



E'Dbendaagzijing Update

Waawaashkesh (Deer)



UPDATE ON BILL S-2, [AN ACT TO AMEND THE *INDIAN ACT* (NEW REGISTRATION ENTITLEMENTS)]

Bill S-2, An Act to amend the *Indian Act* (new registration entitlements), must now go through Second and Third Readings, debates in the House of Commons, and receive Royal Assent to become law. The First Reading without debate occurred December 10, 2025. The House is now adjourned until January 26, 2026.

Bill S-2 was introduced in the Senate of Canada in May 2025. After two readings, it was referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, which held hearings during October and November 2025. Over 60 witnesses testified that the original Bill did not go far enough and called for the total elimination of the "Second-Generation Cut-off." The Senate Committee's amendments include:

1. **Ending the Second-Generation Cut-off:** Moving to a "One-Parent Rule" where children of one status parent inherit status.
2. **Eliminating "Unknown Paternity" Rules:** Children of status mothers are no longer presumed non-status if a father is not named on birth records.
3. **Status Restoration:** Restoring registration rights to descendants of those who were enfranchised (lost status) under historic provisions.

Before the Senate's amendments, the purpose of Bill S-2 was to meet a court-mandated deadline of **April 30, 2026**, to pass this legislation following the *Nicholas v. Canada*. The Bill deals primarily with enfranchisement: Ensure entitlement to registration is transmitted the same for persons with a family history of enfranchisement, including unmarried women, as it is for those without.

Further, Bill S-2 would enable persons who wish to have their names removed from the Indian Register to apply for deregistration; support women who were automatically transferred to their husbands' First Nation, and their descendants, to seek reaffiliation with their natal First Nation; and replace certain offensive and outdated references about First Nations persons with a disability.

Minister of Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty has said she intends to review or potentially remove the Senate's Second-Generation Cut-off amendments, saying she is required to consult broadly with First Nations, referring to the Collaborative Process on the Second-Generation Cut-off and Section 10 Voting Thresholds.

On December 5, 2025, Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige issued a statement commending the Senate's amendments and calling on Chiefs, citizens, and families across the territory to engage with their Member of Parliament (MP) to ensure that justice is not stalled in the House of Commons.

"Canada must finally take responsibility for eliminating discrimination in its own laws. *Indian Act* status is not the same as First Nation citizenship, but Canada has an obligation to stop the legal extinction of our people through legislative neglect."



In 2009, the Anishinabek Nation Chiefs-in-Assembly adopted the E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin and the One-Parent Rule. In June 2025, Anishinabek Nation Chiefs adopted the Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig (Those Who Belong), re-affirming that First Nations, not the federal government, carry the responsibility to determine citizenship and belonging within their families and communities.

NOTICE:

Please join Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige, Curve Lake First Nation Elder Dr. Keith Knott, Southeast Regional Chief Marsha Smoke, and I, E'Dbendaagzijig E-niigaanwidood (Citizenship Commissioner) Dr. Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, in a virtual event on Thursday, January 22, 2026, from 7 PM to 9 PM Eastern Standard Time. We would like to engage with First Nation leaders and E'Dbendaagzijig about Bill S-2 and how we can strategize to move the amended Bill through its passage into law.

