

CLC / UFCW Canada respond to Citizenship and Immigration Standing Committee recommendations for change of Temporary Foreign Worker Program and non-status workers

Just over a year ago, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration began a national study of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program and non-status workers.

The Committee visited a dozen cities and received over 100 written submissions and has now released their [report](#) and recommendations – including separate minority reports from the Conservative, Bloc Quebecois and New Democratic Party committee members.

The Canadian Labour Congress and UFCW Canada are encouraged to see that many labour groups and migrant rights groups provided the Standing Committee with strong examples of what is wrong with the TFW program and thoughtful recommendations for change.

These advocates are knowledgeable and well-informed on this file and their recommendations for policy changes are grounded in the following three principles, which most Canadians support:

1. Canada's migration policy must support nation building and not be designed to simply address employers' demands for workers.
2. Full social and political inclusion of newcomers to Canada must be adequately supported in practise.
3. Employers and labour brokers using temporary migrant worker programs must be held accountable to a high standard of effective workplace protections. The systemic lack of comprehensive compliance, monitoring and enforcement measures is no longer an option.

We are deeply concerned that the Conservative members of this Committee have chosen to dissent from nearly a third (10 out 36) of the much needed recommendations for change as stated in their minority report.

Hassan Yussuff, Secretary Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress, pointed out their "*minority report boils down to the Conservatives saying no to justice and fairness for migrant workers.*"

The Conservative members' minority report says:

No to establishing an advisory board of stakeholders to oversee a flawed program
No to provinces and the federal government working more closely to ensure

newcomers can become permanent residents

No to keeping families together

No to encouraging stakeholder input

No to making the TWF program more transparent

No to improving processes to ensure fair wages for migrant workers

No to levying fees on employers whose conduct can lead to crisis for migrant workers

No to community orientation sessions for migrant workers to know their workplace rights.

Wayne Hanley, National President of UFCW Canada, remarked, *“What are they saying yes to? The continuation of programs that don’t build a country based on fairness and justice for all?”*

Canada is a nation built on waves of immigration. The TFW program must be changed to ensure we continue the task of nation building in ways that value newcomers as equals, that ensures the inclusion of newcomers into the social and political fabric of Canada and that implement measures to hold employers and labour brokers accountable to a high standard of workplace protections.

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