

Bill C-2 Explainer: Heightened surveillance & its impact on migrants and refugees

| What is Bill C-2?

Bill C-2, known as the “Strong Borders Act”, is a wide-ranging legislative proposal that imposes severe limitations on access to refugee claims while expanding surveillance and information-sharing capabilities. Presented as a response to trade pressures and discredited claims of criminals and drugs flowing across the United States border, the Bill fails to support and protect those fleeing from violence and persecution, and to provide fair treatment of migrants and refugees.

The Bill is part of a multi-part initiative by the federal government to increase border controls. In the current climate, the Bill’s surveillance and information-sharing powers could be used against newcomers, raising concerns of racial profiling and disproportionate impact on migrants, refugees and survivors fleeing gender-based violence or persecution.

This explainer outlines some of the ways that Bill C-2’s surveillance powers might impact migrants, refugees and the organizations that serve them. Other resources on Bill C-2’s erosion of migrant rights and on the broader implications of its surveillance mechanisms can be found below.

| Police information demands from service providers, including newcomer services

Under Part 14 of Bill C-2, police, border officials and security agencies would not require court approval or a strong basis for demanding that health providers, banks, online websites, organizations that serve migrants and refugees, or any other service provider confirm if they have provided services to a person.

As Canadian border control officials intensify their targeting of overstays, lists of names could be provided to service providers to track down people for deportation.

When presented with these demands, service providers could be required to respond within 24 hours. If they wanted to challenge the demand, they would need to do so within 5 days, making it difficult to protect their clients from improper requests.

Demands may be accompanied with gag orders that prevent service providers from publicly acknowledging the demand for up to one year, a factor that can undermine client trust in service providers. Failing to comply with a demand could lead to prosecution and criminal sanction.

| Increased information-sharing by immigration officials

Part 6 of Bill C-2 would authorize immigration officials to share information with any other federal government official with few restrictions, greatly increasing the risk of a security breach.

The Bill would also authorize sharing of some sensitive information, including refugee status and changes to gender identity, with any government entity at all. This includes political staff, social service providers, public power companies, housing authorities, security agencies, police and, subject to minimal safeguards, even with foreign governments.

Disclosing refugee status or changes in gender identity to foreign governments can put vulnerable migrant groups in Canada and their families abroad in direct harm. Sharing changes in gender identity within Canada places trans newcomers in severe danger, exposing them to harassment or violence and jeopardizing their access to housing, healthcare or employment.

Bill C-2 could also lead to the adoption of information sharing agreements with countries that are known for persecuting diaspora communities, exposing newcomers and their families to additional threats.

| What can I do?

You can call on your MP to withdraw Bill C-2 using the following tools:

<https://ccrweb.ca/en/take-action-write-mp-bill-c-2>

<https://migrantrights.ca/actionslist/stopc2/>

<https://action.openmedia.org/page/173242/action/1>

<https://iclmg.ca/stop-bill-c-2/>

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-6838>

If Bill C-2 ultimately passes, you can reach out to these organizations for additional support:

Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers: <https://carl-acaadr.ca/>

Canadian Council for Refugees: <https://ccrweb.ca/>

Migrant Rights Network: <https://migrantrights.ca/>

Migrant Workers Alliance for Change: <https://migrantworkersalliance.org/>

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants: <https://ocasi.org/>

| Learn More

Canadian Council of Refugees, Bill C-2 Advocacy Messaging Guide,

https://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/2025-08/Bill-C2-Key-Concerns_0.pdf

Other information resources: <https://ccla.org/privacy/bill-c-2-information-resources/>

Statement on Bill C-2: Dangerous New Border Legislation Erodes Refugee Rights and will Make Many in Canada Less Safe, <https://ccrweb.ca/en/statement-bill-c-2>

Statement: Withdraw Bill C-2, <https://migrantrights.ca/actionslist/c2statement/>

Open Letter: Canada's Bill C-2 puts Refugee Claimants at Risk, <https://ocasi.org/media-release-open-letter-canada%E2%80%99s-bill-c-2-puts-refugee-claimants-risk>

Refugee Lawyers Alarmed by Proposed Sweeping Changes in Strong Borders Act, <https://carl-acaadr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025-06-C-2-News-Release.pdf>

Statement: Bill C-2 Risks Undermining Canada's Commitments to Gender-Based Violence Survivors, https://www.schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Statement-Bill-C-2-Risks-_Undermining-Canadas-Commitments.pdf

Kate Robertson, Unspoken Implications, June 16, 2025, *The Citizen Lab*, <https://citizenlab.ca/2025/06/a-preliminary-analysis-of-bill-c-2/>

Library of Parliament, Legislative Summary – Preliminary Version, Bill C-2, June 19, 2025, https://lop.parl.ca/staticfiles/PublicWebsite/Home/ResearchPublications/LegislativeSummaries/PDF/45-1/PV_45-1-C2-E.pdf

Jenna Fung, Bill C-2 FAQ, August 12, 2025, *OpenMedia*, <https://openmedia.org/article/item/bill-c-2-faq-explaining-canadas-dangerous-new-surveillance-law>

Coalition of Coalitions call for withdrawal of Bill C-2, July 11, 2025, *CCLA*, <https://ccla.org/privacy/ccla-joins-calls-for-withdrawal-of-bill-c-2/>

Joe Mullin, Canada's Bill C-2 Opens the Floodgates to US Surveillance, July 25, 2025, *EFF*, <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2025/07/canadas-bill-c-2-opens-floodgates-us-surveillance>

Recommendations Arising from the Iacobucci and O'Connor Inquiries, June 2009, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/402/SECU/Reports/RP4004074/securp03/securp03-e.pdf>