

## BACKGROUND

### **Policy #1: 60-day guarantee**

**The 60 Day Guaranty: Incentivize provinces and territories to require occupational licensing bodies to decide whether to grant an immigrant a license to work in their trade or profession within 60 days of getting the application.**

How: A Poilievre government will incentivize provinces to mandate occupational licensing bodies to grant immigrants who prove qualified in their trade or professions a license to work within 60 days of applying. If the licensing body requires testing to prove competency, the newcomer must get the chance to challenge the test and get the result within 60 days. Those applicants whose qualifications fall short would get a report within 60 days telling them what training or testing they need to work in their field.

The previous Harper government succeeded in getting provinces to mandate responses within one year. A Poilievre government would go further and achieve it in 60 days. Under the proposal, within 60 days of receiving an application from an immigrant seeking a license to work, regulators would need to approve a license for those who are qualified or ask nearly qualified applicants to complete further training and/or testing.

To incentivize the provinces to adopt this standard, provinces that meet or beat the 60-day rule would receive additional transfers. The size of the transfers will be negotiated with the provinces.

### **Policy #2: Merit-based licensing**

**Approve people to work in their field based on what they can do, not where they studied.**

How: A Poilievre Government will work with willing provinces to mandate licensing bodies to grant credentials based on a single proof of ability through testing and other skills exams that everyone—regardless of where they studied—must pass. Newcomers should be asked to meet the same competency standard as Canadian-trained professionals and tradespeople—no less and no more.

As professional licensing is provincial responsibility, provinces would have the freedom to opt-in or out, just as they do with the Red Seal Trades Program, a 70-year-old partnership in which provinces voluntarily recognize common standards and testing for 55 skilled trades in Canada. Provinces can opt into each individual trade standard.

A Poilievre government would allow provinces to opt into common standards in the professions. Just as with the trades, provinces would have an incentive to join because it would give them a simple way to license and recruit in-demand and highly qualified doctors, engineers, architects and more.

### **Policy #3: Credential new Canadians before they even arrive**

**Empower professionals and tradespeople waiting to immigrate to Canada to work on getting their credentials before they even arrive here.**

Direct Immigration Canada to work with professional and trades regulators to offer immigrants in the trades and professions the chance to begin working on their license to practice before they even arrive. This will empower aspiring immigrants to work on getting licensed while they are waiting to get approved for work permits and visas, so they hit the ground running upon arrival with good jobs and paycheques.

#### **Policy #4: Study-loans for newcomers**

##### **Additional study loans for new Canadians who need to upskill to get licensed in their fields.**

How: Many immigrants need a few extra courses or tests to secure their professional or trades licenses, but cannot afford fees or time off work, and can't get conventional loans because they have not had time to build collateral or credit history since coming to Canada. A Poillievre Government would back small loans made by private and charitable sectors for newcomers to get textbooks, training, testing and time off work to get professional & trades licenses.

When the Harper government had a similar program, the loans had nearly 100% repayment rates, so it would cost the government nothing; moreover, the higher incomes people will earn once the loans help them get into lucrative occupations will mean boosted tax revenue for governments. Finally, when immigrants repay their study loans, their repaid money can be lent out again to another aspiring professional or tradesperson and so on. That will allow the same dollars to be lent out and repaid again and again to help Canada add more doctors, engineers and mechanics, who earn bigger paycheques and more success. This funding will allow for an additional 30,000 loans.

During the Harper-government program, participants accessed these loans from 2012 to 2014 and repayment rates was 97%, with a total of \$9 million of loans issued.

Based on the 97% repayment rate in the Harper Government's pilot program, that means that the government loses one dollar to defaults for every 30 of lending. We will reallocate an additional \$10 million over three years from the existing IRCC budgets to leverage a total of an additional \$300 million of annual loans.

The Liberals ended the program introduced by the Harper government in November 2017.

The government is backing some study loans for immigrants seeking credentials. The programs are scattered, unfocused and hard to access.

#### **Background on the Status Quo:**

According to RBC, there are currently more than 870,000 vacant jobs in Canada, and over one-third of Canadian businesses are grappling with labour shortages. Businesses were already reporting acute labour shortages in some sectors prior to the pandemic.

An aging population will continue to boost retirements and lower the share of the population participating in labour markets—removing roughly 600,000 workers from the available labour market pool over the next three years.

The Harper government made great efforts to engage the provinces and move towards both inter-provincial credential recognition and foreign credential recognition. This included the Foreign Credential Recognition Loan Program.

The last meeting of the Forum of Labour Ministers was held in October 2017. A large part of their work consisted of implementing the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, but there has been no significant follow-up and no obvious progress since then.

Like the rest of Canada, Quebec is experiencing a labour shortage, has announced \$130m in new spending for a new credential recognition plan, and already has its own Foreign Credential Recognition Loan program.

In 2021, Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees Canada had a total allocated budget of \$4.5 billion, according to Public Accounts. We will pay for these programs by reallocating funding within the department.