

December 4, 2024

Dear Honourable Senators and all Parliamentarians.

Thank you for the opportunity to first and foremost, express my appreciation that this issue of Lost Canadians is once again, finally being discussed in the light of day to hopefully clear all of the politicization of this issue for decades and put Canadians first, where they rightfully belong in Canada. Especially before we see another bill die on the floor because of an election call!

To be clear, my name is Randi Winter and I am one of those second-class Canadian citizens who married a Canadian and emigrated to Canada 53 years ago from New York. To be more exact, I married a Canadian whose parents were Jewish refugees from the worst concentration camps and work camps in Europe. Sam's father was actually in the gas chamber in Auschwitz when one of the forced labor workers recognized him from their village in Poland and told him to "walk to the broom in the corner of the room and pick it up with your back to the room and sweep like your life depended on it, because it did. When you hear your number called again, do not answer, just go and hide." That is what he did for two weeks until the camp was liberated. His mother was in a forced labour camp, and there is a book called Torn Threads by Ann Koplowitz for Scholastic books that tells the incredible story of his mother and her sister.

They reconnected after the war and got married and the choice was either to live in Bergen Belsen, turned into a DP Camp like his Aunt (where his cousin was born) which he swore he would never do, or make their way to the American zone in Germany, where Sam, my husband was born. They came to Canada when he was 15 months old and he was a DP, stateless until he was 9.

This is why I find what Canada has been doing to making innocent children stateless for all these years, is so egregious to me. What is allowed to currently happen on the streets and in the government, regarding the blatant rise of antisemitism and allowing pro terrorist groups to protest, destroy, threaten and bully, is disheartening to say the least, while removing charity status to a longstanding organization that plants trees-(which we did ourselves in Israel for our daughter's bat mitzvah on top of Massada.)

It should also be something that no government and their representatives should ever want to actively be linked to-clearly violating SDGs that Canada has signed on to respect or aligning themselves with terror organizations and funding organizations that actively took part and continue to take part in the terrorizing of Israel, Jewish people, desecrating our institutions and attacking our citizens. Yet, I know that all of you in the committee except

one, have been getting updates and detailed dossiers from Don Chapman for years on the more dire situations initiated and perpetuated by every party in and out of power, despite Trudeau's words that he would fix this and that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

As Don says, if you don't know what is happening in the country you represent, shame on me for not getting the truth out, but once you do know, shame on you for allowing these clearly unconstitutional laws, created mostly for partisan political purposes, to keep Canadians who are fiercely loyal, identifying and wanting to live in Canada, pay taxes and be with their relatives and feel comfortable in the culture of their ancestors. Many for decades, if not hundreds of years, as you heard again and again in testimony and questioning on Tuesday.

I have been helping the Lost Canadian cause for years, since first meeting Don Chapman at a talk about his book, then meeting his family, and understanding the almost 50-year battle to claim and reclaim his rightful citizenship, stripped away as an unknowing child, who like his mother, was considered chattel of his father. Talk about the sins of the father and their effect on his family. His father's sin was arthritis and being a dentist- that forced him to move with his family to the U.S. The irony, as you surely know, was that his two adopted siblings never lost their Canadian citizenship as it was too complicated to deal with at the same time of his father's becoming a US citizen. And, of course, as ruled by the judge last December, clearly discriminating against women in not allowing women to pass on citizenship (even though they can pass on treaty rights or visa versa)

I doubt that many of you know the true costs to Don and his family, giving up the income and career that he loved to help countless others for decades, and paying for the lawyers and cost of applications. Don is not a rich person but ask him the real financial and other costs he bore for people he never knew, for their repeated applications, lost applications, turned down applications, which is why the Judge specifically mentioned that it was a flawed process if, in order to get your citizenship, you had to know Don Chapman, like a secret society.

The laws are confusing and obtuse at best, as even lawyers commented on Tuesday, during the first session. Do you realize when you give Don 4 minutes to educate you, that many of the experts you called on, get their information and they also ask for help from him when they have families and friends who find out they cannot renew their passports, or get their pension, or children can't go to school or are denied medical care. It should not be a "Don Chapman secret handshake" which means that you have one of the most dedicated Canadians who ever lived and with the help of a totally volunteer small team, understands better than anyone, the innuendos and caveats, flaws and illegality of Canada's citizenship laws. And I know, he has spent the better part of his life trying to educate you, who

represent Canada, and knows more than anyone else on this planet. He is also responsible for some of the most significant challenges leading to changes in citizenship law. And yet, he has been turned down countless times for the Order of Canada. Shame on Canada.

