

F-5339

SECRET

MEMORANDUM TO THE MINISTER

IMPROVING CITIZENSHIP LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

FOR YOUR MEETING OF DECEMBER 6, 2010

KEY MESSAGES

- The attached deck on *Improving Citizenship Language Assessment* will be discussed at your portfolio briefing on December 6, 2010.
- The recommended approach would require applicants to file upfront evidence of language ability with their application.
- Direction is sought on the recommended approach so that we can move forward with the aim of pre-publishing changes to regulations in spring 2011, to enable fall 2011 implementation.

BACKGROUND:

- In early October 2010, you considered a deck on citizenship language testing with phased options leading to up-front language assessment over the longer-term, requiring legislative change. You asked the Department to look again at shorter-term options within the current legislative framework.

CURRENT STATUS:

- We have developed a recommended approach to strengthen language assessment by requiring applicants to file evidence of language ability with their initial application for citizenship. That evidence could include third-party tests or alternative evidence, such as LINC assessments at the required level.

- The language skills to be tested would be speaking and listening, the most critical for daily interactions. The knowledge test would no longer be used as a proxy for language.
- This regime can be implemented within the current legislative framework, requiring amendments to the regulations and some administrative changes.

NEXT STEPS:

- If you approve the recommended approach, we will prepare changes to the Citizenship Regulations with a view to seeking Treasury Board approval for prepublication in spring 2011.

Neil Yeates

ATTACHMENT: Presentation Deck-*Improving Citizenship Language Assessment*