

Coalition of BC Businesses

Submitted November 5, 2009

To: Toronto Star, Readers' Letters

Re: How we're creating an illegal workforce, November 1, 2009

(200 words)

Dear Editor,

Reporters Sandro Contenta and Laurie Monsebraaten overstate their position by describing Canada's temporary foreign workers as "vulnerable to exploitation" and "ripe for abuse".

On the contrary, the Temporary Foreign Worker program is well regulated and largely represents a positive experience for both foreign employees and employers.

The vast majority of foreign workers enjoy their work experience in Canada and earn enough to temporarily live here and send money home. By law, employers must pay foreign workers a market wage rate set by the federal government, ensure that their foreign workers have affordable accommodations and provide return airfare.

Employers from British Columbia make good use of the program given the acute labour shortages in some regions of the province. Without the help of foreign workers, employers would have had to cut hours or scale back on investments. Reduced staff hours and less investment would leave young Canadians with fewer work opportunities, not more.

B.C.'s employers also welcome the actions taken by the Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism to protect temporary foreign workers. New rules require a more rigorous assessment of the genuineness of foreign job offers and provide stiffer penalties to employers who fail to uphold regulatory standards.

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