



**ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF
LABOUR**

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September 14, 2022

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
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Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Fraser,

RE: We support Permanent Residence for All

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL). The OFL represents 54 unions and one million workers in Ontario. It is the largest labour federation in Canada.

As OFL President, I take seriously these opportunities to speak on behalf of Ontario workers and to convey to decision-makers like you their needs, concerns, and interests. This particular moment is no exception.

Your government is faced with an historic opportunity to advance an equal rights agenda that will be felt for generations to come, not only in Canada, but also around the world. It is an opportunity to improve the lives of millions of people and ensure that justice, fairness, and compassion are the values that guide our country's direction.

I am talking, of course, about the opportunity to commit to equal rights for all by extending permanent residence to 1.7 million migrants, including 500,000 undocumented migrants.

It is urgent that the federal government ensure the regularization of all undocumented people in Canada—without exception—and permanent residence for all migrants, particularly those in low-waged jobs.

I am confident that this goal could be achieved by adopting the set of proposals developed by the Migrant Rights Network, which sets out a plan to guide the development of a regularization program. The OFL applauds the work of the Migrant Rights Network in developing them.

Please find the proposals at [this link](#).

There are moments in history when governments have taken bold and progressive action to address a longstanding injustice. Those moments often come as public support swells for the

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injustice to be fixed, as ordinary people are moved by the struggles and suffering of others to ask their leaders to act.

This is the moment we are all facing.

As OFL President, I am aware of the widespread support for status for all throughout the labour movement. That support has grown rapidly in recent years, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as workers have come to realize the deeply critical role that all migrants and their families play in the economy, in our workplaces, and in our communities.

We urgently need a comprehensive program that includes all undocumented people in Canada, not a partial or exclusionary one.

After many years of organizing in Ontario's labour movement, I have seen how Canadian immigration policy has failed workers—denying them basic rights and benefits like job protections, health care, and education. When one group of workers is left out, all workers are worse off, and all our rights are at risk.

Many migrants come to Canada as migrant workers tied to an employer, increasing their vulnerability and limiting their ability to speak out about bad work conditions. Most migrants and refugees, particularly those in low-waged jobs, have no path to permanent residency. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people make the difficult decision to stay in Canada as undocumented migrants, which results in further exclusion and marginalization.

We need a solution that demonstrates a real commitment to equality. Migrants, including refugees and undocumented migrants, have always worked here—raising our kids, caring for our parents, and picking our food. They often work in some of the most insecure and exploitative jobs in Canada. But these are precisely the parts of our economy that we need to support and expand: nursing, child- and elder-care, farming, and domestic labour.

As we continue to learn lessons from the pandemic, we must always return to this most basic fact: our communities are only as safe and healthy as our most marginalized workers and community members. 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.

I am confident that your government will be looked upon favourably for making the right decision to ensure the regularization of all undocumented people in Canada, and I am likewise hopeful you recognize this political reality.

In the days and weeks ahead, you will no doubt be hearing from many more people like me, who will urge you to correct this historic injustice by adopting the proposals set out by the Migrant Rights Network. As the OFL, we will further amplify this demand by encouraging our affiliates and labour federations in the rest of the country to endorse and attend the September 18 Day of Action for Rights, Regularization and Status for All, which will be taking place in

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locations across Canada. Members of your government would do well to signal their support for this movement by attending an action in their own constituencies.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this matter. Along with the rest of Ontario's labour movement, I will be watching closely to see whether we get the outcome we need.

On behalf of our 54 affiliates, I urge you to seize this moment and do what's right for migrants, their families, and all workers.

Sincerely,



PATTY COATES
President

PC/JC/RH/jc/cope343

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