Over the years, I have met many politicians and even more Lost Canadians and their families. I have been to several swearing in ceremonies post Covid-19. I have met a family that Canada tried to have them give their child Russian citizenship when the father was 5 generations Canadian Ukrainian, having fled from the Russians generations earlier. And this was during the current war in Ukraine and the child was born stateless because he was born in Hong Kong during the pandemic where citizenship is not automatic. Again, the inequality under the law, other children also born in hospitals in Hong Kong, with the same birth certificates and at least one Canadian parent (still 2nd generation born abroad) were accepted.

Why be surprised when siblings are not given equal treatment with one accepted and the other languishing? Yes, we just heard yesterday that one sibling was accepted and the other has heard nothing.

I have seen one family devastated waiting for approval, after the father and twin were killed by random bombs in Syria, had the government alternately, accepting one set of brothers and sisters, having another one turned down, then unceremoniously stripping the original family of their citizenship with no explanation and having it given to the other siblings instead-when they should have been all accepted. Their 8-year old's family member's application languished on the Minister's desk for 3 years and 3 ministers, while approved and ready to sign. Then the bureaucrats wanted this boy and his guardian aunt to travel through a war zone to get their fingerprints done to ensure they were not criminals in Canada, where they had not yet had the privilege of stepping on its soil,

I have met a family whose children, for 15 years, were turned down, both Canadian. Their issue, both parents came to Canada as small children, not born here, so the sins of the parents were put on the heads of forced family separation, and paying thousands of dollars in repeated fees and medical exams, hiring lawyers who were useless against the hardened automatic refusal, which I have seen rejections even when as per the judge and the minister's explicit instructions on how to apply with Don as their representative, and their applications were ignored, lost or rubber stamped into a dead file without opening as happened to the son of a Canadian. The boy's father died during Covid and his last words to his brother, was to bring him to Canada and raise him as his son with all the Canadian opportunity his family had. Burt lived most of his life in Canada with a Canadian mother and even legally adopted by a Canadian father, yet he was deemed and undeemed like so many before him. No path to appeal, (and one of the big flaws of the toothless bill S-245,

was that as initially presented, it would continue to undeer and not consider anyone to be granted citizenship who cared and had “dared” to apply through these years!)

I stood next to Erin Brooks and her surfboard here in Vancouver at a press conference with Don, Jenny Kwan and Surf Canada to try to raise awareness of her being turned down twice for citizenship, Her citizenship request was initiated and backed at the request of the Canadian surfing team- as she is one of the world’s greatest surfers and was a serious Olympic hopeful and now a world champion, turned down. She has trained with the team since she was 14. Having some of those rare Canadian gold and silver medals stripped from a 16-year-old girl, because Canada did not want to consider already set precedent for an athlete and who had much more lucrative offers from 5 other countries and turned them all down, because she only wanted to represent Canada. Erin came alone that day, just for a few hours, because her mother was having surgery for breast Cancer. Oh yes, and one of her main training houses where she lived and trained in Lahaina, had been totally destroyed, along with all her medals and memorabilia. (she also has a residence in Tofino and her family is in Quebec.) She should have also been given a grant for hardship, and allowed her to compete in several Olympic trials, and be able to celebrate Christmas last year as a Canadian. But no. They waited until there was only one trial left, and she placed one spot out of a guaranteed place. She is now proudly competing for Canada on the global stage and international circuit as a rare surfing phenomenon. But the cost to our country and a 16-year-old? A well-respected Canadian psychiatrist could only shake her head in disbelief.

I recently wrote an article for a veteran’s magazine about one of Canada’s oldest remaining Indigenous veterans. Another group deemed and undeer so many times it makes your head spin. He came home from fighting on the beaches at D-Day, severely injured, and was not allowed into the bar in Ontario with his friends. He fought side by side and lived and died as brothers, but “Indians” were considered wards of the country, not people and so had less veteran grants, no recognition, and then were told that they were not even citizens! He was so disgusted that he left Canada and lived in Arizona for over half century, and even though bill C-37 captured people like him, Canada did nothing to apologize or to ensure that they were actually given citizenship papers.

This is why so many of us are so skeptical about how the government is going to actually let people know they have now been found. I heard people talking about the fears of letting a secret third line and spies into Canada. I have heard so much talk about them being disloyal or “citizens of convenience” or a burden to the country. I have never heard of a single Lost Canadian being accused or charged with anything like other Canadians or immigrants, refugees have been.

