

# CLOSING THE GAPS IN OUR BORDER SYSTEM

At last, the federal government is taking the necessary steps to shore up this country's border security while strengthening public confidence in its immigration system.

Not only have the Liberals pledged \$1.2 billion in new funding over five years to agencies that manage the border, they're working to close a loophole that let tens of thousands of asylum seekers enter Canada through unauthorized areas along our border with the United States. Both moves deserve applause.

Critics might accuse Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of dragging his feet on a matter of national importance but, in all fairness, the Liberals have been struggling with a complex situation they did not create.

Not only must they hammer out a solution with American allies who, in the paranoid era of Donald Trump, might prefer to see those asylum seekers remain in Canada, the Liberals must also uphold Canadian laws, including the charter rights of all who set foot in this country.

Yet despite such challenges, the necessity for action became undeniable when a huge flaw emerged in a Canada-U. S. border agreement. According to the terms of the Safe Third Country Agreement, both Canada and the U.S. are considered safe havens for refugees.

Therefore, they can both deny entry to asylum seekers who come to authorized entry points along their shared border.

But strangely, asylum seekers who arrive at unauthorized points along that border cannot immediately be turned away. If they're entering Canada, Canadian authorities must handle their claims to be accepted as refugees. How gaping a loophole this truly is suddenly became apparent in 2017 when growing numbers of asylum seekers began simply walking through it into Canada, especially at Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle in Quebec.

In just over two years since then, more than 40,000 irregular crossers have entered Canada this way, overwhelming the federal government's ability to deal fairly with all the claims. During the same time, provincial and municipal governments have scrambled to provide shelter, health care, education and other social services to the migrants.

Despite the federal government's decision to hire more adjudicators to reduce the backlog of refugee claimants, wait times for hearings and decisions soared. Meanwhile, when the claims are finally heard, the percentage of claimants being rejected is larger than normal, fuelling concerns that many asylum seekers are actually economic migrants trying to enter Canada any way they can.

Such are the compelling reasons for plugging the holes in our porous border.

As Ottawa moves to address the border problem, it is defending the national interest and, as part of that, the integrity of an immigration system that is vital to our future but depends on continuing, nationwide support. That ongoing support is crucial: As nations around the world increasingly slam their doors to newcomers of all kinds, Canada should, for everybody's sake, keep its welcome mat out.

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## REVIEW SHOWS HALTON CONTINUED TO THRIVE IN 2018

### MANY ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS, WRITES GARY CARR



GARY CARR  
Column

Billions of dollars are invested in the region annually, fostering economic growth and resulting in meaningful jobs for Halton's skilled, talented workforce. Results from the 2018 Economic Review reveal that Halton is carrying forward with its momentum of development growth, business investment and job creation.

Below are some of Halton's economic highlights from 2018.

#### National, international companies choose Halton

- Global logistics leader

DSV Canada broke ground on what will be the largest DSV complex worldwide and will create 800 jobs in the region.

- Ford Motor Company invested in new technologies, including plans to assemble the new Ford Edge ST at the Oakville Assembly complex.

- Oak West Corporate Centre and Great Lakes Business Park announced plans for new flex office buildings in Oakville.

- Futura announced plans for a new industrial facility in Halton Hills, the future home of CanWel Building Materials.

- QuadReal Property Group is investing in a new distribution warehouse in Halton Hills.

- Crawford Metals (Crawford Metals) announced plans to expand its industrial facility in Burlington.

#### Development again tops \$1 billion and exceeds expectations in non-residential building area constructed

- \$1.8 billion in total building construction in 2018.

- 3.8M sq. ft. of non-residential floor area built in 2018 (57 per cent increase

over 2017).

#### Talented labour pool keeps unemployment rate low

- 75 per cent of residents hold a post-secondary degree or diploma, making Halton one of the most highly educated regions in Canada.

- Halton has an average unemployment rate of 5.3 per cent (lower than the provincial rate of 5.6 per cent and the national rate of 5.9 per cent).

#### Confidence is high among Halton businesses

Local businesses who responded to our annual Business Conditions Survey revealed that they remain confident in the local economy:

- Nearly half of businesses surveyed are anticipating increased profits over the next 12 months.

- Four in five are optimistic about the future and expect economic conditions to remain stable or improve.

- Three out of five are investing in capital assets and in skills training to increase productivity.

Gary Carr is Regional Chair of Halton Region.

## ABOUT US

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