The Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) is doubling down on its decision to bypass an important step in the determination process for landed asylum seekers in Canada. An exclusive story in the Sun papers revealed how the IRB is allowing individuals from some dangerous countries to skip a face-to-face hearing in front of an immigration judge. While the federal government insists that front-end screening and vetting will continue unchanged, removing the final step of a formal hearing needlessly undermines the integrity of our immigration system. The IRB stated that only cases which satisfy initial screening tests will be eligible for the rubber stamp approval, but the entire point of a hearing in front of a judge is to verify the credibility of a written application. Judges provide an important check on the security and vetting work done by CSIS and the RCMP. Even if we assume that most migrants asking for Canada’s protection under UN refugee conventions are not dangerous, we still rely on each and every step in the process to weed out the good guys from bad. There is no shortage of terrorists, spies and serious criminals manipulating the global refugee crisis to gain entry into naïve and accepting Western countries. Now is not the time to start skipping steps and cutting corners in our screening and vetting process. Those who arrive unannounced, without any prior background checks, must be carefully examined by our security and immigration officials, as well as by a judge who determines if the person is credible and if their claim is accurate and truthful. The best way to do this is through a face-to-face hearing. Canada’s immigration judges are trained to determine if the person is lying, if there are inconsistencies on their application and if there is any reason to believe an applicant could pose a threat to Canada’s national security. The role is hardly redundant. Thousands of asylum seekers are denied status in Canada each and every year; rejected because an immigration judge determined they were lying about their past or that they pose a risk to Canada’s national security. In 2013, for example, only 38% of landed asylum claims were accepted. The remaining cases were either denied by a judge or abandoned – leading the CBSA to spend as much as $90 million annually on its deportation program. Earlier this year, the Sun broke news that more than 300 foreign terrorist, spies and serious criminals were rejected and denied status in Canada in 2016. Not everyone who comes to Canada asking for asylum is an actual refugee. We know that terrorist groups and sophisticated criminal gangs attempt to use Canada’s refugee system to sneak people into Canada. For instance, back in 2010 a ship carrying nearly 500 asylum seekers from Sri Lanka arrived off the coast of British Columbia. Canada’s immigration judges eventually found that 11 of the claimants – self-proclaimed refugees – were eventually found to be members of a terrorist organization, and another two were discovered to be wanted war criminals. Removing checks and balances in our immigration system may save time and money for the federal government, but it also potentially leaves Canadians open to greater risks. At a time when we should be taking additional steps to improve the integrity of our system and protect ourselves from those who seek to do us harm, the IRB seems to be

dismissing the risk and burying its head in the sand. Read the original from the Toronto Sun.