

A stylized map of Canada is shown in the background, with provinces and territories colored in various shades of purple, teal, and brown. The map is centered behind the text.

Citizenship and Birth Tourism

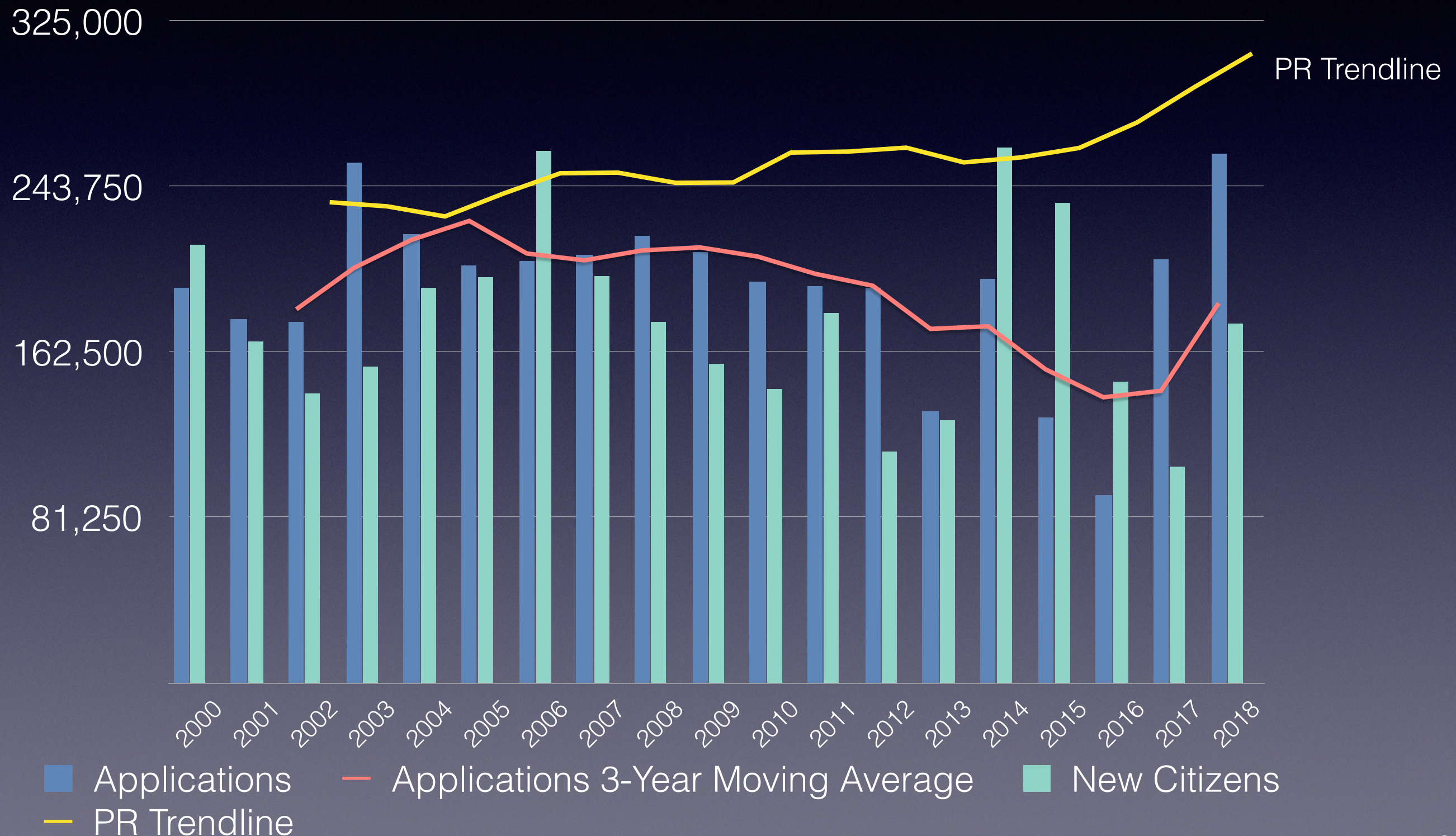
Numbers and Issues

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Citizenship Applications & Citizens

2000-18 IRCC Operational Data



Birth Tourism

- Women who visit Canada to give birth with the express purpose of obtaining citizenship for their child
- Completely legal given no visa restrictions for that purpose and Canadian birthright citizenship
- Viewed as short-cut to citizenship, undermining meaningfulness and connection to Canada

