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Dear friends of the Canadian Hispanic Congress,

It is a privilege to share this monthly newsletter with you. We live in a rapidly changing world, where developments both at home and abroad continue to shape our lives in profound and often unexpected ways. Although many challenges and uncertainties remain, I was particularly heartened by the outcome of the Alberta referendum, which offered a welcome moment of encouragement amid an otherwise unsettled landscape.

As Canadians, we are fortunate to call this beautiful country our home. We should never take for granted the privilege of belonging to a nation enriched by its diversity, shared values, and collective spirit. In times of uncertainty, we are reminded that our greatest strength is found in one another. It is through our shared commitment, compassion, and solidarity that we continue to move forward together.

Warmly,
Monique Forster
President, Canadian Hispanic Congress

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Alberta Separatism Referendum Cost $84 Million

Alberta's referendum on separatism and other provincial issues cost a total of $84 million, more than twice the approximately $37 million spent on the province's 2023 general election. Global News reports that Elections Alberta disclosed the figure while appearing before a legislative committee, explaining that the referendum significantly exceeded the agency's annual budget.

The referendum included 10 questions. About 75% of voters said they wanted Alberta to remain in Canada rather than move toward a second, binding vote on separation. Albertans also narrowly approved five questions related to giving the province greater control over immigration, while four proposals involving constitutional changes were rejected.

Alberta's chief electoral officer, Gordon McClure, requested an additional $59 million in funding to cover the costs, and the request was unanimously approved. Of the referendum's total expenses, $26 million was needed to pay staff who manually counted more than 22 million ballots. Around $7 million was spent renting voting and counting locations, while nearly $11 million went toward security, IT equipment, shipping and ballot postage.

Elections Alberta officials also described the process as extremely demanding for staff, with many employees working very long shifts. The agency later received additional funding to prepare for Alberta's 2027 general election and to hire more full-time staff. Officials said the referendum showed that the agency's current staffing model was difficult to sustain under such a heavy workload.

Democratic U.S. Midterm Victory Raises New Questions for the Canadian Economy

The Democrats won control of both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate in the November 3 midterm elections, a result that could change the political dynamics in Washington during the final two years of President Donald Trump's term. For Canada, one of the most important issues will be what the new Congress could mean for bilateral trade relations and U.S. tariffs.

According to Global News, Democratic control of Congress could bring greater scrutiny and political pressure on the administration's trade policies, but it does not mean tariffs affecting Canada will automatically disappear. Many of the existing tariffs were imposed through presidential executive authority, meaning Trump retains significant power over trade measures even with an opposition-controlled Congress.

Trade uncertainty remains an important issue for the Canadian economy. The Bank of Canada estimates that the average U.S. tariff rate on imports from Canada reached 7.5% in October, although approximately 80% of Canadian goods exports to the United States remain tariff-free.

The election results also come while Canada and the United States continue to deal with unresolved trade negotiations and uncertainty surrounding the CUSMA relationship. A Democratic-controlled Congress could therefore alter the political environment surrounding those discussions, but it does not guarantee immediate tariff relief for Canadian businesses. Following the election, Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc said Canada's focus on its trade negotiations had not changed and emphasized that Canada would continue working with the representatives elected by Americans.

Canada Refocusing Express Entry on Top

Talent That Drives Economic Growth

The Government of Canada announced changes to the Express Entry Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) aimed at better aligning economic immigration with the country's labour market needs. Starting November 3, 2026, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will award additional points to candidates with eligible Canadian work experience or a qualifying job offer in a high-wage occupation. Examples mentioned in the announcement include occupations such as engineers and electricians. Under Express Entry, a high-wage occupation is defined as one with a median wage of at least 1.3 times the median wage of the overall Canadian workforce.

IRCC is also changing how job offers are assessed. Beginning on the same date, a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) will no longer be required for a qualifying job offer to receive the new Express Entry points or to meet job-offer requirements under the Federal Skilled Worker Program and the Federal Skilled Trades Program. IRCC will still assess job offers to make sure they are genuine and meet program requirements, with safeguards intended to protect the integrity of the immigration system.

Candidates already in the Express Entry pool will have their CRS scores automatically recalculated under the new system. Those who want to receive points for a qualifying job offer must update their profiles before November 3. The recalculation may take up to two weeks, during which invitation rounds will be temporarily paused.

Canada is investing in the integration of more foreign-trained health professionals

The Government of Canada announced more than $31 million in federal funding for six projects designed to make it faster and easier for internationally educated health professionals to join Canada's health workforce. Of this funding, $20 million will support the creation of 50 additional positions per year over four years for internationally educated family physicians through the Practice Ready Ontario program. This could result in up to 200 new family physicians working in Ontario by 2028-29.

The program will focus particularly on improving access to primary care in underserved northern and rural areas of Ontario, as well as Francophone communities. It will also include a specific stream for French-speaking internationally educated family physicians.

The funding will support five additional projects across Canada for internationally educated physicians, nurses, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. These initiatives will provide practical tools and resources to help professionals understand provincial and territorial licensing requirements and prepare to work in the Canadian health sector.

Health Canada notes that internationally educated health professionals can face lengthy, expensive and complicated credential recognition processes when trying to enter the workforce. According to the Statistics Canada data cited in the release, approximately 60% of internationally educated health professionals employed in Canada currently work in the fields for which they were originally trained.

