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## THE INSTITUTE FOR CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP CHALLENGES BUSINESSES TO GIVE PAID TIME OFF FOR CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

ICC launches #CelebrateCitizenship campaign

TORONTO, ON, MAY 1, 2019—The Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) today issued a call to action to Canadian employers to give their employees paid time off to attend their citizenship ceremonies.

The #CelebrateCitizenship campaign was officially launched today by ICC CEO Yasir Naqvi. Speaking to business leaders at the Economic Club of Canada today, Yasir Naqvi said, “Small gestures can have enormous impact. By giving their employees paid time off to attend their citizenship ceremonies, Canadian companies are doing their part to foster an inclusive society and sending a clear message to new citizens that they belong.”

A recent ICC–Leger poll shows overwhelming support for the idea: 8 in 10 Canadians think that people should get time off work to attend their citizenship ceremony and over half believe it should be paid.

The campaign is just one step needed to address rising nationalist sentiments and increasing polarization in Canada and around the world. There is substantial research to show that diversity and inclusion contribute to a stronger economy and stronger Canada. But the ICC reminded businesses on Wednesday that inclusion requires concrete action.

“Leger has always been committed to inclusion and diversity. So, when we got the numbers back from the poll we conducted in partnership with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship and heard about their #CelebrateCitizenship Challenge, we thought, ‘Challenge Accepted.’ Leger now has an official policy giving a paid full day off to employees to attend their citizenship ceremonies. Our poll numbers made it a no-brainer, and it’s just the right thing to do.” said Dave Scholz, Executive Vice-President and Partner of Leger.

The ICC believes that citizenship is more than just a legal document; if celebrated, it has the power to be a pivotal moment to accelerate a new Canadian citizen’s sense of belonging. The #CelebrateCitizenship challenge is an easy change that any employer—small, medium, or national in scale—can make. Inclusion does not need to be complicated. A citizenship time-off policy is a concrete step every business can take to move us toward a more open, diverse, and stronger Canada.

### ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP

Powered by a passionate and committed national network, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) delivers programs and special projects that inspire Canadians to be inclusive, create opportunities to connect, and encourage active citizenship. The ICC is a national charity co-founded by The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul. For more information, visit [icc-icc.ca](http://icc-icc.ca).

– 30 –

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