Issues

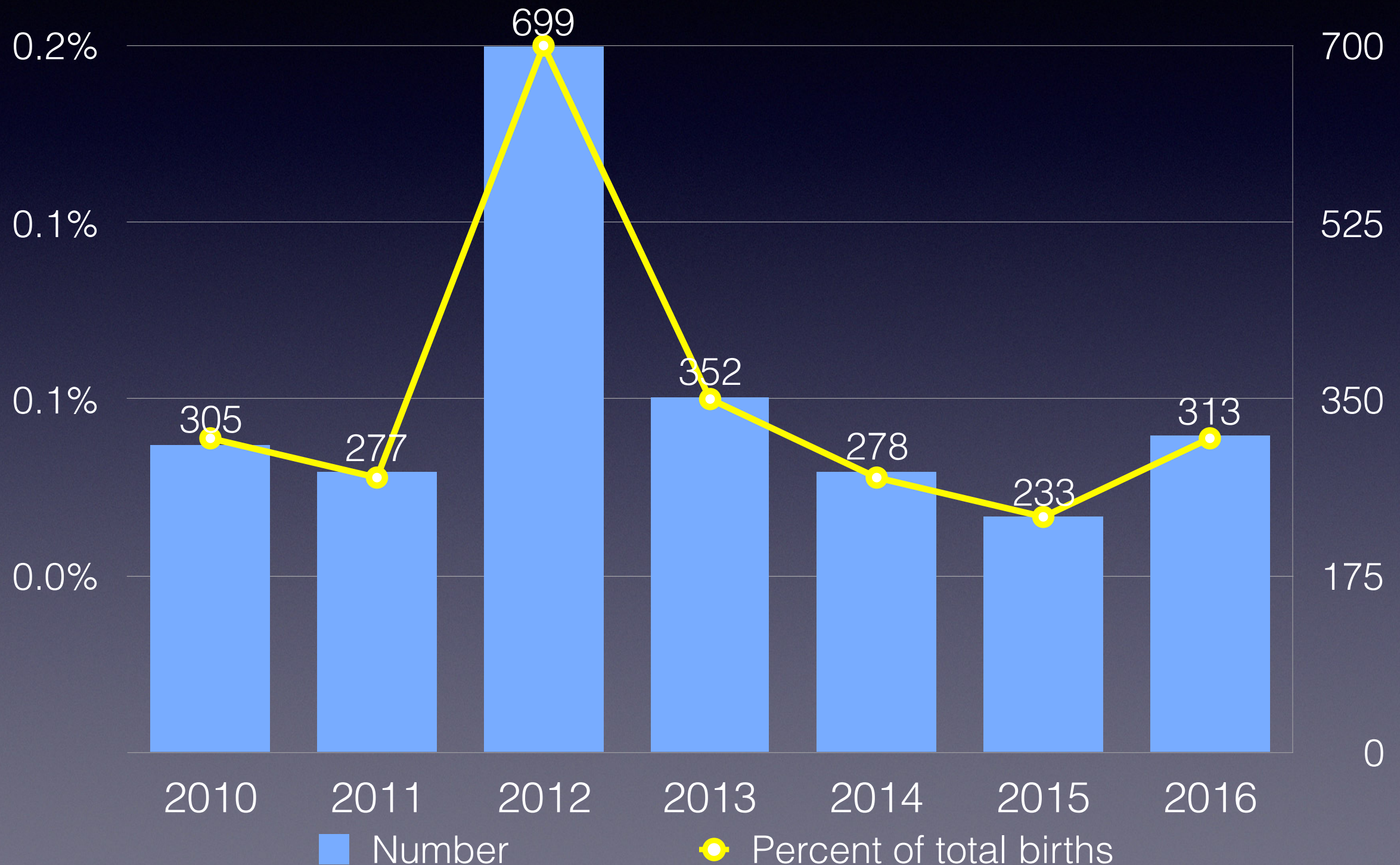
- Short-term
 - Crowding out residents from local hospitals (Richmond General)
 - Some unpaid or under-paid medical bills
- Longer-term
 - Children able to return to Canada and pay Canadian tuition rates
 - Eventually, can sponsor parents and other family members (“anchor babies”)
- Public perceptions of “gaming the system”
- Exact numbers unclear

