Alberta Federation of Labour

Backgrounder

AFL Backgrounder: Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program

Low Wage Agenda
In April 2012, the Conservative government made changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program by introducing an Accelerated Labour Market Opinion (ALMO) stream for higher-skilled foreign workers.

The ALMO stream is clearly designed to drive down wages: employers can pay workers under the TFW Program up to 15 per cent less than Canadian workers [LINK to news release and technical background document].

Canadians Shut Out of Hiring
Under the ALMO stream, employers do not have to consider hiring Canadians first before turning to the TFW Program for foreign labour.

Lax Oversight
Under the ALMO stream, fewer than 20 per cent of successful applications are subject to a compliance review.

Widespread Violations
In 2010, the Alberta NDP uncovered Alberta government documents showing that 74 per cent of employers with workers under the TFW Program were in violation of the Alberta Labour Code [LINK to Alberta NDP Opposition news release].

Secret Consultations
The review that led to the April changes to TFW rules was conducted behind closed doors, with no input from the public. Only employers were invited to participate. The AFL and other groups asked to make submissions, but were refused.

Bogus Labour Shortage
The Alberta Federation of Labour has shown that the Alberta government's claims of a catastrophic "labour shortage" are not credible and overblown [LINK to AFL news release].

Many New Jobs Going to Foreign Workers
Jim Stanford, Chief Economist for the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), found that nearly 30 per cent of new jobs in Canada were filled by workers under the TFW Program [LINK to Stanford's work].

Alberta #1 Destination for Workers under the TFW Program
In 2011, Alberta employers were approved to bring in 50,840 workers under the TFW Program, the most in the country (Ontario was second with 47,635) [LINK to federal government statistics].

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