



April 15, 2024

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

The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
By email: Marc.Miller@parl.gc.ca, Minister@cic.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Miller:

RE: Broad regularization of undocumented people, and permanent residency for migrants

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.

I am writing with great urgency regarding the regularization of undocumented people, and permanent residency for migrants, in particular low-waged migrant workers.

An estimated 300,000 to 600,000 undocumented people are living in Canada today. They are established in communities with family and children and are contributing socially and economically. Among them are undocumented workers who have come to Canada with valid temporary residence status, but have fallen out of status for various reasons, and have found employment and settled over the years.

Without status, the fear of detection, detainment and deportation drives undocumented workers and their families "underground". Undocumented people are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and are denied basic human and labour rights and benefits such as job protections, healthcare, and education, often limiting their access to social programs and making them vulnerable to employer exploitation and abuse.

The CLC fully supports a broad regularization program for undocumented people in Canada. Since 2019, the CLC has provided a modest "Out-of-Status" Construction Workers in the GTA initiative that creates a path for undocumented construction workers to settle in Canada. We believe the "Out-of-Status" Construction Workers initiative tests various policy and implementation elements that can inform the development of a broad regularization program for undocumented people.

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We urge the government to be ambitious, and immediately introduce and implement a broad regularization program for undocumented people that is simple, straightforward and with protections that ensures their safety.

The CLC stands in solidarity with migrant workers, refugees and undocumented people who are fighting hard for their human and labour rights. The CLC diligently and persistently advocates for the expansion of permanent immigration for many temporary workers, in particular low-waged workers. We call on the government to introduce and implement the category-based Express Entry for TEER 4 and 5 workers, including union-centered pathways to permanent residency.

In response to industry concerns with labour shortages, federal policy has facilitated accelerated expansion of employer access to temporary migrant workers, without matching accelerated improvements for migrant workers' access and ability to exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms enjoyed by other workers in Canada.

The federal government's employer-driven Temporary Foreign Worker Programme (TFWP) creates an immense imbalance of power in the employment relationship. Last September, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery stated that "...the agricultural and low-wage streams of the TFWP constitute a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery", and he is "perturbed by reports that the share of workers entering Canada through this programme is sharply on the rise."

The CLC calls on governments to enshrine the right of all agricultural workers to form and join unions and bargain collective agreements establishing fair wages, reasonable working hours, and improved health and safety conditions as the signatory to the ILO fundamental conventions. We particularly urge the government to end tied work permits for migrant workers, replacing them with open permits that allow low-wage workers with temporary work permits to leave their employers and move freely in the Canadian labour market, without fear of deportation. We urge the government to provide opportunities to ensure access to permanent resident status for migrant workers, especially low-waged workers.

Canada's unions are alarmed at the scapegoating of migrant and immigrant workers, especially racialized newcomers to Canada. Affordability challenges that everyone faces are the result of poor public policy management by governments, and not the fault of newcomers. We insist that the government's labour supply and population growth is accompanied by ambitious and accelerated public investments in housing, public transit, health care, settlement and social services, and decent jobs.

Based on our experience with the "Out-of-Status" Construction Workers and the Agri-Food Pilot, we find that the educational and language requirements are barriers to migrant applicants and must be removed.

This is very much the case for the Home Child Care Provider Pilot and the Home Support Worker Pilot that are expiring on June 17, 2024. The CLC urges the government to make both these pilots into permanent immigration streams with no educational and language barriers, and no caps on the number of applicants. An interim transition program must be put in place to bridge current child care and home support workers in the pilot to these

permanent immigration streams, ensuring that thousands of women caregivers maintain their immigration status and not lapse into undocumented status.

The current racist anti-immigrant narrative is of great concern to us. The CLC commits to fight even harder for just and fair labour and human rights of migrant and immigrant workers in Canada. We are ready to work with your government towards a progressive, ambitious, and inclusive immigration agenda.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bea Bruske". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bea Bruske
President

cc: The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and
Official Languages of Canada
Migrant Rights Network (letters@migrantrights.ca)