

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peaceful Gathering on Parliament Hill Calls for Transparency and Timely Immigration Processing

OTTAWA, ON — March 13, 2026 — A group of permanent residence and visa applicants from across Canada are gathering peacefully on Parliament Hill today to call for greater transparency and reasonable timelines in immigration processing. Participants, including workers, families, and skilled professionals, say their applications have been stalled at final-stage security screening, despite many living and working legally in Canada for years.

More than 200 people from across the country are expected to attend, including many from the Chinese Canadian community who describe the review process as opaque and unpredictable, often referring to it as a “black box.”

The group is also urging the federal government to provide one-time funding to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to help address prolonged applications and reduce the backlog for all applicants.

Examples of affected applicants include

A potential physician delayed

An international medical graduate fully licensed in China has passed the Medical Council of Canada qualifying exams and obtained MD equivalence certification from the Collège des médecins du Québec. Despite these qualifications, his permanent residence application has been stalled for more than 13 months. Because PR status is required to apply through the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS), he has already missed the 2025 residency match and may miss the 2026 cycle, despite Canada’s severe physician shortage.

A family’s life on hold

A family who arrived in Canada through a provincial immigration program applied for permanent residence in 2021. Their application remains in the security screening phase, and their now-adult daughter fears getting married because doing so could disqualify her from receiving permanent residence with her family.

Family reunification delayed

A permanent resident who came to Canada as an international student in 2008

sponsored her parents in 2021 through the Parent and Grandparent Sponsorship Program. Their application remains stalled in security screening. Her father also applied for a visitor visa to see his daughter and grandchild but was refused on the grounds of “immigration intent,” leaving the family unable to reunite in Canada for years.

According to publicly available information, more than 23,000 permanent residence applicants are currently undergoing security screening. As the organizers state: “We respect Canada’s security screening process. But applicants’ lives should not remain indefinitely suspended without communication or reasonable timelines.”

The group’s supporters include Senator Yuen Pau Woo of British Columbia. He said “Security screening must protect Canada while respecting procedural fairness and reasonable timelines. Applicants should not be subject to excessive national security scrutiny because of exaggerated or vague fears about immigrants from China posing a threat to Canada.”

To restore predictability, participants are calling for:

- **Adherence to service standards** for immigration processing
- **Temporary resources** to address prolonged cases and backlogs
- **Greater transparency**, including explanations and estimated timelines when applications exceed standard processing times

Media Availability: In addition to a media briefing at the Press Gallery in 135B West Block at 9am on 13 Mar, affected individuals will be available on Parliament Hill for interviews between 10am-2pm.

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References

IRCC Service Standards:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/service-declaration/service-standards.html>

CBSA Security Screening Standards:

<https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/agency-agence/reports-rapports/ae-ve/2023/appen-annex-eng.html>