

Model Letter to Write to Ministers and MPs – Temporary Migrant Workers Campaign

Please send letters* to both:

The Honourable Diane Finley, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
Office of the Minister Human Resources and Skills Development
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0J9

The Honourable Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P.
Minister for Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1L1

Send a copy of your letters to your local MP ([click here to find your MP using your postal code](#)).

**Note: you need to put a stamp on your letters to these addresses, unlike letters to Members of Parliament at the House of Commons address.*

Greeting to use: Dear Minister,

Some points you might include in your letter:

General

- you/your organization's interest in this issue
- underline the problematic nature of Canada's shift from "nation-builder" - welcoming permanent residents as an immigration strategy, to "exploiter of cheap labour" – promoting a temporary migrant workforce with fewer rights and protections than citizens and permanent residents
 - one of the stated reasons for the Changes implemented April 1st 2011 was to "underline that employment facilitated through the TFWP is meant to be temporary in nature"
- The widespread abuse and exploitation of migrant workers under the "low-skill" streams of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program including the Low-skill Pilot Project, Live-in Caregiver Program, and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP).

Some of the abuses documented include:

- Payment of exorbitant and illegal fees to brokers for finding employment
- Job description, wages and other working conditions not matching original promises
- Withholding of wages
- Withholding of personal documents such as passports
- Not receiving overtime pay and other contraventions of employment standards
- Expectations of unpaid "extra" work for the employer
- Sub-standard housing arrangements, often at excessive rents owed to the employer
- Experience of racism from employer, co-workers and community
- Threats of deportation from employer
- Misleading promises from employers, brokers and government of the possibility of permanent residence and citizenship.
- Cases of Temporary Foreign Workers being trafficked for labour; indentured labour

Shortcomings in the way Canada treats migrant workers:

- lack of monitoring of employers, allowing for abuses
- lack of access to settlement services, e.g. English/French language classes (isolates workers, creates two-tier society)
- lack of effort on the part of the government to inform workers of their rights
- lack of access to adequate health services

Highlight the impact of this two-tier work force on Canadian society:

- unequal society with two classes of workers
- prevents many communities from retaining permanent population of workers who can successfully integrate into the community
- changes Canada from a country where immigrants are seen as nation-builders, to one where they are seen as purely economic units to be taken advantage of and then disposed of

Demands – with regards to the TFWP

- **Implement a Mandatory Monitoring System for all temporary migrant worker programs** (TFWP, SAWP, Live-in Caregiver Program)
 - Rights without enforcement are not real rights
 - The only current monitoring of employers of migrant workers is a *voluntary* monitoring initiative that employers in the TFWP can sign up for – this is obviously ineffective
 - There is no monitoring initiative at all for the SAWP and Live-in Caregiver Program
 - A mandatory monitoring system for employers of migrant workers is imperative to prevent abuse and exploitation

- abusive employers must be prosecuted – the two-year ban implemented in April 2011 makes no mention of compensation for exploited workers, and implies that abusive employers will be free to participate in the program again after the two years have passed
- **Repeal the time-limits on participants in the TFWP**
 - any time limits in the program should be placed on employers, not workers, because employers should not be relying on temporary workers to fill long-term jobs
- **Make work permits sector-specific, not tied to one particular employer**
 - If a worker is mistreated or fired, s/he is often forced into the underground economy because s/he can't legally work for another employer even if there is a demand
- **Give all Temporary Foreign Workers access to permanent residency** (not only highly skilled and live-in caregivers)
- **Eliminate the live-in requirement in the Live-in Caregiver Program**
 - this requirement often leads to exploitation via unpaid overtime, as well as sexual, physical or psychological abuse.
- **Allow all Temporary Foreign Workers to access settlement services** (currently only Alberta offers this)
- Encourage Canada to sign the United Nations International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (see here for more info: <http://www.marketwire.com/press-release/Celebrate-Organize-Migrant-Justice-Human-Rights-20th-Anniversary-Migrant-Workers-Convention-1371250.htm>)

➤ Mention that further information is available on the Canadian Council for Refugees' website at: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/migrant-workers>

For more information, please consult the CCR website on migrant workers at:
<http://ccrweb.ca/en/migrant-workers>

You can also contact Marisa Berry-Méndez, CCR Settlement Policy Director at (514)277-7223 ext. 5 and mberrymendez@ccrweb.ca