

## 2018.03 CITIZENSHIP FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

**Whereas #1** the National Council of Women has adopted policy giving special treatment to refugee women to ensure equality, safety and prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation 2001.6; and

**Whereas #2** the Parliament of Canada has passed Bill C-6, Citizenship Act, eliminating the obligation to live with the spouse, common-law partner or conjugal partner for two years in Canada prior to eligibility for Canadian residency; and

**Whereas #3** even though this change seems to have been adopted with the best intent, it can lead to fraud and crimes such as fake and forced marriages; and

**Whereas #4** Canada's Civil Marriage Act requires the free and enlightened consent of two persons to be the spouse of each other and no person who is under the age of 16 years may contract marriage; therefore be it

**Resolved #1** that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy that those laws that protect women and girls from underage, forced or fake marriages are enforced and that the process set down to gain citizenship include access to programming and resources designed to educate, assist and protect those who might need direct protection; and be it further

**Resolved #2** that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to:

1. take appropriate action to educate and protect women and girls from underage, forced or fake marriages, and re-establish the two years living together in Canada with the spouse, common-law partner and conjugal partner prior to becoming a Canadian resident, and
2. establish an exception to this rule in the case of any kind of abuse (verbal, physical or mental) giving an abused person and his/her children the right to move out of the common living space without losing the right to become a permanent Canadian resident and to be protected under Canadian law as other Canadian residents.