

1375, boul. St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa, ON K1G 0Z7

Tel./Tél. : (613) 237-1590 Fax/Télé. : (613) 237-5508 Toll free/Sans frais : (844) 237-1590

cupemail@cupe.ca/courriel@scfp.ca – cupe.ca/scfp.ca

September 14, 2022

BY E-MAIL

The Right Honorable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
OTTAWA, ON K1A 0A2
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

-and-

The Honourable Sean Fraser
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
Confederation Building, Suite 110
House of Commons,
OTTAWA, ON K1A 0A6
sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Fraser:

Re: Support for Regularization and Permanent Resident Status for Undocumented Migrants and Temporary Migrant Workers

On behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), we are writing to you to express our support for your recent actions toward regularizing undocumented workers and providing permanent residence status to migrant workers of all skill levels. We want to further encourage you to ensure these actions provide equal rights for all 1.7 million migrants in Canada, including 500,000 undocumented migrants.

Migrant workers have fought long and hard to have their rights recognized in this country. We welcomed the mandate letter asking the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to create a “regularization program” for undocumented migrants, and the unanimous parliamentary motion supporting a plan to provide access to permanent residency status. Ensuring vulnerable and precarious workers, of all skill-levels, can continue to live, work, and make a meaningful contribution to their communities is impactful beyond measure.

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MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CANDACE RENNICK

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

PATRICK GLOUTNEY, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER, LEE-ANN KALEN

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

Regularization and permanent resident status are important, not only for migrant workers but for everyone in this country. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, migrant workers have cared for our elderly, staffed our hospitals, cleaned our public spaces, and grown our food despite these jobs being some of the most insecure and exploitative in Canada. The pandemic exposed how essential the labour of migrant workers is to our society, and how precarious and vulnerable these workers are.

This must be a wake-up call for government and Canadian society at large. We are only as safe and healthy as our most marginalized workers. Migrants, including refugees and undocumented migrants, have always worked here — raising our kids, caring for our parents, and picking our food. These are precisely the parts of our economy that we need to support and expand: healthcare, child and elder-care, and farming.

As you know, most migrants come to Canada under temporary permits rather than as permanent residents and are denied basic rights and benefits like job protections, healthcare and education, and the right to join a union. Many work permits tie them to one employer which increases their vulnerability and limits their ability to speak out about bad work conditions. Providing permanent residency to all migrants is an essential first step in ensuring that we can respond to future crises in a more just and equitable way.

Migrants and refugees may face the threat of deportation, some to places where they face violence or deep economic hardship. Most, particularly those in low-waged jobs and no path to permanent residency, face difficult decisions to stay silent if they face exploitative and dangerous working conditions, or to stay in Canada as undocumented migrants which results in further exclusion and marginalization.

Efforts by migrants to have their rights recognized in Canada includes the creation of a [set of proposals to guide the development of a regularization program](#). We ask that you recognize the importance of these proposals and the need to incorporate them into any program put forward by the Government of Canada. Rather than implementing a partial or exclusionary program we are appealing to you to put your stated values of equality, fighting racism, and welcoming immigrants and refugees into practice by implementing a comprehensive program that includes the experiences and expertise of migrants.

Now is the time to regularize all undocumented people without exception and to ensure permanent residency for all migrants, particularly those in low-waged jobs.

Sincerely,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

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cc: J. Singh, NDP Leader
J. Kwan, NDP Citizenship, Refugees, and Immigration Critic
Canadian Labour Congress
Migrant Rights Network