



Temporary Migrant Workers – Canada’s Disposable Workforce

In recent years, the number of workers admitted to Canada on temporary visas has doubled. The increase in Temporary Foreign Workers has brought to public attention stories of abuse and difficult conditions faced by workers. For many years, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has been urged by numerous groups, including the CCR, to address the vulnerable situation of temporary migrant workers as a result of their status.

CIC has announced regulatory changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) that are to be implemented in April 2011. The CCR critiques these changes in the context of concerns over the particular vulnerability of workers on temporary visas and the broad impacts on Canadian society of expanding the temporary migration program.

Changes announced by CIC to be implemented in April 2011:

- Two-year ban on employers who are found to have significantly violated the terms of their agreement with the worker.
 - The assessment of employers takes place when the employer applies for a new work permit application. There are many ways for the employer to reverse a negative assessment.
 - The only other mechanism for monitoring employers is an entirely *voluntary* Monitoring Initiative launched by HRSDC in 2009.
- Four-year limit on the stay of Temporary Foreign Workers, followed by a four-year period during which they are not allowed to work in Canada.
- More rigorous assessment of the genuineness of employer’s work offers.

What are the shortcomings of these changes?

- While these changes were announced as measures to protect workers from exploitation, there is still no mandatory monitoring system to uncover cases of abuse
 - **A voluntary monitoring system is *not* effective.**
- The four-year limit on migrant workers ensures that a revolving door of migrant workers willing to accept inferior wages and working conditions will be available to Canadian employers.
 - **Time-limits on migrant workers are intended to reinforce the temporary nature of the program. However, much of the labour demand is permanent. Addressing long-term labour needs via short-term “disposable” labour creates a two-tiered society, with a growing population of workers being used exclusively for their labour, who have fewer rights than others.**

CCR considers that:

- ✓ **The government must implement a mandatory monitoring system for employers of temporary migrant workers, and pursue prosecutions of those who violate the law**
- ✓ **Any time limits should be placed on employers, not workers, to prevent employers from using temporary workers with fewer rights to meet long-term labour demands.**

For more information, please visit: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/migrant-workers>