



Ontario Nurses' Association

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September 13, 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
sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Fraser,

Re: We support Permanent Residence for All

On behalf of the Ontario Nurses' Association's more than 68,000 front-line registered nurses and health-care professionals, as well as 18,000 nursing student affiliates, I am writing to support permanent residence for all. Specifically, we are calling on your government to ensure regularization of all undocumented people and permanent residence for all migrants.

This is an important issue that directly affects ONA members because some of them do not have permanent resident status. In fact, we raised this issue in both our union's federal and provincial organizing. Our public health members and hospital members have directly provided care for workers without permanent resident status and advocated for their access to health care. Some of them worked with migrant farmworkers during the pandemic testing and provided vaccines. Our members have voiced their concerns that migrant workers need to have permanent resident status, so that they receive the health care they need when they need it, and without risk of deportation.

There are over 500,000 people, including families, living in Canada without any valid immigration permits and this number is increasing. In addition, 1.2 million people are on work, study or refugee claimant permits; most of these people have no opportunity to remain permanently in Canada.

Permanent resident status is the mechanism through which all other rights are accessed for migrants. Undocumented people, migrant workers and refugees are being exploited in substandard working conditions, because regressive immigration and labour laws restrict their agency and leave them open to abuse. Lack of permanent resident status makes it difficult, and often impossible, for migrants to speak up for their rights. Having

access to permanent residency will help ensure that migrants can access other rights and speak out against injustice.

We applaud Prime Minister Trudeau's mandate asking the Immigration Minister to create a "regularization program" for undocumented migrants and the unanimous parliamentary motion asking the Immigration Minister to create a plan to give permanent residency to workers of all skill-levels. This is the right step towards ensuring that no one gets left behind. Immigration status is a critical social determinant of health, and all undocumented people, migrant workers, students, families, and refugees deserve equal rights and permanent resident status.

This is a historic opportunity to address a longstanding problem, and your government has an important choice to make: you can choose between a partial, small and exclusionary program that will give rights to a few and deny them to most, or equal rights for all by extending permanent residence to 1.7 million migrants, including 500,000 undocumented migrants. We strongly urge you to choose the latter.

Nurses are calling on your government to do the right thing and implement a regularization program of all undocumented people without exception and permanent residence for all migrants, particularly those in low-waged jobs, immediately. The Migrant Rights Network has created a set of proposals to guide the development of a regularization program (see attached). ONA endorses these principles.

Your government has repeatedly committed to liberal values such as upholding values of equality, fighting racism, and welcoming immigrants and refugees. We invite you to fix an historic injustice by implementing a comprehensive regularization program.

The Ontario Nurses' Association stands in solidarity with migrant workers, undocumented people, students, families, and refugees, and those who support them, including the Migrant Rights Network, and demand the government provide rights, regularization, and status for all.

Sincerely,

ONTARIO NURSES' ASSOCIATION



Cathryn Hoy
Provincial President

Cc: Migrant Rights Network - info@migrantrights.ca