

EXCLUSIVE: Immigration admits citizenship was granted with “insufficient” documentary evidence

Canada’s immigration department admits it gave citizenship certificates to individuals “without sufficient supporting documentary evidence,” clarifying that ancestry doesn’t guarantee citizenship.



Canada’s immigration department admits that it gave citizenship certificates to individuals “without sufficient supporting documentary evidence,” after receiving a surge of citizenship requests due to a change in rules about ancestral citizenship claims from Bill C-3, but avoided answering questions about the number of applications that were approved and revoked.

A spokesperson for Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees Canada told Juno News on Friday that “from the beginning,” they have been “very clear” that individuals who prove “Canadian” ancestry do not automatically qualify for citizenship.

Immigration lawyer Sergio Karas argues that the rules have been anything but clear, and the Liberal immigration department’s response is “more evidence” that the department headed by Immigration Minister Lena Diab is incompetent and attempting to play cover for the massive mistake.

The IRCC came under fire this week after a report of at least 4,000 individuals seeking to gain citizenship in Canada had their previously approved citizenship applications revoked, only to be told they are no longer revoked and in fact are under review.

After the IRCC initially didn't respond to Juno News when asked about the numbers of applications it received and later recalled, Taous Ait, press secretary for the immigration minister called Juno News.

She said that from December 15, 2025, when Bill C-3 became law, to March 31, 2026 approximately 17,385 citizenship by descent proof applications were approved.

"Of which 4,075 were confirmed to be citizens by descent because of Bill C-3," Ait said. "IRCC can only determine whether an application is related to Bill C-3 after it has been processed."

Ait said all the applications are being reviewed "to offer peace of mind to the affected individuals," but asserted that "only a limited number of people who obtained a citizenship certificate under Bill C-3 have been or will be contacted to provide additional evidence in support of their case."

As Juno News reported Friday, several online groups on social media and forum platforms indicate that many Americans, particularly those of Cajun descent with roots in pre-Confederation Nova Scotia, are seeking Canadian citizenship. Karas raised concerns that many of the fresh wave of applications stemming from Bill C-3 would effectively have "zero connection to Canada."

<https://www.junonews.com/p/exclusive-bill-c-3-opened-citizenship>

Though the department avoided answering questions about the volume of requests its received for citizenship based on ancestry to Canada, since the amendments to the Citizenship Act removing the first-generation limit for citizenship by descent, the IRCC told Juno News that Canadian ancestry does not automatically qualify applicants for Canadian citizenship.

“Individuals seeking proof of citizenship through a Canadian ancestor must establish the chain of parent-child relationships through each generation and provide solid evidence to support their claim,” Briannah Dale, a senior communications Advisor for the feds, told Juno News. “Having Canadian ancestry does not automatically mean entitlement to citizenship.” She said that each application is reviewed by trained officers who review the submitted evidence before approving citizenship. Following a wave of individuals submitting genealogy websites as proof of entitlement to Canadian citizenship, the IRCC changed its rules clarifying what documents were required, over six months after the program began to roll out.

Karas said the response “does not address” the reality that the Liberal department “rushed the process” to grant citizenship by ancestry to people who had “very flimsy evidence” before changing the rules.

“This is more evidence that they’re locking the gates of the barn after the horses have escaped, and so now they’re trying to backtrack,” Karas told Juno News in an interview.

“Unfortunately, what happens is that a lot of people are going to have their citizenship certificates revoked because they have provided flimsy evidence of their ancestry, who will probably litigate this in the courts.”

Dale, the spokesperson for the IRCC told Juno News that the department had “become aware of a limited number of cases where citizenship certificates obtained under C-3 may have been issued without sufficient supporting documentary evidence.”

“The purpose of the review is to determine, through an individualized process, whether the certificate was properly issued based on the evidence required by law. This is a necessary and important safeguard,” she said. “A small proportion of people who obtained a citizenship certificate under C-3 have been notified that their file is under review and will have an opportunity to provide additional documentary evidence in support of their case.” She said that if the review confirms that the individual is entitled to the certificate, it will be returned.

Karas thinks the “debacle” will lead to a wave of lawsuits and cases being adjudicated by the courts, from people who are anxious to keep their recently acquired citizenship certificates.

“This is not what they did initially, the email counselling certificates went out to everybody, and now, they issue another letter saying, ‘Oh no, well, you can keep your certificate,’” Karas said. “What kind of organization is this? This is amateur hour.”

As announced by Diab on Wednesday, the immigration department is freezing the processing of new C-3 citizenship applications, implying individuals could still flood the system with such applications.

“Separately, an investigation of this matter is underway,” Dale told Juno News. “Our priority is to safeguard the integrity of Canada’s citizenship program and maintain public confidence in its administration.”

Karas argued that the immigration department was never clear about what could constitute citizenship and what documents would be valid ways to prove that, noting that across social media and the media, including big American outlets such as the New York Times and Washington Post, the message received was the opposite of what the government is saying now.

“What they should be doing is to pause the program, stop accepting applications for a few months,” Karas said.

He also advocated for raising the cost of applications noting that currently, and for over a decade the price to apply for citizenship is just \$75.

“For somebody who lives in the US, that’s basically 50 bucks. Who wouldn’t do that on the chance you can get citizenship?” he said.

Karas previously criticized Bill C-3 for making Canada an “insurance policy” for people who would use its social services and healthcare system without ever caring to live in the country and pay taxes towards those systems.

The IRCC did not respond to Juno News requests for whether the Citizenship by ancestry claims were separated from other streams of citizenship requests to avoid the debacle from affecting other streams of citizenship applications.

"If all the applications go into the same bag, then everybody else is going to suffer. These are going to cause delays for everyone." Karas said. "You're pulling officers to process applications for citizenship by descent that are coming fast and furious, so what happens to the rest of the applications?"

Karas advocated that Canada follow the lead of many European nations on this and dedicate fewer resources to processing ancestry claims, to avoid a "deluge of applications."

"Have a queue that is for people applying for citizenship by descent, and it may take a couple of years until they give you a certificate. Have a very intense vetting of the quality of the documents presented," Karas said. "Potentially, you're talking about thousands upon thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of people that are going to be entitled to citizenship by descent if they can prove their ancestry."

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