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Sample letter to MP:

Date

Name

Member of Parliament

Address 1

Address 2

**Re: Canada's Refugee Transportation Loan Program – Survey and Request for Assistance**

As a constituent, I am writing this letter to request your assistance in the important matter of Refugee Transportation Loans. In March 2010, a letter and brief survey was mailed to you from First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition.

The survey consisted of a single yes/no question:

**Do you support the elimination of the requirement that refugees resettled in Canada pay back to the Government of Canada the costs of their transportation to Canada?**

To date, First Call has not received your response on this important issue. This is why I am writing to you today.

Some of the key impacts this policy is having on refugee children and their families are:

- Teenagers struggle to keep up with their high school studies while working to contribute towards loan payments.
- Refugees postpone upgrading their skills and qualifications while working at low-end jobs to meet the monthly loan payments.
- Refugee youth sacrifice ambitions of pursuing higher education because they must work to pay off their debt.
- Parents working multiple jobs to meet loan payments are hardly at home and can't give their children the support they need.
- Refugee families making their loan payments may not have enough money for basic living costs, including food.
- Refugees struggling with the trauma of persecution and exile and the stresses of adapting to a new country are particularly vulnerable to feelings of acute anxiety over the huge debt burden.

- The risks of defaulting on the debt are long-term consequences such as lack of access to mortgages, educational loans and the possibility of sponsoring family members.

First Call is a province-wide, non-partisan coalition of organizations concerned about the health and well-being of BC's children and youth. For over two years, they have been raising concerns about Canada's policy of charging refugees interest-bearing loans for the costs of their transport to Canada.

I am asking you to inform First Call regarding your position on this policy. I am hoping that you will support the necessary policy changes to allow the Government of Canada to absorb the cost of transportation for resettled refugees, and that you will let the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and the Minister of Finance know where you stand on this issue.

Further information on refugee transportation loans is available on First Call's web site: [www.firstcallbc.org/economicEquality-whatsNew.html](http://www.firstcallbc.org/economicEquality-whatsNew.html)

**Your response can be sent by e-mail to [info@firstcallbc.org](mailto:info@firstcallbc.org), or in writing to: First Call, 202 – 1193 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC V5V 3C9.**

Thank you for your urgent attention to these requests.

Sincerely,