

DOMESTICS/CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers, and Newcomers

FEBRUARY 1999



NEW DIRECTIONS FOR IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION

On January 6, 1999, Minister Lucienne Robillard announced the new directions for Immigration and Refugee Protection Legislation and Policy.

Some of the proposed changes are:

STRENGTHENING FAMILY REUNIFICATION

- Definition of spouses can include **common law wife/husband and same sex partners**
- Age limit of sponsoring a dependent child is increased from 19 years to **22 years**
- **Decreasing the length of sponsorship of spouses and children** is being considered.
- Measures will be adopted to **prevent further sponsorship** for immigrants who failed to honour his commitments to support a family member.

- **Elimination of biases in the rights of adopted vs. biological child** and in differential treatment among various adoption cases.

MODERNIZING THE SELECTION SYSTEM FOR SKILLED WORKERS AND BUSINESS IMMIGRANTS

- Selection will be **focussed on flexible and transferable skills.**
- **Emphasis on education and experience.**
- Other criteria - **language, age, job offers,**
- **Personal suitability flexibility, adaptability, experience and a knowledge of Canada.**
- For business entrepreneurs - **experience on business, education, language skills and the establish provenance of their funds.**

FACILITATING THE ENTRY OF HIGHLY SKILLED TEMPORARY WORKERS

Adopting a new system that would permit the

You are welcome to INTERCEDE meeting every first Sunday of the Month

(if it falls on a holiday, meeting is on second Sunday)

Sunday, February 7, 1999 3-5 p.m.

Cecil Community Center, 58 Cecil St

Topic: APPLYING FOR CITIZENSHIP

Speakers: Representative from Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Next Meetings: Sunday, March 7, 1999, Topic: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Sunday, April 11, 1999, Topic: UNDERSTANDING YOUR TAX RETURN

(Accountants will be available to help you fill out your tax return)

issuance of employment authorizations more efficiently.

Employers to undertake specific human resource development commitments in training to benefit Canadian workers.

In spite of the presentation of (NAC) National Action Committee and Intercede during consultations held on March 16, 1998, as well as the advocacy of other organizations involved with domestic workers, nothing has addressed their request that **domestic workers must be accepted as landed immigrants.** If domestic workers are considered landed immigrants it will **minimize all kinds of abuses against them.**

There is a demand for this type of work. It seems forgotten that the domestic workers are the persons entrusted with children. Their wisdom and values radiates to **the children they care for who someday might be the leaders of tomorrow.** The government does not listen to their plea. Domestic workers can make life comfortable and easy for anyone but certainly their work is undervalued.

Modernizing the selection system of skilled workers and facilitating the entry of temporary workers does not give any assurance to caregivers of permanent resident status or labour protection.

Another concern is the selection of immigrants based on education. It has been happening that immigrants with diploma or degrees on education (example, nurses, lawyers, medicine, etc..) can not practice their profession. They need to go back to school - proper mechanism is not in place to provide the tools needed so that their

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skills and talents are availed of. Most often they land in jobs they are forced to like for survival. One of our clients expressed **"Canada has the most highly educated cleaners in the world"**.

We look forward to hearing the concerns of our members and supporters in preparation for upcoming consultations with the provincial and territorial governments.

**TIDBITS CORNER FROM
INTERCEDE**

- Always buy a temporary health coverage for family members arriving in Canada as landed immigrants or visitors.

It is always better to refer a good friend to a bank - good friendship turns sour when it comes to collecting a money borrowed by a friend.

Never sign any agreement papers until you have read in between the lines its contents. It is always wise to consult with others or experts about any agreement. Specially when it involves purchases. Do not be harassed by the salesperson for your signature.

Never lend your credit card to a friend. Avoid using your credit cards by phone and always check your bills.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION NEW SUBSCRIPTION CHANGE OF ADDRESS

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5

Please send **DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS** to :

NAME :

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	\$20.00	Others	\$25.00

WOMEN, OUR VOTE COUNTS:

The Ontario Coalition for Social Justice and other women's organizations in the community have started a non-partisan campaign to encourage women to vote.

Some of the rationale mentioned for this concerted campaign are:

- Women workers are still earning between 63-70 cents for every man's dollar and the majority of women are still clustered in low paying jobs.
- Recent social spending cuts have had a bigger impact on women. The burden of cut-backs to government programs falls disproportionately on women.
- Women's poverty is deeper today than in 1993.
- Some groups of women, such as aboriginal women, women of colour, immigrant and visible minority women, rural, homeless and poor women, young women and women with disabilities have greater barriers in our society and in voting at election time.

Temporary permit holders and landed immigrants who are not eligible to vote can still participate actively in the political arena by rendering voluntary help to the political party sincere in helping immigrants.

TORONTO'S MAJOR PROBLEM - HOUSING

With the partial removal of rent control, increases in rent make more people live in poverty. It is normal to note that in an immigrant's dwelling, there are two or more persons living within. They share the cost of rent and food.

Immigrants save money to prepare for immigration applications for petitioning their family. Part of their salary goes to their home country earmarked either for maintenance or educational purposes of families or relatives.

The ironic part is that majority of rental dwellings in Toronto are not very well maintained. It is either the floors are not good, the ceiling

walls or walls are cracked, hallways and elevators are filthy, no hot water most of the times, stairways are hardly mopped etc. etc...

