



For Immediate Release
April 15, 2008

MPs Stand up for Bramptonians: Dhalla and Malhi vote against Immigration Changes

Last week Brampton MPs Dr. Ruby Dhalla and the Hon. Gurbax Singh Malhi voted against Bill C-50, which contains the Conservative government's proposed amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

"The way in which these changes have been brought forward, and the unnecessary powers they would grant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, make a mockery of the idea of accountability and transparency in the government's decision making process," said Malhi in the House of Commons during his speech in response to Bill C-50.

Under the proposed changes, the Minister would not only have the power to pick and choose which immigrants she deems acceptable, but would also have the ability to cap the number of applicants "by category or otherwise," and to reject any applicant already approved for admission by immigration officers. This means that the more than 900,000 prospective immigrants currently on the waiting list could be stripped of the right to have their application reviewed.

"The changes being proposed do nothing to help reduce the backlog that exists," said Dhalla. "Why is the Conservative government bringing these changes in through the back door without allowing Canadians the opportunity to have a voice? What do they want to hide? The Minister could have the ability to accept, discard, or reject applicants from certain countries even if they meet all of the immigration criteria. These changes will replace Canada's open arms with closed doors."

The bill provides no assurance that the government won't use the new powers as a way to favor certain groups at the expense of family reunification, or to discriminate on the basis of country of origin.

"These amendments show a lack of understanding for our need for immigrants over the coming decades," stated Dhalla. "They also undermine the contributions to Canada's social, political and economic fabric that immigrants have made

throughout our history as a country. We will continue to stand up against these discriminatory changes”

“People from around the world want to live and work in Canada because of our reputation for tolerance and democracy,” said Malhi. “Our status as a destination of choice for prospective immigrants is threatened by these changes. The government is signaling that fairness and impartiality, which have guided Canada’s immigration policy for the past 40 years, no longer have a place in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. That is simply shameful.”

Both Malhi and Dhalla have spent the last month meeting with concerned constituents and community groups who are very fearful of the potential consequences of Bill C-50.

Since the Conservative government came into power in 2006, 36,000 fewer landed immigrants have been allowed to enter Canada. The waiting list for refugees has grown to over 60,000 and over 50 positions on the Immigration and Refugee Board remain unfilled.

-30-

Contacts:

Candice Debi
Office of Dr. Ruby Dhalla, M.P.
Brampton—Springdale
(905) 874-6868

Jerad Gallinger
Office of the Hon. Gurbax Singh Malhi, P.C., M.P.
Bramalea—Gore—Malton
(905) 790-9211