Data issues

- Statistics Canada/Provincial Vital Statistics Agencies undercount
- Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)/ Discharge Abstract Database (DAD) provides hospital-level financial data for “other country resident self-pay”
- Overcounts given other temporary residents (students, corporate transferees, some Canadian expatriates and other temporary residents)

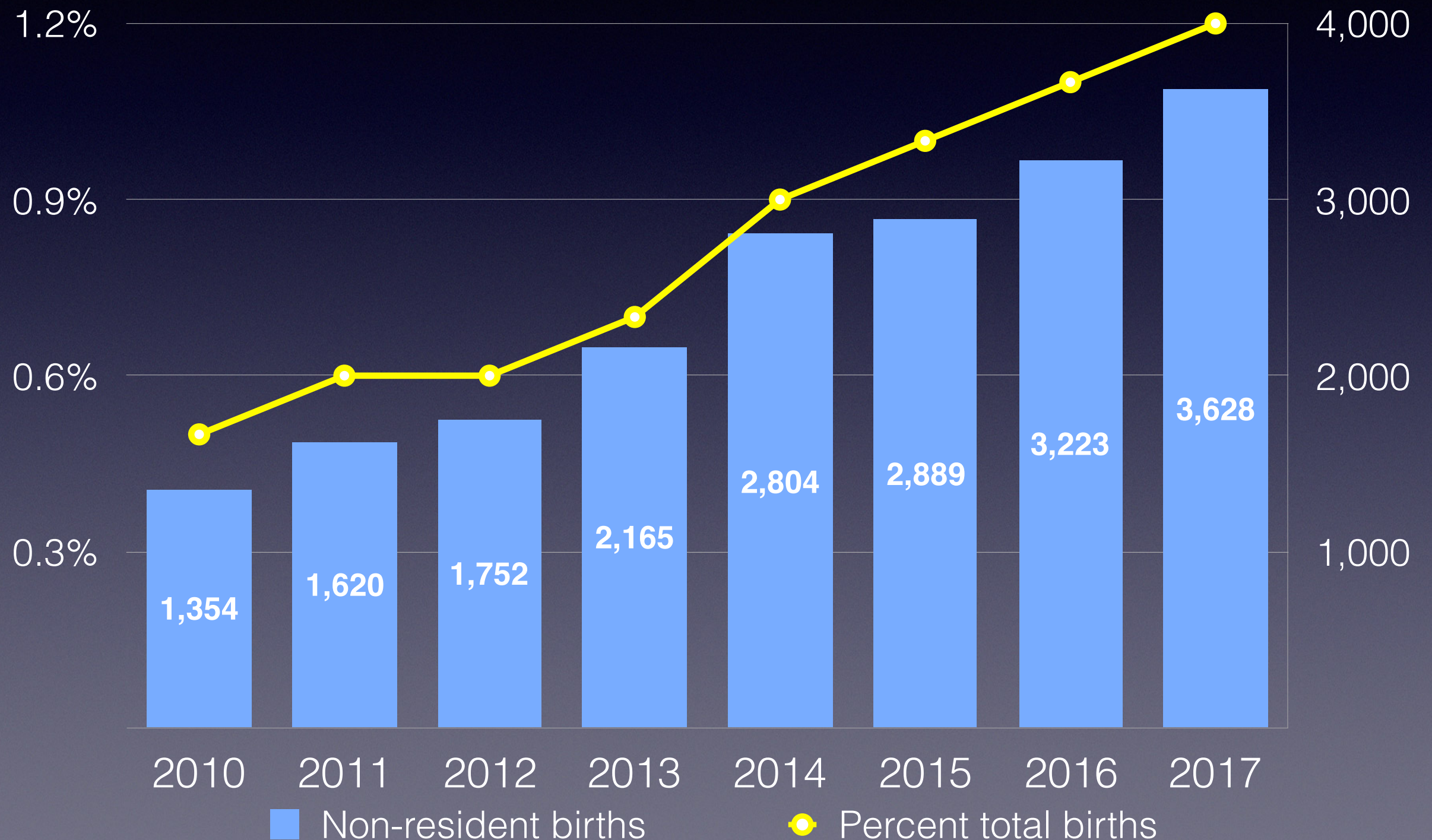
Non-Resident Mother Births

Statistics Canada Vital Statistics 2010-16 Undercount



Other Country Resident Births

Hospital Data, CIHI DAD, All but Quebec, Overcount



Other Country Resident Births

Hospital Data, CIHI DAD, All but Quebec

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Ontario	1,009	1,135	1,259	1,525	1,839	1,930	2,193	2,524	13,414
British Columbia	140	191	189	304	533	460	576	689	3,082
Alberta	83	142	135	134	194	287	267	233	1,475
Other	122	152	169	202	238	212	187	182	1,464
Canada (excluding Quebec)	1,354	1,620	1,752	2,165	2,804	2,889	3,223	3,628	19,435

