

Minister  
of Immigration,  
Refugees and Citizenship



Ministre  
de l'Immigration,  
des Réfugiés et de la Citoyenneté

Ottawa, Canada K1A 1L1

FEB 07 2018

His Worship Michael Fougere  
Mayor  
City of Regina  
Queen Elizabeth II Court  
P.O. Box 1790  
Regina SK S4P 3C8



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2017-00958561

Dear Mr. Mayor:

Thank you for your correspondence of August 28, 2017, with which you enclosed a copy of a motion presented at a Regina City Council meeting, declaring Regina as a sanctuary city. I apologize for the delay in responding.

I appreciate you sharing the motion presented to Regina City Council on July 31, 2017, and for sharing your vision on becoming Canada's most inclusive community. Canada has a long and proud tradition of providing protection to those who need it the most by providing refuge to the world's most vulnerable people, and has welcomed generations of newcomers who have helped us build our society, culture and economy in long lasting and enduring ways.

Immigration from all streams provides significant benefits to Canada and to the immigrants who have come here to build their new lives. When we come together to welcome and integrate newcomers, it strengthens our communities and contributes to our country's success.

Canada is recognized as having a fair asylum system, which offers protection to people fleeing persecution, and provides recourse to appeal mechanisms, as well as access to the Federal Court system. Asylum claimants are entitled to social assistance, education, temporary health services, emergency housing, and legal aid while a decision is pending on their claim.

A "sanctuary city" has no meaning or status in Canada's asylum system. There is a risk that such declarations will create incentives for more migrants to enter Canada between ports of entry and establish themselves in "sanctuary" cities. In cases where a claimant has been denied protection in Canada and chooses to reside in a "sanctuary" city to avoid removal, these declarations risk undermining the lawful operation of part of Canada's asylum system.

Canada

With respect to failed asylum claimants, Canadian law requires that foreign nationals who have been issued a removal order need to depart Canada voluntarily or could face removal by the Canada Border Services Agency.

On the issue of services being provided to eligible asylum claimants, generally, municipalities are responsible for managing the costs of shelters that asylum seekers may use, which in turn are supported by the provinces and territories. In Budget 2016, the Government of Canada announced \$504 million over two years for Investment in Affordable Housing, which provinces and territories, in consultation with municipalities, can use how they see fit in terms of housing priorities, including shelters. The Government has also recently announced a \$4 billion Canada Housing Benefit, which will provide rent support for about 300,000 low income households, beginning in 2020.

The Government of Canada also provides funding every year through the Canada Social Transfer (CST), which is a federal block transfer to provinces and territories in support of post-secondary education, programs for children, social assistance and other social programs. The CST is provided on an equal per capita basis to the provinces and territories in accordance with Statistics Canada's annual population estimates, which include persons who are claiming refugee status and the family members living with them. The CST will provide \$13.7 billion in 2017-18 to the provinces and territories.

Additionally, in Budget 2017, the Government of Canada has made significant investments in a National Housing Strategy (more than \$11.2 billion over five years), a Targeted Employment Strategy for Newcomers (\$27.5 million over the next five years), and an additional \$2.7 billion over the next six years to provinces and territories under the Labour Market Transfer Arrangements for skills training and employment supports.

With Budget 2017, the Government of Canada will also strengthen Canada's asylum system by investing \$62.9 million over five years starting this year, and \$11.5 million per year thereafter to enhance the delivery of immigration and refugee legal aid services, in partnership with the provinces and territories.

Thank you, again, for expressing the City of Regina's concerns. I trust that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship