a hiring officer. This is a way of highlighting skills and experience while blocking out prejudice. The anonymous CV makes it possible to select applicants for an interview based exclusively on the criteria of skills, training and experience. While anonymous CVs would not solve all discrimination-related problems, they constitute a useful teaching tool designed to eliminate the reflex of looking first at an applicant's gender, age, address or ethnic origin. Anonymous CVs do not replace rigorous assessment of candidates' qualifications at a later stage in the hiring process; they serve primarily to ensure that all candidates deserving of consideration at that stage are screened through.

Previously in this report, the Committee recommended that the government consider providing financial incentives to employers for the creation of short-term work experience opportunities, such as internships or practicums. While these experiences help increase immigrants' chances of employment, they still are not a guarantee that

21 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *The Employer's Roadmap: Hiring and Retaining Internationally Trained Workers*, 2009, p. 3. Available at: <http://www.credentials.gc.ca/employers/roadmap/index.asp>.

22 Swedlove, 10:50.

participants will get their first job in their field. Looking at the experience of student placement programs, the employer that can offer a short-term work experience is not always in a position to offer a permanent job when the placement comes to an end.

Recommendation 5

Whereas the Committee recognizes that recent immigrants to Canada are overrepresented in poverty, unemployment, and underemployment rates in this country, the Committee recommends that the Government of Canada use all available resources, including financial and fiscal incentives, to alleviate the aforementioned challenges faced by immigrants.

Under the suite of employer-targeted measures, the Committee believes that the government should lead by example in hiring immigrants. The latest report on employment equity in the federal public service found that: “Although the representation of visible minorities continues to increase, there still remains a gap compared with their workforce availability estimate of 10.4 percent.”²³ While not all immigrants are visible minorities and vice versa, meeting employment equity goals has been identified as a way to show leadership and make a tangible difference in immigrant employment.²⁴

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada redouble efforts to hire and retain visible minorities, in keeping with commitments under the *Employment Equity Act*.

Job seeking immigrants face challenges having their credentials recognized and overcoming other labour market barriers. Currently, there is limited recourse available to immigrants seeking jobs who feel that they have not been considered for a position due to a failure to recognize their foreign skills or credentials. The *Canada Labour Code* governs hiring practices for federally regulated sectors such as banks, interprovincial transportation carriers and crown corporations; the Code does not provide any recourse for a job applicant to an adjudicator.²⁵ Applicants who suspect they have been discriminated against in the hiring process of a federally regulated employer may make a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

23 Canada Public Service Agency, *Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada: 2006—2007 and 2007—2008*, 2008.

24 Casipullai, 9:20.

25 This adjudicator is available to certain non-unionized employees, who do not have the ability to file a grievance with a union, in order to challenge an unjust dismissal, see section 240 of the *Canada Labour Code*.

Staffing of the federal civil service is generally governed by the *Public Service Employment Act*,²⁶ which provides that appointments to the federal civil service must be made based on merit. Applicants wishing to challenge an external hiring process have recourse to the Public Service Commission investigation process; those wishing to challenge an internal hiring process or an abuse of authority have recourse to the Public Service Staffing Tribunal; both bodies are able to take corrective action.²⁷ The Committee feels these measures are inadequate and that an ombudsman is required to help strengthen trust, confidence, and accountability in hiring practices.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce an ombudsman’s office where prospective employees could take their complaints about the hiring process for employers under federal jurisdiction, including the federal government.

International medical graduates

Due to the shortage of medical professionals in Canada, foreign credential recognition for this group is of special concern to the government and to the Committee. Despite the progress made under the Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative (IEHPI) described above, witnesses suggested that more can be done. For instance, Ms. Shahnaz Sadiq of the Alberta International Medical Graduates Association suggested that a fast track option be available to those with less than three years out of practice.²⁸ Ms. Kathryn McDade of Health Canada told the Committee that her department is working with the Medical Council to develop a common national assessment process for “practice ready” medical professionals. The Committee believes this is valuable work that will benefit both individual immigrants and Canadians. Accordingly, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada renew the funding for the International Educated Health Professionals Initiative for another five year period and transfer to the Government of Quebec

26 *Public Service Employment Act*, S.C. 2003, c. 22. Unless another Act of Parliament governs hiring for that specific agency—for example agencies and crown corporations have staffing procedures which are governed by the separate acts, for example the Canada Revenue Agency’s staffing processes are governed by the *Canada Customs and Revenue Agency Act*, S.C. 1999, c. 17.

27 See *Public Service Employment Act*, section 66 and 81.

28 Ms. Shahnaz Sadiq, President, Alberta International Medical Graduates Association, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting no. 29, October 22, 2009, 10:25.

its fair share of such funding so that the Government of Quebec can fund its own credential recognition process, pursuant to the Federal-Provincial agreement of September 15, 2004 (Quebec Clause).

Conclusion

Ensuring that immigrants can use the skills, education and experience gained in their countries of origin is in everybody's interests. Having in place procedures to determine equivalency and comparability is the first step in helping to validate previous experience so that employers can be confident that they are hiring people qualified to do the job, while immigrants can have a clear understanding of what, if any, additional training may be required.