It is unfathomable that so many famous Canadians and politicians have family members with Lost Canadian problems. Ask Romeo Dallaire what the process was like. Ask MPs, you already heard from Senators and those who testified and presented themselves as representative of the many ways that Canada kept its own families separated, denying citizenship, even now, when clearly against the December 19, 2023, decision. And the government thinks it is ok to still keep denying people their upheld rights against the explicit ruling of the judge.

That being said, Per Andrew Griffith's testimony today saying that "The potential impact of Bill C-71 could be potentially large. So, before the government enshrines a new pathway to citizenship for some, all of the facts need to be properly considered. Canadian citizenship is a precious gift."

You have been shouting from the rooftops for years, citizenship is just that, a privilege and not a right, but it is not a gift that someone is giving our families, it should be enshrined rights that are not against the law in Canada or any SDGs or human and moral decencies as well as impossibilities to enforce or try to enforce on those who were purposefully disenfranchised for all these years. The big question is why would anyone think that Canadians would be more inclined to be citizens of convenience or living in Canada with nefarious designs compared to people who have no ties or loyalty? What is the rate of permanent residents who take up the privilege and opportunity to apply for citizenship? Under 25% I believe.

You pay millions to criminals, terrorists, Japanese, South East Asians and more in reparations, allow Nazis, murderers, fomenters of destruction to be served coffee by police and allow their marches in sensitive neighborhoods, allow desecration of property-public and private, and yet a newborn child or adoptee, war bride or Indigenous person to this country, is considered a possible Mata Hari, unworthy of the "gift" of citizenship.

And these Lost Canadians who finally win the right to be deemed Found Canadians, are muzzled and told not to even ask for compensation back for the costs of their fight to exercise their Canadian-worthiness. Not to mention being told that their precedent cases would not be deemed publicly a precedent. There has been compensation for many nationalities, Indigenous, victims of countless events, and yet the only ones being told to be quiet and be happy they are getting their citizenship and that should be enough of a "reward" are Canadians?

As to Tuesday's testimony, many of the cases being brought up in discussion involve split families, adoptions, mental health issues, separation, loss of income, and forceable removal of war brides, medical experimentation by the government on a woman

imprisoned while pregnant and stripped of her citizenship. Her “crime” falling in love with a Chinese man she was forbidden to wed by the government. It took until she had a life lived in fear and under cover, until she was in her 90s to be apologized to. She was not offered more than platitudes for the misery and loss that was the story of her life.

My question is, against this backdrop, is how does a newborn accrue citizenship, with rules that deem 3 out of 5 consecutive years against the reality of the nature of work of the parents? What if they come at 2 and the parents have to move or go to study, or the government sends them to another post? Again, why are the “sins” of the fathers the responsibility of denying a child their rights as children of citizens?

Apropos to the 5-year rules, another example of a young person being in Canada and wanting 3 consecutive years, besides personal reasons for travel and leaving the country for short periods of time, what if this young, smart person gets a full scholarship for another country and then a Fulbright after and they only spent some time in Canada because they were minors before? This is why having an unreasonable deadline and consecutive makes no sense for CITIZENS. They are not immigrants. Nor refugees. Significant connection to Canada is not an absolute and we are reaping the results of poorly thought-out laws. Unfortunately, political and natural disasters do not give 5 year’s notice! I believe that before a penny is spent on immigration, a dollar should be spent on citizenship. Invest in Lost Canadians.

Why are we looking to punish and push undeemed citizens further away as they once had passports, rights and those were unceremoniously taken away?

The senator was asking about the cost of APPLICATION for someone to assert their rights of Canadian citizenship. In a world where we are paying and enticing farmers, restaurant servers and so many others to come and bring their family so there is no hardship, why are we not prioritizing our own citizens-instead putting them through the ringer and at a hefty financial cost?

NO one should have to apply 5 times and be turned down as a child. This is not a talent show. A few weeks ago, it was a great joy to welcome as new Canadians, families from war torn Israel and Lebanon a few days apart. That is my Canadian spirit. I want to live in a country where everything good is possible. Where you are not guilty until proven innocent.

Thank you for taking the time to read through to the end. I know it is long, but not as long as the discrimination and biases against Lost Canadians has existed. And please, be sure to thank Don Chapman for his tireless service on behalf of Canada. His friendly face and willingness to listen was a panacea against the often heartless and uncaring aloofness of

the IRCC bureaucrats who the judge mentioned were making illegal and wrong decisions over half the time in the cases presented in court in the name of the Supreme Court challenge.

Be inclusive, Stay Safe, and Travel Well

Sincerely,

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