

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
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Hon. Marc Miller
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
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April 15, 2024

RE: Regularize All Undocumented People and Ensure Permanent Resident Status for All Migrants

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Miller,

I am writing on behalf of the Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC), a specialty community legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario. ISAC's mandate is to advance the rights and interests of low-income Ontarians with respect to income security and employment. We carry out our mandate through test case litigation, policy advocacy, community organizing, and public education. You can read more about our successful advocacy and litigation work on our website at www.incomesecurity.org.

While our focus is on income security, our work inevitably encounters the immigration system and the additional barriers and challenges that precarious and temporary immigration status creates for individuals as they interact with social assistance programs, tax-delivered benefits, and employment laws.

We have closely followed the national conversation on regularization, and we note that in 2021, Prime Minister Trudeau directed the Immigration Minister to create a "regularization" program for undocumented and precarious migrants, and while that promise has been repeated many times, we have yet to see significant movement towards a program that ensures all migrants can gain status in Canada.

Undocumented and migrant workers, the majority of whom are racialized women, are often forced to take on dangerous, low-income work either because of the nature of their work permits or due to the need to make ends meet. Many cannot leave abusive workplaces because their permits are tied to their place of employment, or they must remain in their work in order to gain permanent status. This structure leads to increased vulnerability to violence, illness, and poverty. Migrants also face discrimination, racism, and scapegoating for the affordability crisis and labour market issues that have nothing to do with them. It is absolutely time to put an end to this through the implementation of a broad regularization program.

A broad program would positively impact many Ontario legal clinic system clients by improving their access to judicial recourse when their rights are violated, and access to tax-based benefit programs, to federal social safety nets, and to public healthcare which they pay into but cannot access due to their status.

ISAC supports the call by many individuals and organizations across the country to ensure equal rights for all people in Canada, regardless of their immigration status. The following reforms would achieve this goal:

- Immediately create a comprehensive and inclusive [regularization program](#) that allows all undocumented people to apply for permanent resident status immediately, and which does not include caps, restrictions by industry of work or geography, or two-step immigration which only gives temporary work permits;
- Create an [interim program for migrant caregivers](#) in Canada to apply for permanent resident status without educational accreditation and language test score requirements;
- End migrant exploitation by ending tied work permits and hours of work limits for international students;
- Ensure permanent resident status for all working class people in Canada today.

The solutions to ensure equal rights for everyone in Canada are before us. I strongly encourage you to listen to the voices of migrants and undocumented people and implement these reforms as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Melinda Ferlisi
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cc: Migrant Rights Network