Much has been accomplished by federal, provincial and territorial governments and their partners in other sectors. Like the witnesses who appeared before the Committee, this report highlights some of the success stories in foreign credential recognition in Canada. However, the statistics showing the high percentage of highly educated immigrants working in jobs requiring low levels of education and the still too well-known anecdotes of cab drivers and other underemployed immigrants suggest that there is still a long way to go.

The Committee believes that the recommendations in this report, targeting pre-departure foreign credential recognition services, expanding opportunities to gain work experience, access to foreign credential recognition programs, employer-targeted measures and credential recognition of international medical graduates, would build on success and further the federal government's leadership in this important area. As we work to strengthen our rebounding economy, we cannot afford not to tap into the abundant resource bank of immigrant skills and education currently underutilized in Canada.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada offer pre-departure foreign credential recognition services to all immigration classes at the priority locations of China, India, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider the implementation of a financial incentive program for employers to create short-term work experience opportunities. The appropriate delivery mechanism(s) for such a program should take into account the circumstances of employers of different sizes, industries, and locations.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada implement workplace experience programs such as the Young Newcomers Internship Program and the Immigrant Internship Pilot Program in all federal departments and that the targets for these two programs be expanded.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada work with the provincial and territorial governments to create a loan program for immigrants to access foreign credential recognition programs.

Recommendation 5

Whereas the Committee recognizes that recent immigrants to Canada are overrepresented in poverty, unemployment, and underemployment rates in this country, the Committee recommends that the Government of Canada use all available resources, including financial and fiscal incentives, to alleviate the aforementioned challenges faced by immigrants.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada redouble efforts to hire and retain visible minorities, in keeping with commitments under the *Employment Equity Act*.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada introduce an ombudsman's office where prospective employees could take their complaints about the hiring process for employers under federal jurisdiction, including the federal government.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada renew the funding for the International Educated Health Professionals Initiative for another five year period and transfer to the Government of Quebec its fare share of such funding so that the Government of Quebec can fund its own credential recognition process, pursuant to the Federal-Provincial agreement of September 15, 2004 (Quebec Clause).

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Alberta International Medical Graduates Association Shahnaz Sadiq, President Tasnim Waqar, Member</p> <p>Alliance of Sector Councils Wendy Swedlove, Chair, Working Group on Immigration and Foreign Credential Recognition</p> <p>Council of Ministers of Education, Canada Yves E. Beaudin, National Coordinator, Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials</p> <p>Office des professions du Québec Christiane Gagnon, Vice-Chair</p> <p>Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) Amy Casipullai, Coordinator, Policy and Public Education</p> <p>Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council Elizabeth McIsaac, Executive Director</p> <p>World Education Services Timothy Owen, Director</p>	2009/10/22	29
<p>Department of Citizenship and Immigration Corinne Prince St-Amand, Executive Director, Foreign Credentials Referral Office</p> <p>Department of Health Kathryn McDade, Director General, Health Care Policy, Strategic Policy Directorate</p> <p>Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Jean-François LaRue, Director General, Labour Market Integration Silvano Tocchi, Director, Foreign Credential Recognition Division</p>	2009/10/27	30

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings ([Meetings N^{os} 29, 30, 33, 34 and 35](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

David Tilson, MP

Chair

Supplementary Opinion of the Conservative Members of the Committee

Our members support much of what is contained within this report, both content and recommendations. We concur with the reports overview of the substantial progress that this government has made towards the recognition of foreign credentials.

We appreciate that the recognition that the issue of foreign credential recognition involves both the federal and provincial governments. We are encouraged by some of the innovative recommendations such as those for internship programs and loans to help new immigrants enter the work force in the field of their expertise.

Having indicated the support of the overall report and the consistent direction the government has taken for nearly four years, we disagree with some of specific recommendations of this report.

We oppose any efforts, however well meaning, that disadvantage Canadians by giving immigrants a special advantage in the hiring process through the use of financial incentives for Canadian businesses. We also oppose the radical change to the Canadian employment market that would be caused by the creation of an appeal mechanism for individuals who are not hired through the job application and interview process. In addition to our view that this idea is misguided, we fail to see how it relates to the subject or content of this report.

We are pleased that the report reflects the success of the government's approach to foreign credential recognition and the cooperative way that the government is engaging the provinces and territories on this issue. We also concur with the witnesses who presented that pre-departure foreign credential screening should receive a greater emphasis. We are happy to see the government moving in that direction.

It is clear that the government supports reasonable efforts to bring newcomers into the workforce which are crucial for skilled new immigrants to enter the Canadian economic mainstream. Additionally, we are committed to allocating resources to ensure that foreign trained doctors live up to their full potential and that Canadians have access to quality healthcare.

People come from countries across the world to work in Canada. Our government supports this process because it strengthens economic opportunity for individuals and our country within the global competitive framework. There is no room for disincentives that disadvantage one Canadian over another. A policy which would pay businesses to

choose one Canadian over another or a new immigrant over someone who has been here for longer is unacceptable.

Finally, we strongly oppose the creation of an "ombudsman" for unsuccessful job applicants. This is an unreasonable and unprecedented interference in the hiring practices of firms and government departments. It also creates an unreasonably differentiated job market between federally and provincially regulated sectors.

In closing we would like to thank the witnesses who appeared before our committee during this study and the committee members who for the most part worked cooperatively to complete this study and produce this report.

Respectfully Submitted,

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St. Catharines

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