

In the Name of Decency, Compassion & Higher Justice: Allow American War Resisters to Remain in Canada

Open Letter to the Canadian Prime Minister

By [Spencer Spratley](#)

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Dear Prime Minister Harper,

I believe, in general, that Canadians are very proud of some of their unique traditions. I believe that Canadians feel good about way we assisted Americans who did not wish to serve in the Vietnam War. There is a strong sense that it was the right thing to do and it has become a proud part of our national identity. For a moment in history, we stood up for a justice that transcends borders and nationalities. We stood up for humanity and decency.

Unfortunately, I am concerned that this Government is moving us farther away from some of the positions that made Canada the envy of the world. You are beginning to change the face of Canada in ways that many of us are uncomfortable with. I am beginning to feel like the Government of Canada is attempting to adopt an ideology as our national identity and I am very disturbed by that. I feel that some of your policies are beginning to depart from deeply held traditional Canadian values. And you are transforming the face of Canada with the mandate of a minority Government. You also have a majority in the House of Commons who voted, on behalf of Canadians, to support the request made by American War resisters to remain in Canada. I believe you are turning your back on a majority of Canadians on an issue that is very important to us. That is not the sign of a democratic Prime Minister. Somehow Canada has always been a little bit different and we have always been proud of that. We don't want to be more like anyone else.

Sir, I believe that the Iraq war lacked any justification whatsoever. The evidence now makes this painfully clear. America has lost its credibility at this time in our history. This war in Iraq is only a notch above the Vietnam War in terms of sheer brutality and the lack of any meaningful justification. The main difference is that the lies and the spin this time around have convinced some people otherwise. Others have just concluded, "Well, there is no justification for it that I can see. However, there must have been a good reason for it." Most people are now wising up and recognizing the truth about this war and we are all seeing and reading about the unbelievable toll it is taking on young American soldiers and their families. Many returning veterans, especially those had to undergo the psychological torture of the "stop loss program", are coming back completely destroyed. Many of them are beyond the reach of others who would like to help them. The number of suicides amongst returning vets of the Iraq War is so very high. This tragedy has to cause your heart to sink, as it does mine. Would you really want your own son to serve 2 or 3 tours of duty in Iraq sir?

Wouldn't you worry terribly about his physical and mental health?

Sir, in the name of decency, compassion, and a higher justice, I request you to allow American War resisters to remain in Canada as conscientious objectors. Please don't send them off to have their lives and families destroyed by an unjust war. Your decision to begin deporting American war resisters lacks decency and compassion. I strongly urge you to reconsider your position.

Sincerely,

Spencer Spratley

Mississauga, Ontario

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