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September 7, 2022

Sent via email

**Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau**  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A2  
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

**Hon. Sean Fraser**  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
Confederation Building, Suite 110  
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6  
sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca

**RE: CUPE Ontario supports Permanent Residence Status for All**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Fraser,

On behalf of the members of CUPE Ontario, we are writing to express our support for the immediate regularization of workers in Canada and the extension of permanent residency status to all migrant workers.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario is the largest Union in the province with more than 280,000 members. CUPE members work in health care, municipalities, school boards, social services, airlines, and post-secondary education in virtually every community across the province.

We are working in hospital emergency rooms and ICU's; we are the PSW's in long-term care and retirement homes; we are paramedics providing emergency services. We are the shelter workers assisting the unhoused and the childcare workers supporting the youngest Ontarians. We keep children safe at school and help the most vulnerable students learn. We make universities work, researching, instructing, and teaching, while also making sure campuses are safe, clean and fed. We are the critical public service workers who need to report to work to ensure that our communities continue to function: the solid waste collectors, the snow plough drivers, the drinking water specialists, the public transit workers, and the hydro electricians. We are the heart of Canada's airline industry, flight attendants and others, who move the people of our country from coast to coast to coast.

And many of us are, or have been, migrant workers.

Which is why we know Canada's immigration policies have continually failed workers.

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**Fred Hahn**  
President

**BUILDING A BETTER ONTARIO**

**Yolanda McClean**  
Secretary-Treasurer

For too many migrant workers, entry to Canada has been crushingly precarious. Arriving as international students or under temporary work permits, access to basic public services, like healthcare, has been either costly, restricted, or denied outright. As a union, we have organized and allied with other labour and community organizations to fight for these basic rights. As an example, CUPE Ontario's University Workers' Coordinating Committee has long worked with the Canadian Federation of Students to demand international students – many of whom are also university workers – have access to the same, universal healthcare services as other Ontarians through OHIP.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we – and many other critical but low-waged workers - were finally acknowledged as the frontline heroes we've always been. The pandemic revealed how the work of CUPE members in the caring professions – supporting the elderly and most vulnerable, looking after children, cleaning our public spaces – were critical to the basic functioning of our society. It revealed how those who grow, process, and deliver our food were essential to our collective security.

But it also revealed how these same workers faced disproportionately higher rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths, especially those who were precarious, migrant workers.

For migrant workers, too many of whom are denied the basic protection of a union, the COVID-19 pandemic proved they were critical to Canada but also that they were critically neglected by the Canadian government who continued to allow employers to exploit them, denying them the basic rights, services and workplace protections need to safely do their vital, frontline jobs. The pandemic has shown us the need to recognize our inherent interconnectedness and the basic truth that all of us living in Canada are only as safe, and as healthy, as our most marginalized workers and neighbours.

Providing permanent residency to all migrant workers, including undocumented workers, is an important first step towards this goal.

It is also crucial to Canada's ability to recover from the pandemic in a meaningful and equitable way.

We know your government has recognized the need to create a "regularization" program for undocumented workers in Canada. Further, we know Parliament has spoken, unanimously, in support of a motion calling on the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to develop, under tight timelines, a plan to give permanent residency to workers of all "skill levels". This would include many of the critical, frontline, low-waged migrant workers whose jobs have, up until now, been wrongly deemed "low skilled" under the Temporary Foreign Workers program and thus ineligible for consideration for permanent residency.

Given the tight timelines the Minister has been instructed to follow by Parliament, CUPE Ontario members know your government is making its choices now. The time for partial programs that judge some workers worthy of permanent residency and other ineligible based on the type of job they are doing must end. History has shown this type of picking of winners and loser in the jobs market is fundamentally inequitable. Our current system has clearly awarded higher-paid workers with residency status while critical, frontline, but lower-paid workers, have been preserved in their precarity without access to permanent residency.

CUPE Ontario members know that, to ensure full and robust equal rights for all workers, Canada must extend permanent residency to all 1.7 million migrants in Canada, including the regularization of the at least 500,000 who are currently considered “undocumented”. We endorse the Migrant Rights Networks’ [set of proposals to guide the development of a regularization program](#) and ask your government to commit to the timely regularization of all undocumented people, without exception, and permanent residence status for all migrants, particularly those in low-waged jobs moving forward.

Sincerely,



Fred Hahn  
President



Yolanda McClean  
Secretary-Treasurer

CC: Migrant Rights Network - info@migrantrights.ca

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**Fred Hahn**  
President

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**Yolanda McClean**  
Secretary-Treasurer