The measles outbreak that affected several provinces and territories in Canada has ended

The Public Health Agency of Canada announced that the multi-jurisdictional measles outbreak in the country has ended after more than two months passed without a reported case linked to the outbreak. The outbreak began in October 2024 and resulted in more than 6,400 cases across 10 provinces and territories. According to the agency, most of the people who became ill had not been vaccinated against measles.

Because the outbreak strain continued to spread for more than 12 months, Canada lost its global measles elimination status in late 2025. Responding to the situation required coordination among federal, provincial, territorial and local public health systems.

Measures taken during the outbreak included identifying cases and contacts, improving disease monitoring and reporting, conducting laboratory testing, working with communities and increasing access to vaccination. PHAC provided national coordination, technical advice, disease surveillance and laboratory expertise. The Government of Canada also supported the response through vaccine regulation and procurement, as well as emergency preparedness activities.

Although the outbreak has ended, measles continues to circulate in many parts of the world, and travel-related cases are expected to continue occurring in Canada. The agency also clarified that the end of the outbreak does not automatically restore Canada's measles elimination status. That can happen only after transmission of the outbreak-related strain has been interrupted for at least 12 consecutive months. PHAC also noted that two doses of a measles-containing vaccine provide strong protection against infection.

Bank of Canada Says Aging Population and Lower Immigration Are Reshaping the Economy

A new Bank of Canada analysis says that Canada's rapidly aging population and declining immigration levels are reshaping the country's economy, labour market and consumption patterns. According to Global News, Canada's population grew by about 3% annually during the first half of this decade, significantly higher than the 1.2% average recorded over the previous 50 years. This rapid population growth added new workers to the economy and helped ease labour shortages, while also increasing pressure on housing and social services.

In 2025, population growth slowed to 0.5%, the lowest rate in more than a century, following the federal government's decision to reduce immigration levels. The Bank of Canada says fewer immigrants will mean fewer workers and weaker demand for goods and services, which could result in slower economic growth.

At the same time, Canada's population continues to age. The country's median age increased from 26 in 1971 to more than 40 in 2026. This demographic shift is expected to change consumption patterns, increasing demand for travel, pharmaceuticals, adaptive living products and supportive home care services. It could also increase government spending on hospitals and long-term care. With fewer younger workers available to replace people retiring from the workforce, some sectors could also face significant labour shortages, higher wages and stronger competition for workers, potentially contributing to higher prices and inflation.

Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit Supports Low- and Modest-Income Households

The Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit (CGEB) continues to provide financial support to low- and modest-income Canadian households facing the cost of food and other essential expenses. The most recent payment was issued on October 5 and represented the second payment in the July 2026 to June 2027 benefit cycle, as well as the final payment scheduled for 2026. According to Global News, the benefit replaced the former GST credit in July, and payments are administered quarterly by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and are tax-free.

To receive the CGEB, individuals must meet specific residency and age requirements. Recipients generally must be at least 19 years old, although exceptions apply to people who have or previously had a spouse or common-law partner, or who are or were parents living with their children. The CRA determines eligibility and payment amounts primarily according to declared income and household circumstances.

Payment amounts vary significantly. For example, a single person without children who reported a 2025 income of $11,564 may receive up to $445 during the current benefit cycle, divided into four quarterly payments. A single person with two children and an income of $45,000 or less could receive a total of $1,358.

The CRA also provides an online calculator that allows residents to estimate the amount they may be eligible to receive based on their individual circumstances.

Canada Launches Workforce Retention and Retraining Program to Help Employers Keep Workers

The Government of Canada has launched the Workforce Retention and Retraining Program (WRRP), an initiative designed to help businesses keep employees on the job, prevent layoffs and provide training while adapting to changing economic conditions. According to Employment and Social Development Canada, the program is part of a $3.5 billion investment announced in August through the Rapid Response Supports for Workers and Employers.

The WRRP is available to businesses across all sectors that need to transform, retool or diversify and will remain in place from October 2026 until March 2028. Eligible employers can receive up to $1,000 per participating employee to help cover training and administrative costs. Businesses can select the type of training that best meets their workplace needs, including technical training, digital and foundational skills, peer-to-peer learning and on-the-job training.

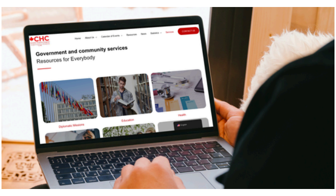
DESIGN TALKS

Participating employees can maintain incomes closer to their normal levels while working reduced hours through a combination of EI Work-Sharing benefits and an income top-up for participating in employer-provided training. The program also provides employees with greater flexibility in scheduling work hours when responding to disruptions related to tariffs.

The federal government expects the WRRP to help prevent an estimated 20,000 layoffs and support more than 2,300 employers. Canada is also extending temporary Employment Insurance measures, including provisions intended to make benefits more accessible to workers affected by job losses.

Resources for Everybody

The Canadian Hispanic Congress displays details about government and community services available to all. From health and employment to free language courses and immigration assistance.
For more information, visit:
https://canadianhispaniccongress.com/education/



CHC Community Services

The Canadian Hispanic Congress invites you to visit our website and learn about the different resources and support made available by the government and community organizations!

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Learn about
the different
resources and
supports for
the entire
family.

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