

FB2B Statement on Bill C-2: A Threat to LGBTQI+ Refugees and the Right to Seek Safety

As a coalition in solidarity with LGBTQI+ refugees, refugee claimants, and asylum seekers, From Borders to Belonging (FB2B) strongly condemns Bill C-2, the so-called “Strengthening the Portability of Immigration Status and the Border” Act. This bill threatens the safety, dignity, and fundamental rights of those fleeing persecution, particularly LGBTQI+ people whose lives are shaped by intersecting forms of marginalization and criminalization.

A Direct Attack on the Right to Seek Asylum

Bill C-2 introduces sweeping changes that will disproportionately harm LGBTQI+ refugee claimants:

- The **one-year bar** disqualifies people from accessing a full refugee hearing simply because they did not seek protection within a year of arriving in Canada. Many LGBTQI+ people delay making a claim out of fear of being outed, internalized stigma, trauma, or lack of access to affirming legal advice and community support. Others arrive as international students, migrant workers, or visitors without fully understanding their gender identity or feeling safe enough to disclose it. For trans people who come to recognize their identity only after living in Canada, claiming refugee status within one year is often impossible. This provision punishes people for not disclosing before they were ready or safe, placing them in grave danger if returned to their countries of origin.
- **It also ignores shifting personal and political realities.** A person who may not have faced persecution when they first arrived could face new and serious risks later because of escalating violence in their home country, the targeting of ethnic or religious minorities, the criminalization of LGBTQI+ people, or a change in their own circumstances in Canada such as losing temporary status. Bill C-2 erases these realities and denies people the right to protection when they most need it.
- The **14-day bar** for irregular border crossers removes a crucial window of safety for those fleeing from the United States, a country where trans and queer people, particularly migrants, racialized and undocumented individuals, increasingly face state-sanctioned violence and criminalization. Denying them access to Canada’s refugee determination system is inhumane and unjust.

A Tool for Exclusion, Surveillance, and Deportation

This bill expands government powers to:

- **Revoke or cancel immigration status on vague grounds**, putting LGBTQI+ migrants with precarious status at heightened risk of deportation.
- **Share personal data across agencies**, raising serious concerns about privacy and digital safety, especially for LGBTQI+ individuals from countries where queerness is criminalized.
- **Militarize borders and criminalize migration**, treating people seeking safety as threats rather than human beings with rights and dignity.

These provisions will deepen fear and isolation among LGBTQI+ newcomers and make it harder for them to access life-saving protection.

This Bill Contradicts Canadian Values and Our Commitments to Refugee Protection and Human Rights

By limiting access to refugee protection and enabling unchecked ministerial power, Bill C-2 violates both the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canada's international obligations under the Refugee Convention. It is a direct affront to the principles of equity, non-discrimination, and inclusion that Canada claims to uphold.

For LGBTQI+ refugees, whose lives are shaped by systemic criminalization, family rejection, and state violence, this bill sends a chilling message: *You are not welcome here.*

Our Demands

FB2B calls on the Government of Canada to:

- Withdraw Bill C-2 in its entirety.
- Uphold access to full refugee hearings for all, regardless of when or how they entered Canada.
- Respect the lived realities of LGBTQI+ people, including the barriers that delay or complicate asylum claims.
- Reject policies that criminalize or surveil migrants, and instead invest in humane, rights-based protection systems.



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Rainbow Refugee
Rainbow Refugees Nova Scotia
The 519

- Affirm Canada’s commitment to LGBTQI+ refugees by centering protection—not punishment.
- Withdraw from the Safe Third Country Agreement, which already denies many LGBTQI+ people access to Canada’s refugee system, and which Bill C-2 would further entrench.

LGBTQI+ people flee their countries because of laws, policies, and cultural systems that harm, enact violence, criminalize and erase them. Canada must not reproduce these harms at its borders.

Now is the time to choose solidarity over suspicion, and belonging over border policing.