

Liberals admit Citizenship Bill lacks research

Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson has taken Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister John McCallum to task for making changes to Canada's citizenship rules for purely political reasons, lacking the research to justify the changes.

The Minister admitted his department had not done an economic analysis of changing the language requirement age range to become a citizen, Tilson said. It became clear very quickly that this was a politically motivated change with no data to back it up. During a meeting of the House of Commons Immigration Committee on Bill C-6, Tilson, who is the vice-chair, criticized the Minister's decision to narrow the age at which prospective citizens must display proficiency in either of the two official languages down from 64 to 55 and up from 14 to 18. Tilson is concerned this will make it more difficult for younger and older immigrants to be productive members of the workforce.

If they're going to go to school, they have to be able to understand what's going on in school, either in French or in English, Tilson observed. If they are going to be working later in life, then one of the two official languages is a big advantage. The Minister is making changes without the data to justify it and that's unfair to prospective citizens.