

## Update on Bill C-11:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim  
release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” (Luke 4: 18-19)*

### Thank You

Thank you to those who wrote to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration regarding Bill C-11 (Balanced Refugee Reform Act).

The many briefs, the letters and the oral presentations to the Standing Committee contributed to improving the original draft, as did the changes the opposition parties called for. If you wrote to the Standing Committee, your letter is part of the public record. It is on the Standing Committee’s web site under *Briefs Concerning Bill C-11*. If you click on Briefs Concerning Bill C-11, you will find the list of letters and briefs.

Justice Ministries submitted a brief to the Standing Committee which is on our web site.

The Rev. Glynis Williams, director of Action Refugies in Montreal submitted a brief and appeared before the Standing Committee. Action Refugies is jointly supported by Presbyterians Sharing... and the Anglican Diocese of Montreal. If you would like a copy of the Action Refugies’ brief, please contact Justice Ministries.

### Why We Got Involved

It’s helpful to remind ourselves why we all took the time to write our letters and our briefs. We acknowledged the positive aspects of the original bill, but we were concerned about those sections of the original bill that might weaken the safeguards for those seeking protection.

We should never apologize for doing what we can as citizens of Canada and as disciples of Jesus to work for a refugee system that is a model for governments, organizations and citizens in other countries. Refugees need and deserve more protection, not less. Here is the update.

### The Update

On June 15, Bill C-11 received third and final reading in the House of Commons. By the time the Bill received third reading, a number of amendments had been made. The Bill then went to the Senate and was reviewed (for one day only) by the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. The Senate Committee made few changes to the Bill. On Monday evening, June 28, the Bill was passed in the Senate. It was then sent to the Governor-General to receive Royal Assent. It was assumed that Bill C-11 would become law by July 1. Here are some of the changes were made to the original draft bill. The changes are in **bold**.

- **All refused claimants will now be guaranteed the right to an appeal.** In the original draft, claimants from countries on the “designated country list” which Minister Kenney referred to as the safe country list, did not have the right to appeal.
- **More time will be given in the process for a refugee to make a claim.**
- **There are some criteria in the Bill for countries on the “designated country list”.** Further criteria will be developed, but it isn’t clear how the additional criteria will be developed. In the original draft, there was no mention of criteria. How would a country get on this list?

There are other amendments to the Bill, but these are the major ones. If you would like additional information on the amendments, please contact Stephen Allen.

**What's Next:**

Once Bill C-11 becomes law, the new system will then be implemented. The rules and regulations necessary for implementing the Act will take 12-18 months, although the Immigration and Refugee Board is hoping to have more time (18-24 months). If other issues arise regarding the Bill, we will inform you.

Organizations such as the Canadian Council for Refugees will request an opportunity to have input into the rules and regulations ([www.ccrweb.ca](http://www.ccrweb.ca)).

Please encourage your congregation, presbytery or presbyterial to study *Staying Rooted in an Uprooted World*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada's study for 2010-2012. Offer to lead a study group. This is an excellent resource for learning about uprooted people, including refugees. The study is available from the Bookroom.

Once again, thank you for those who wrote to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

In grace and peace,

Stephen Allen