



October 27, 2010

Dear Ms. Minna,

I'm writing from the Mennonite New Life Centre to express our concerns about Bill C49. As you know, it is our mission to welcome refugees to Toronto. We are concerned that Bill C49 sends a message of suspicion, and makes unfair distinctions between refugees based on their method of arrival. I urge you to vote against Bill C49 on the following grounds:

- Efforts to address the problem of human smuggling should target the smugglers, not the smuggled.
- The Refugee Convention prohibits punishing refugees for their mode of arrival, which is what Bill C-49 proposes to do.
- Bill C-49 proposes mandatory detention without independent review: this is arbitrary detention, which is contrary to the Charter and to international law. Children could be among those detained.
- Bill C-49 denies some refugees the right for five years to apply for permanent residence, and therefore for reunification with their children. Children should not be punished because their parents took a boat and not a plane.

For the churches who support our work, the call to welcome the stranger is a moral imperative, not just a matter of immigration policy and procedure. Refugees come to us in search of peace and security. We owe them welcome, not suspicion and detention. Bill C-49 punishes refugees for the sins of smugglers.

I understand that Bill C49 is currently undergoing second reading. I urge you not to support this Bill.

Thanks,  
Tanya

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*Walking together with newcomers*