



September 16, 2022

File: 20403-P01-2022 & 20403-I03

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A2  
[justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
Confederation Building, Suite 110  
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6  
[sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca](mailto:sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Fraser,

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) is Canada's largest central labour body and speaks on issues of national importance for three million unionized workers across Canada. The CLC brings together more than 50 national and international unions in Canada, as well as 12 provincial and territorial federations of labour, and over 100 labour councils.

We are very encouraged with the direction of your government to regularize undocumented workers who are contributing to Canadian communities, and to expand permanent residency opportunities for international students and migrant workers, including migrant agricultural workers.

Migrants, international students, refugees and undocumented people are fighting hard for their rights. And, the CLC stands in solidarity with them. We continue to actively engage and advocate for their rights and protections.

The CLC fully supports a broad regularization program for undocumented people in Canada. This support is in line with the CLC's support for sanctuary cities as well as health access and equity for all. We are also very proud to contribute to the building momentum for a broad regularization program with our modest *Out-of-status Construction Workers in the GTA* initiative.

There are an estimated 500,000 undocumented people in Canada who live in constant fear, are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and are denied basic human and labour rights and benefits such as job protections, healthcare and education. Undocumented people suffer, unable to speak up against poor and unsafe working conditions, racism, discrimination and wage theft.

We urge your government to be ambitious in the developing an inclusive and comprehensive regularization program for undocumented people with protections that ensures their safety.

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There are also at least 1.2 million people in Canada on temporary work, study or refugee claimant permits issued in Canada each year.

The CLC is proud of our work to address barriers faced by refugees, both in Canada and at multilateral bodies such as the ILO. Our work includes helping to expand and coordinate efforts on the reception of refugees from Syria and now, Afghanistan, and our on-going call on the federal government to suspend the *Safe Third Country Act*.

The CLC has long advocated for migrant workers. Migrant workers under the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) are made vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because their work permit is tied to a specific employer. This imbalance in the employment relationship limits the migrants' ability to speak up of abuse and exploitation for fear of reprisals from their employer. The CLC continues to urge the government to make meaningful and substantive changes to the TFWP that ensures migrant workers have full human and labour rights, including the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Today, there is greater public appreciation for the essential and valuable contribution migrant workers provide to our collective social and economic well-being. Migrant workers care for the elderly, children and people who are sick; they work in health and community facilities, they clean and build; and grow and process food. Unfortunately, most migrants in low-waged work do not have access to permanent residency.

For these reasons, the CLC fully supports creating more opportunities for permanent residency for migrants, especially for low-wage migrants, so they can have and exercise their full human and labour rights in Canadian society.

We are living in unprecedented times with major disruptions and change. To thrive and prosper, Canada must engage everyone to their fullest potential. This means removing barriers to full participation and opportunities for undocumented people, migrants, international students and refugees.

We urge your government to be bold and progressive in your ambition to provide full and permanent immigration status for the 1.7 million migrants, including undocumented people.

Yours sincerely,



Bea Bruske  
President

cc: Migrant Rights Network ([info@migrantrights.ca](mailto:info@migrantrights.ca))