

THE WEEKLY VOICE

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Birthright Citizenship Is A Polarizing Factor

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saying his department has commissioned research to get a better picture of the scope of the issue in Canada.

"While these statistics indicate that this is not a widespread practice, the government of Canada recognizes the need to better understand the extent of this practice as well as its impacts," Hussen said in his response.

The issue of so-called birth tourism has been polarizing in Canada, with the Liberals defending the current law that gives automatic citizenship to anyone born on Canadian soil except for children of foreign diplomats.

Conservative members passed a policy resolution during their biennial convention this summer calling on the government to end birthright citizenship "unless one of the parents of the child born in Canada is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada."

Leader Andrew Scheer said at the time one of the goals would be to end the practice of women coming to Canada simply to give birth to a child that will automatically have Canadian citizenship.

Other countries have ended or modified their birthright-citizenship laws, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, India, the Dominican Republic, Thailand and Portugal.



Michelle Rempel, Shadow Minister for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, her deputy Larry Maguire, look on as Pierre Paul-Hus, Shadow Minister for Public Safety at a news conference in Ottawa, on Thursday. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld

Recently, U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened to end birthright citizenship in the US, although critics have argued such a change could violate that country's constitution.

Canada did explore changing Canada's existing birthright policy under Stephen Harper's Conservative government. This work ultimately found any change to the law would have significant impacts. Many Canadians _ 40 per cent or more _ don't have passports and use birth certificates to prove their citizenship. A change in rules would mean

they'd need new identification to prove their citizenship and get government services.

A 2013 estimate pegged the cost of changing the rules at \$20 million to \$30 million, plus \$7 million in extra costs for the federal government every year, the senior official said. He further noted this did not include costs to the provinces and territories, which would be even higher because they're responsible for more personal documents than the federal government is.

The Conservatives did not change the policy. Nor will the

Liberals, said Mathieu Genest, a spokesman for Hussen.

"The birth-on-soil principle has been enshrined in our legislation since Canadian citizenship first came into existence in 1947. A change was planned by the Harper Conservatives, but abandoned after listening to the advice of experts," Genest said.

Griffith said he was inspired to delve into the question of how prevalent birth tourism is in Canada after he noted the number of non-resident births reported for Richmond Hospital in B.C. were disproportionate to the rest of the country. The data he collected captured the number of mothers who paid out-of-pocket for their hospital bills, which was at least five times higher. He acknowledged this would include Canadian expatriates and foreign students whose hospital expenses were not covered by medicare.

Ontario lawyer Gordon Scott Campbell said he's had several clients in recent years who have given birth while in Canada while in the middle of legitimate refugee or immigration processes.

Hussen said Canada does not collect information on whether a woman is pregnant when entering Canada, nor can a woman legally be denied entry solely because she is pregnant or might give birth in Canada.

India Is Saskatchewan's Major Trading Partner

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ment says approximately 4,550 Saskatchewan jobs rely on exports to India.

"India is one of our province's most important trading partners and holds enormous potential for further growth," Moe said in the release. "India's economy and population are booming and Saskatchewan has what India needs to support that growth."

"We are heavily reliant on the U.S., they are our most important trading partner, thus the importance of a trade deal with them,

which we were pleased to see with the U.S.M.C.A.," Moe said. "But we're also very focused on expanding our trade opportunities, our export opportunities with other nations around the world."

Moe met with the Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu (see picture on right) and said in a statement that "We will keep working together to build these trade relationships that will benefit both Saskatchewan and India."

Later, he met with the Minister of Food Processing Industries



Harsimrat Badal and the discussion covered the whole gamut of Saskatchewan-India trade "and

how we can grow commerce, and also share knowledge and innovation, especially in the agri-food and processing industries."

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Canada's Auto Industry At Risk If GM Shuts Plant

OTTAWA: The head of the union representing workers at General Motors' car plant in Oshawa, Ont., argued Tuesday that the company's decision could lead to the collapse of the auto-parts industry in Canada and demanded a sharp response from the Trudeau Liberals.

Unifor president Jerry Dias said General Motors "just showed the president of the United States and the prime minister of Canada their middle finger" by moving production out of Canada and the U.S. and threatening the jobs of about 2,500 workers he represents at the Oshawa plant.

"We're playing with a corporation that plays by their own rules. So we have to have governments that are going to play by very strict rules as well," Dias said after meeting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Parliament Hill.

"I mean, if you're going to have a company that's going to show us their middle finger, then I think our government should show them their middle finger as well."

Dias said GM has moved production of five models of vehicle to Mexico and the United States in the past few years, and if the Oshawa plant closes, the company will have only one left here.

He blamed low labour standards in Mexico, and called on Trudeau to work with U.S. President Donald Trump.

The new North American trade pact _ which is set to be signed by the end of the week _ should help eventually, but the parts that apply to the auto sector won't kick in for years and by then it could be too late, Dias said.