

**On immigration, Liberals and Conservatives border on the same ideas; The immigration policies of two main parties in the election campaign share the same basic philosophy that immigration is critical to the country's success, that we should focus on skilled immigrants and that we should continue to welcome persecuted peoples**

Breaking News from globeandmail.com

October 16, 2019 Wednesday 7:16 PM GMT

Copyright 2019 The Globe and Mail, a division of CTVglobemedia Publishing Inc. All Rights Reserved

**Section:** OTHER

**Length:** 800 words

**Byline:** Editorial

## **Body**

---

### **ABSTRACT**

The **immigration** policies of two main parties in the election campaign share the same basic philosophy that **immigration** is critical to the country's success, that we should focus on skilled immigrants and that we should **continue** to welcome persecuted peoples

### **FULL TEXT**

If you put a Liberal and a Conservative candidate in a room and asked them to argue about **immigration**, the outcome might be more reminiscent of a Monty Python skit than a political debate.

Liberal MP: If re-elected, our government will ensure Canada remains a country where people fleeing oppression, or simply looking for a better life, can find a safe home and contribute to our country's prosperity.

Conservative MP: Our platforms could not be more different. If we form the next government, we will make sure this country **continues** to be a place where oppressed people, and those looking for a life that is better, can find a home that is safe and contribute to the prosperity of our country.

Liberal MP: But unlike our opponents, we will benefit the economy by increasing annual **immigration** levels!

Conservative MP: A typical Liberal solution that ignores the fact that **immigration** benefits our economy!

You get the point. The **immigration** policies of two main parties in the election campaign share the same basic philosophy - that **immigration** is critical to the country's success, that we should focus on skilled immigrants and that we should **continue** to welcome persecuted peoples.

Any differences between the two are minor or a matter of emphasis. The Conservatives would reprioritize economic-class immigrants after the Trudeau government slightly increased the flow of family reunification immigrants over the past three years, for instance.

As well, the Conservatives say they would lift the cap on the number of privately sponsored refugees who can be brought into the country by community and religious groups. It's a signal they don't want to be seen as anti-refugee.

On immigration, Liberals and Conservatives border on the same ideas; The immigration policies of two main parties in the election campaign share the same basic p....

The majority of refugees chosen from overseas to resettle in Canada - 19,000 out of 29,500 this year - are privately sponsored. The federal cap on applications to sponsor a refugee in provinces other than Quebec, which sets its own limits, is 10,500. Eliminating the cap could result in an increase in refugee arrivals.

The Liberals, for their part, are promising to allow "local communities, chambers of commerce and local labour councils" to sponsor a limited number of immigrants to meet labour demands in smaller towns and cities.

They would also eliminate the \$630 citizenship application fee. And they want to continue increasing immigration, from 260,000 in 2015 to 350,000 in 2021. The Conservatives say annual immigration levels should be set "in Canada's best interests," but have declined to put a number on that.

Minor platform differences aside, whichever party forms the next government will face some difficult issues - the first being the large number of people who continue to walk across the open border from the United States seeking asylum. Close to 50,000 people have done so since 2016. Some are fleeing the refugee policies of the Trump administration, others travelled to the U.S. so as to get to Canada.

Ottawa has an agreement with Washington that says anyone seeking refugee status must do so in the first country they land in, but it only applies to people who cross at a legal border post. That odd loophole in the Safe Third Country Agreement has been a headache for the Trudeau government and a point of attack for Mr. Scheer. The Conservative Leader has accused the Liberals of undermining faith in Canada's immigration system by not doing enough to stop irregular border crossings.

But while he talks tough, Mr. Scheer has not made a convincing case that he could have done anything differently about a peculiar situation that arose quickly and caught the government off-guard. He says, if elected, he would renegotiate the Safe Third Party Agreement to apply to all border crossers. The Trudeau government says that's what it wants to do, too. It's not clear why the Trump administration would be willing to help either.

And even if the agreement were renegotiated, it wouldn't fix the fact that the refugee-determination system moves at a snail's pace, because successive governments have underfunded it. The queue was backlogged before the border crossings started; today, the wait time for processing an asylum claim is two years.

The Liberal government has redeployed resources and money to speed up the process. That's also what Mr. Scheer is promising to do. Once again, there is little daylight between the promises of the two parties.

Follow this link to view this story on globeandmail.com: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-on-immigration-liberals-and-conservatives-border-on-the-same-ideas/>

## Classification

---

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Web Publication

**Subject:** IMMIGRATION (89%); REFUGEES (89%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (73%); CONSERVATISM (73%); ELECTIONS (73%); POLITICAL CANDIDATES (73%); POLITICAL DEBATES (68%); RELIGION (50%)

**Geographic:** QUEBEC, CANADA (70%); CANADA (92%)

**Load-Date:** October 16, 2019

On immigration, Liberals and Conservatives border on the same ideas; The immigration policies of two main parties in the election campaign share the same basic p....

---

End of Document