

MESSAGE BOX FOR SPOKESPEOPLE

Full & Permanent Immigration Status for All: We call on Prime Minister Trudeau to keep his promises and create a plan to ensure everyone in the country has permanent resident status. All migrants that arrive in the future must be able to come to the country with permanent resident status.

On World Refugee Day, Prime Minister Trudeau must keep his promise to Welcome Refugees: Canada has shut its doors to refugees during COVID-19. Only 18,500 people were able to apply in 2020 because of border closures, less than a third of the previous year's total of 58,378 applications. The situation is worse in 2021, with only 2,245 people able to apply in the first three months of this year. On World Refugee Day 2020, Prime Minister Trudeau said "Through good times and bad, our country has strived to be a beacon of hope for the world's most vulnerable. All countries share a moral responsibility to help refugees and forcibly displaced people find shelter and start their lives anew."

Unite Families on Father's Day: Migrants are separated from their families, in some cases for decades. This worsens health, traumatizes families growing apart, and is inhumane. Migrants need their families, and the way to ensure that is full and permanent immigration status.

We are all essential: In May the federal government created an immigration program for some migrants but too many cannot meet the exclusionary criteria. Getting PR requires having valid temporary status, being currently employed in one of a few select jobs, and passing English exams. The federal government knows that lack of immigration status is unfair and unjust. No one must be left behind: Each of us is essential, whether we grow food, clean buildings, work in factories or take care of children. We all deserve full immigration status immediately!

Status for All is about rights and power: Today, migrant students and workers, refugees, and undocumented people are not able to access healthcare, or education or speak out against a bad boss because they don't have full status. Permanent immigration status ensures that migrants have the power to protect themselves.

Equal rights for all means equal immigration status for all: One in 23 people in Canada are without permanent immigration status. This has created a two-tiered society with fewer rights for some. Bad bosses can exploit more, health and educational institutions can charge high fees, bad landlords can mistreat migrants.

Precarious and temporary status is an aberration: Just 20 years ago, most people entered Canada with full and permanent immigration status. Today, most workers, students, refugees and others are on temporary status with few rights. This only serves the interests of bosses that want to pay lower wages and institutions that want to charge high fees. PM Trudeau has promised to “build back better”, that must include single tier immigration with equality through full immigration status for all.

Answers to difficult questions

...But not all migrants want to stay, do they?

Today, your ability to get healthcare in Canada, or speak out or leave a bad situation, is tied to your immigration status. As long as some people don't have permanent resident status, they have fewer rights and opportunities. This is not about who stays or who goes, this is about ensuring equality for those in the country.

...But isn't the economy in a downturn, how can Canada accept more immigrants?

There are over 1.6 million migrants without permanent residency already in the country. Most of them are doing essential jobs, and continued to work even in the pandemic. Migrants sustain all of us. Ensuring permanent resident status for everyone will ensure more prosperity and support for everyone.

...But this is a long term solution, what are some immediate changes that migrants need now?

Migrants need permanent resident status to assert any other rights that they have. Even if someone had more labour or housing protections or healthcare rights, they know that speaking out can mean termination, deportation, and even homelessness if they live in an employer provided housing. We need significant overhauls in labour rights and access to services, but full immigration status for all is the quickest, most effective way to improve conditions. We call on PM Trudeau and all political parties to work together to ensure Status for All!

...But why should migrant and undocumented people get special treatment?

Migrants, refugees, students, workers, undocumented people don't want special treatment, they want equal rights. Migrants take care of their families, and communities, but it's federal immigration laws that deny them access to rights and fairness. We all want to live in a society where everyone has the same rights and opportunities.

...But not all migrants are essential workers, are they?

Whether we are in waged work or not, no matter what our past, we are all essential. All of us deserve respect, dignity and fairness without exclusions or exceptions. Full and permanent immigration status for all is the only way to make it so.

...So what you are asking for is an easier pathway to citizenship?

No - pathways already exist for migrant careworkers or students or refugees but they are just paths for abuse. We don't want a two tier system where people remain temporary and exploitable for years and only a few at some point get stability. We want full and permanent immigration status for everyone right now.