

**To: Prime Minister Stephen Harper
Immigration Minister Jason Kenney
Temporary Resident Policy and Programs Director Maia Welbourne**

As community, women's, immigrant rights, faith-based and trade union organizations we strongly oppose the proposed changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program that entrench a disposable workforce with few rights. We call on the government to scrap these proposed amendments immediately and ensure real protection and justice for migrant workers.

Under a smokescreen of protection for workers, **the regulatory changes would limit migrant workers' time in Canada to four years and bar them from re-entering Canada for the next six years.** Workers could be denied entry at the border if an immigration officer decides their job offer is not genuine.

These changes do not strengthen protection for migrant workers. These changes only make workers even more vulnerable and reinforce the government's efforts to build a disposable workforce through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP).

The government states it is responding to extensive consultations. However, our organizations and countless workers have told Immigration Minister Jason Kenney that, to address systemic violations of workers rights in the TFWP, fundamental changes are needed, including ensuring migrant workers have permanent status. Imposing limits on workers' time in Canada makes workers status even more precarious and is an unjust and arbitrary provision.

Giving immigration officers arbitrary powers in denying workers admission to Canada penalizes migrant workers rather than targeting recruiters and employers who should be held accountable for the exploitation that workers face.

The government proposes that abusive employers be banned from hiring workers for 2 years and their names be made public. However, these changes do nothing to address the reality that migrant workers who are tied to one employer and who are denied full immigration status often cannot speak out against the widespread violations in the TFWP without risking deportation.

This policy change is part of an ongoing trend of exclusion within the Canadian immigration system where the government has created more temporary programs and less access to citizenship rights. Today, people from only 38 professions are able to immigrate to Canada under the Federal Skilled Worker points system. Refugee acceptance rates have declined sharply and there is talk of further dismantling the system. Deportations have increased 50%.

The government's press release states that these changes "strengthen the protection of temporary foreign workers." **They do not.**

Real protection means enforcing standards on employers and agencies hiring migrant workers. Real protection means allowing migrant workers to bargain collectively, with full coverage under labour legislation. Real protection means access to citizenship benefits and responsibilities. Real protection means permanent residence on arrival. Real protection means regularization for all. Real protection means prohibiting fees migrant workers are forced to pay to find work, a fair appeals process for repatriations and an end to deportation. Real protection that Canada's immigration system has, as yet, failed to ensure.

We call on the government to scrap these proposed amendments and move to ensure real protection and justice for migrant workers immediately.

Endorsed to date by:

Agriculture Workers Alliance, Canadian Arab Federation, CAW Canada, Canadian Hispanic Congress, Caregivers Action Centre, Caregiver Connections Education and Support Organization, Centre des Travailleurs et Travailleuses Immigrants, Chinese Canadian National Council, Coalition for Change, CUPE National, CUPE Toronto District Council, Interim Place, Justice for Migrant Workers, Migrant – Ontario, No One Is Illegal – Toronto, Ontario Federation of Labour, Portuguese National Congress, SEIU Local 2, Social Planning Toronto, South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, UFCW Canada, UFCW Canada, Local 175, Local 832, Local 1000a, Local 1118, Local 1400, Local 1518, Workers' Action Centre