Other Country Resident Births

Top 10 Hospitals, CIHI DAD, All but Quebec

		Total 2010-18	Average 2010-15	Average 2016-18	% Increase	2017-18 Total Births	2017-18 NR Births	% Total Births
Richmond Hospital	BC	1,770	125	382	206.8%	2,145	469	21.9%
Scarborough and Rouge Birchmount	ON	811	81	135	65.4%	1,720	163	9.5%
Ste-Mary	QC	1,649	168	270	60.9%	3,962	361	9.1%
St. Paul's & Mount Saint Joseph	BC	670	67	111	64.7%	1,451	132	9.1%
Mackenzie Richmond Hill	ON	744	51	164	223.5%	2,570	229	8.9%
Our Shared Purpose—St. Joseph's	ON	1,106	125	160	28.3%	3,315	181	5.5%
Scarborough and Rouge General	ON	666	66	112	68.7%	2,581	129	5.0%
Trillium Mississauga	ON	791	84	124	48.7%	3,514	146	4.2%
McGill	QC	574	123	110	-10.5%	3,063	123	4.0%
North York General	ON	1,347	143	210	46.4%	5,169	155	3.0%

Options

- Study further (Government position using CIHI)
- Qualified birthright citizenship (Australia)
- Provide discretion to visa officers to refuse birth tourists
- Financial disincentives

1: Study further

- Government approach
- Responds partly to Richmond and other pressures
- Aims at greater precision in numbers
- Given CIHI role in study, numbers unlikely to change
- Substantive response or delaying tactic?

2. Qualified birthright citizenship

- Australia model: parent must be citizenship or permanent resident, with residency requirement for child (10 years)
- Simple legislative change but significant implementation operational changes and costs
 - Federal issuing citizenship proofs or cards to all Canadians; or,
 - Provinces incorporating citizenship status in birth certificates (as Enhanced Drivers Licenses)
- Costs of first option estimated at between \$20 to 30 million, no provincial cost estimates
- Given small numbers (less than 1 percent total live births or immigrants), not cost effective

3. Restrict visas

- Currently, no grounds to deny visa for women with intent to give birth in Canada
- Provide visa officers with discretion to deny visas in cases of suspected birth tourism (CBSA at port of entry?)
 - Allow visa officers to request pregnancy test
- Challenge of developing operational guidelines for officers that are Charter compliant and that can be applied consistently
- Sends signal but risk of misrepresentation

4. Financial disincentives

- Non-residents already pay non-resident fees (~ 2 to 3 times medicare)
- Increase non-resident fees or require deposits that are 5 times higher than non-resident fees to address non-payment issues
- Will address financial and non-payment issues but unlikely to decrease demand given that birth tourism is likely more prevalent among the wealthy

Public Attitudes

2019 Angus Reid Survey

	Total	Male	Female	CPC	LIB	NDP
Only the mother is in Canada on a tourist visa	24%	21%	26%	13%	36%	36%
Both parents are in Canada on tourist visas	24%	21%	26%	14%	35%	37%
Both parents are in Canada on student visas	40%	38%	42%	25%	55%	61%
Both parents are in Canada on work visas	55%	53%	57%	41%	72%	74%
One parent is a permanent resident of Canada (the other is not)	82%	83%	82%	77%	93%	92%
Both parents are permanent residents	92%	93%	92%	90%	98%	95%
One parent is a Canadian citizen (the other is not)	88%	91%	86%	88%	95%	94%
Both parents are Canadian citizens	97%	97%	97%	98%	99%	99%

Source: [Birthright Citizenship: Plurality of Canadians see it as good policy, but also say some changes are needed](#)

Concluding Observations

- Birth tourism small percentage live births and number of immigrants
- Evidence we have shows it is increasing
- Clearest option is qualified birthright citizenship but operational and cost implications high
- Government study needs to include detailed review of options, not just the numbers
 - Government should work with provinces to take another look at provincial option given Enhanced Drivers License experience as well as financial options

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