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Releases

Trudeau Liberals' temporary foreign worker changes favour employers

Vancouver - Proposals from a parliamentary committee dominated by the federal Liberal government could—if enacted—make it easier for employers to use temporary foreign workers instead of recruiting Canadian workers by paying decent wages and implementing much needed skills training programs.

"There will be intense pressure facing Employment Minister, MaryAnn Mihychuk, and Immigration Minister, John McCallum, over the next few months as they decide how to deal with the committee recommendations," says BC Federation of Labour President, Irene Lanzinger.

"Our overall concern is that on balance, the recommendations will give employers even greater freedom to use temporary foreign workers as a first resort, instead of the last," Lanzinger says.

"The committee did deal with a number issues raised by the BC Federation of Labour, like a pathway to citizenship for foreign workers along with better enforcement of standards to safeguard their rights while working in Canada," she says.

"But concrete recommendations and measures to address these issues are noticeably absent from the recommendations. And that means temporary foreign workers will continue to face isolation and exploitation by employers on the job in Canada."

While Lanzinger says the Trudeau government deserves some credit for carrying out a review, she says the shortcomings of the committee's report have to do with the limited time it spent studying the issue.

"More time studying the program and more rigorous and independent analysis of employers who rely on it to meet their labour force needs would have helped shape balanced recommendations and better public policy options around this controversial issue."

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