

April 12, 2024

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship  
[minister@cic.gc.ca](mailto:minister@cic.gc.ca)

Minister Miller,

**Re: Supporting an open and inclusive federal regularization program for migrants without full immigration status in Canada**

On behalf of Unifor, and our 315, 000 members across Canada, I would like to express our union's continued support for the development and implementation of a comprehensive federal regularization program to ensure migrants without full immigration status in Canada can be granted equal rights and protections in Canada.

The announcement of such a program has been long anticipated, having been first introduced through Prime Minister Trudeau's ministerial mandate letter back in December 2021. Since that time, Unifor has written to your government in support of a regularization program (dated August 30, 2022) while also closely working with our allies in the Migrant Rights Network, to raise awareness and engage with MPs on issues migrant workers are facing in Canada.

We are encouraged to hear that a tentative announcement of a federal regularization program is in the works this spring. Before any formal policy announcement, we did, however, want to reiterate many of the key recommendations that have been brought to your attention, and that have been supported and endorsed by nearly 500 community, labour, migrant justice, and advocacy organizations across Canada. This includes ensuring that any regularization program is open and inclusive, with no caps, or other barriers that would preclude undocumented migrants from being able to access the program. We have seen how previous government attempts at introducing sector-specific permanent pathway residency programs have seen minimal success, largely because the requirements have been too restrictive, leaving many migrants unable to apply.

Like many, we too were alarmed upon hearing the U.N. Special Rapporteur's report last year which described Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) as a 'breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery'. As such, we further wish to

advocate for an end to the current tied work permit system, which attaches certain migrant workers to a single employer – a practice that serves to benefit only employers, while hampering the ability for workers to speak out against mistreatment or poor working conditions for fear of losing employment and being forced to leave Canada.

As the largest private sector union in Canada, we are increasingly seeing migrant workers amongst our membership, working in many of the workplaces we represent – including in the agricultural and food processing sectors, retail, manufacturing, health care and transportation. Many of our migrant worker members have arrived through various temporary worker streams, from low and high-wage streams of the TFWP to those in the International Student Program.

Canada's shift towards temporary migration has resulted in many migrant workers living in constant precarity, and often end up losing their status due to needing to navigate an increasingly complex set of rules and regulations, in addition to having to face long bureaucratic processing delays. Migrant workers, especially from low-income communities, have few resources to be able resolve issues with their cases when problems arise. As a result, they end up without immigration status, leaving them open to abuse and exploitation from employers, employment agencies, recruiters and landlords. Ensuring full immigration status will not only secure equal labour rights and protections for vulnerable workers, but also promote greater labour mobility and facilitate greater access to unionization.

We trust your government will not further delay the introduction of a regularization program. Thousands of migrants living and working across Canada are depending on this. This will be a positive, yet critical step, in ensuring equal rights for all, while building more fair and inclusive workplaces and communities. We thank you for your time and attention on this important matter.

Sincerely,



**Lana Payne**  
**National President**

cc. The Right Honourable Prime Minister Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

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