Most immigrants do not bother to complain due to language barriers or they find no time to raise their problems because they work 7 days a week or if they raise their problems it takes sometime to be attended to.

In case a tenant leaves the dwelling, the owners start to improve on it a little bit and rents the place for a much higher price.

The City of Toronto should review their policies and enforce by laws for the protection of tenants such as:

- Utility shut-offs
- Conversion of rental units to other uses
- Improve housing and health standards
- Encourage condominium and private home development with conditions that rental should be affordable
- Subsidize first and last month rent for victims of violence, disabled and seniors.
- Be strict with regards to building and fire code
- License the landlords
- Revisit the property taxes paid by tenants

It is for the benefit of the tenants to have an organization of their own. They can have a unified voice with regards to tenancy problems.

HUMAN INTEREST FEATURES

Maria, after completion of her live-in caregiver program, underwent a medical exam for completion of her documents in applying for permanent residence. She was diagnosed with a dangerous sickness. The employer, for fear that her children might be contaminated, terminated her services. Maria underwent medi-

VANCOUVER CDWCR

Committee for Domestic Workers' & Caregivers' Rights
(an INTERCEDE Affiliate)

Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

cal treatment for almost two years and when her hopes are almost nil, she received a report from her doctor that she is out of danger and that she could go back to work. As soon as she found a job, she reopened her file with immigration to acquire permanent residency in Canada. After a year she acquired her landed status and was able to visit her family in Peru.

Susie was an OR Nurse in the Middle East. She decided to become a live-in caregiver in Canada so that in the future she could acquire a landed immigrant status and be able to reunite with her only daughter. She is a single MOM. During the transition of becoming a landed immigrant, she was operated for breast cancer which was just in time. She underwent chemotherapy and radiation and later on the doctor proclaimed her clear. She worked 16 hours a day Monday to Sunday saved a lot of money and decided to operate a homecare for elders. Lately she is reunited with her daughter bought a home for herself and manages her own homecare.

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY

Effective January 1, 1999

	MONTHLY (12/year)	SEMI-MONTHLY (24/year)	BIWEEKLY (26/year)	WEEKLY (52/year)	
GROSS WAGES		\$1,306.07	\$ 653.03	\$602.80	\$ 301.40
DEDUCTIONS:					
Income Tax		167.45	83.30	76.25	38.90
Canada Pension Plan		35.50	17.75	16.39	8.19
Employment Insurance		33.30	16.65	15.37	7.69
Room & Board		<u>369.42</u>	<u>184.71</u>	<u>170.50</u>	<u>85.25</u>
Total Deductions		<u>\$ 605.67</u>	<u>\$ 302.41</u>	<u>\$ 278.51</u>	<u>\$ 140.03</u>
NET PAYMENT		<u>\$ 700.40</u>	<u>\$ 350.62</u>	<u>\$ 324.29</u>	<u>\$ 161.37</u>

Minimum wage in Ontario is currently \$6.85 per hour. Even though your employer/worker agreement or "contract" may have stated your wage at less, your employer must pay you the current legal minimum wage.

Gross Wages are based on a 44 hour work week with no overtime. If you work more than 44 hours in a week you should get overtime pay or, if you agree, paid time off instead. **Overtime pay** is "time-and-a-half" your regular hourly wage. If you are paid the minimum wage of \$6.85 per hour, your overtime pay is \$10.28 per hour. You may or may not agree to take paid "time-and-a-half" off instead. For example, if you worked ten hours overtime, you should get 15 hours off with pay within the next 12 weeks.

The maximum deduction for **board** is \$53.55 per week (\$2.55 per meal). However, if you miss all six meals during your two days off, only \$38.25 (\$53.55-\$15.30) should be deducted. **Room** is calculated at a rate of \$31.70 per week for a private room or \$15.85 per week for a shared room.

Income Tax deductions are based on Code 1 exemption.

Your employer is required by law to withhold Income Tax deductions, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and Employment Insurance (EI) Premiums from your gross wages. Your employer sends these deductions together with their own contributions to Revenue Canada every month. Each pay day, your employer should give you a:

Written Statement of Earnings: January 1, 1999

Name of Employee: Mary Grace Joy **Hours worked:** 44 hours
Pay Period: January 1-7, 1999 **Salary:** \$6.85 per hour

Gross Wages: \$ 301.40
Deductions: Income Tax \$38.90
CPP 08.19
EI 07.69
Room 31.70
Board 38.25 (6 meals not taken)

Total Deductions: \$ 124.73
Net Payment: \$ 176.67

CARING FOR CHILDREN IS A HUGE RESPONSIBILITY! Be UPDATED!

Register with INTERCEDE before Feb. 20, 1999

CHILD CARE TRAINING

March 6 - April 24, 1999 (1-4 pm every Saturday)

Fee: \$70.00 for seven week session

Arranged by INTERCEDE with Seneca College

YOU MIGHT BE MISSING SOMETHING IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED YET..

INTERCEDE Caregivers Co-operative, Inc.

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We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism Program, Ministry of Citizenship, Culture & Recreation (NSP) and the Municipality of Toronto for their financial support.

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205
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