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MEMORANDUM TO THE MINISTER

ANALYSIS OF CITIZENSHIP TEST QUESTIONS

FOR APPROVAL

SUMMARY

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) regularly monitors the performance of the written citizenship test in order to track pass rates, and to identify problematic questions or other issues that could affect the outcomes for applicants who take the test.

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- During the second week of June 2012, CIC met with citizenship judges to discuss the oral versions of the questions

    CIC is working with the Citizenship Commission on modifications to oral questions to improve their clarity and fairness, while still keeping them in line with the corresponding written test questions.

- In response to a previous memorandum to you (see memo F-7670 at Annex E),

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BACKGROUND:

- *Discover Canada* and the accompanying citizenship test are designed to ensure that new Canadians have an in-depth understanding of Canada to further their integration in Canadian society.

- To ensure the integrity of the citizenship test, CIC periodically re-scrambles the test versions.

- CIC undertook a limited monitoring of the written test results to assess the performance of the questions. The monitoring exercise for the written tests took place

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                                                                   To address this decrease in the pass rate, we have been reviewing the formulation of questions.

- While CIC collects data on the written tests in a systematic manner, no statistics are available for the oral versions of the test. As such, the assessment of the performance of the oral knowledge test and of the adequacy of oral test questions relies on anecdotal information from the Citizenship Commission.

CURRENT STATUS

- From the test results in the monitoring sample, we reviewed questions with a pass rate below 75%.

- In reviewing these   questions, the following elements were considered:
    o question pass rate (with particular attention paid to those questions with a pass rate below 60%);
    o reference to the correct answer in the guide (i.e.

    o complexity of language used and the assigned level of difficulty of the question.

- A detailed table of our analysis and recommendations is attached (see Annex A).

- As needed, CIC works with the Citizenship Commission on oral questions. In June 2012, citizenship judges provided CIC with comments on the performance of the oral citizenship test questions. Oral versions of test questions are based on the approved written versions. An example of an oral version of the knowledge test, with a written test version for comparison is attached (see Annex B).

- CIC has been reviewing comments submitted by citizenship judges regarding the performance of oral questions. While there is some overlap of poorly performing questions in both the written and oral versions of the test, judges have identified other oral questions that could benefit from a minor re-formulation. CIC continues to work with the Citizenship Commission on modifications to the oral test questions.

NEXT STEPS:

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- In order to   and to give them the opportunity to review newer oral test questions they would not have seen in their initial review,

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COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS:

- Recent media stories on the citizenship test have highlighted the perceived difficulty of the test for certain cohorts.

- As needed, responsive messaging will be prepared to address the lower pass rate Messaging will continue to reflect information gleaned through our monitoring activities, in such a way as to not compromise the integrity of the test.
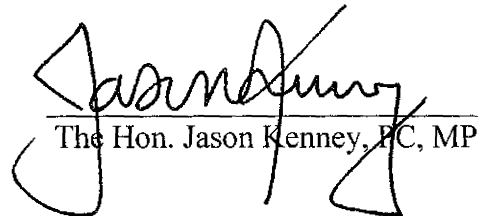
RECOMMENDATIONS:

Neil Yeates

☑ I concur *with annotated changes*
☐ I do not concur

☑ I concur *with annotated changes.*
☐ I do not concur

The Hon. Jason Kenney, PC, MP

Annexes (5)
A: Departmental analysis and recommendations for poorly performing test questions
B: Example of an oral knowledge test used by judges in hearings
C: Summary of proposed minor modifications to additional/amended questions from F-7670
D: Memorandum F-7861
E: Memorandum F-7670 with MINO comments