



80 Commerce Valley Drive E, Suite 1
Markham, ON L3T 0B2
Phone: 905-739-9739 • Fax: 905-739-9740
Web: cupe.on.ca E-mail: info@cupe.on.ca

April 24, 2024

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A2
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Hon. Marc Miller
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Marc.Miller@parl.gc.ca, Minister@cic.gc.ca

RE: We support Permanent Residence for All

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Miller,

On behalf of the members of CUPE Ontario, we are writing to express our support for the immediate regularization of workers in Canada and the extension of permanent residency status to all migrant workers.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario is the largest Union in the province with more than 280,000 members. CUPE members work in health care, municipalities, school boards, social services, airlines, and post-secondary education in virtually every community across the province.

We are working in hospital emergency rooms and ICU's; we are the PSW's in long-term care and retirement homes; we are paramedics providing emergency services. We are the shelter workers assisting the unhoused and the childcare workers supporting the youngest Ontarians. We keep children safe at school and help the most vulnerable students learn. We make universities work, researching, instructing, and teaching, while also making sure campuses are safe, clean and fed. We are the critical public service workers who need to report to work to ensure that our communities continue to function: the solid waste collectors, the snow plough drivers, the drinking water specialists, the public transit workers, and the hydro electricians. We are the heart of Canada's airline industry, flight attendants and others, who move the people of our country from coast to coast to coast.

And many of us are, or have been, migrant workers, which is why we know Canada's immigration policies have continually failed workers.

Most migrants to Canada are coming under temporary permits (such as work and study permits) rather than as permanent residents. In 2017, 70% of immigrants came to

Fred Hahn
President

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Yolanda McClean
Secretary-Treasurer

Canada under these various temporary streams, and were thus denied basic rights and benefits like job protections, healthcare and education. Many migrants come to Canada as migrant workers tied to an employer which increases vulnerability and limits their ability to speak out about bad work conditions. Most of them are denied the right to a Union. When it comes to refugees, Canada does not even rank in the top 50 of refugee-accepting countries. A majority of refugees who claim asylum inside Canada are denied. Many are often threatened with deportation to places where they are assaulted and murdered because of exclusionary laws. 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 know your government has recognized the need to create a “regularization” program for undocumented workers in Canada. Further, we know Parliament has spoken, unanimously, in support of a motion calling on the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to develop, under tight timelines, a plan to give permanent residency to workers of all “skill levels”. This would include many of the critical, frontline, low-waged migrant workers whose jobs have, up until now, been wrongly deemed “low skilled” under the Temporary Foreign Workers program and thus ineligible for consideration for permanent residency.

CUPE Ontario members know that, to ensure full and robust equal rights for all workers, Canada must extend permanent residency to all 1.7 million migrants in Canada, including the regularization of the at least 500,000 who are currently considered “undocumented”. Migrant Rights Network has created a [set of proposals to guide the development of a regularization program](#) and ask your government to commit to the timely regularization of all undocumented people, without exception, and permanent residence status for all migrants, particularly those in low-waged jobs moving forward.

Sincerely,



Fred Hahn
President



Yolanda McClean
Secretary-Treasurer

CC: Migrant Rights Network

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