



Raj Chouhan, MLA
(Burnaby-Edmonds)



Province of
British Columbia
Legislative Assembly

June 13, 2006

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Re: MLA Raj Chouhan's statement regarding "Canadian Marriage Fraud Victim Society"

Dear Sir/Madam:

This is to clarify that I do not endorse the philosophy or activities of a group known as "Canadian Marriage Fraud Victim Society".

It has come to my attention that an on-line petition started by this group is calling on the Canadian government to introduce a legislated probationary period of three years as a condition to obtaining immigration by spouses sponsored from foreign countries.

I am strongly opposed to this stance. I believe that this proposed legislative change is a regressive and an unfair measure which will cause more harm than good. Practices of a few unethical individuals must not result in another blanket policy that will take away the sense of security and stability that permanent residency provides and that all of the genuine applicants in this category deserve to live with.

In fact, the focus of my own work is to specifically point out problems with the provincial government's existing blanket policy which unfairly penalizes sponsors by making them responsible for any social security expenses of their sponsored spouse even after the marriage breaks up. This can continue for three to ten years depending on the length of the immigration sponsorship agreement. These agreements cannot be broken, even if the sponsored person abuses or abandons the sponsor. As a result, the sponsoring spouses have received bills for tens of thousands of dollars from the government and in some cases; liens have been put on people's homes as well as their wages garnisheed.

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In conclusion and once again, I would like to categorically state that my own work has no connection or commonality whatsoever with the stated mandate of the above-mentioned group.

If you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to contact me at 604-520-2756.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Chouhan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Raj Chouhan, MLA
Burnaby-Edmonds
New Democrat Official Opposition critic for
Human Rights, Multiculturalism and Immigration