August 23, 2019

Hon. Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada
365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1L1

Dear Minister:

With the launch of the OECD’s Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Canada 2019 report last week, Canada and our Canadian immigration system have received some much-deserved accolades. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce would like to echo this praise.

As the report notes, Canada is seen as a role model for successful immigration management. It commends the nation’s evidenced-based and innovative approaches that evolve as environments change. The report also includes a series of policy recommendations. I am writing you on behalf of the Canadian Chamber to highlight three recommendations that are a priority for the Canadian business community.

First, in a number of government consultations and appearances at standing committees over the past year, we have stressed that the best way to ensure the overall integrity of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program is for the federal government to proceed with our long-standing recommendation to implement a Trusted Employers Program. Such a proposal was also included in HUMA’s 2016 report and the OECD makes a similar recommendation. Both Australia and the United Kingdom have had these programs effectively in place for decades, and Canada should adopt a similar model.

A second recommendation from the OECD report that we would like to highlight is the need to better assess and recognize foreign credentials. As part of our Vote Prosperity platform, we have included the importance of enhancing labour mobility and increasing the scope of mutual recognition of professional qualifications at home and abroad. To this end, we encourage the federal government to pursue ambitious and clearly defined labour mobility provisions in trade agreements in order to ensure
Canadian companies can provide a range of services to international customers. This includes intra-company transferees and services provided on a contractual basis, such as consultancy and after-sales servicing. We also support the OECD’s suggestion, in an effort to reduce the administrative burden, of requiring licencing bodies to take the initial qualification assessment for immigration as the starting point in their respective licencing procedures.

Thirdly, the OECD report highlights the growth in regional migration across the country while also noting that the vast majority of immigrants still settle in metropolitan and cluster areas. We have welcomed government initiatives that devolve decision making in the immigration selection process, starting with Provincial Nominees Programs, then with the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program and now the recently announced Rural and Northern Pilot Program. We need to continue to decentralize to allow for solutions built by communities for communities that address local workforce needs. Targeting immigration flows is, therefore, also a key recommendation of our Vote Prosperity platform.

As the OECD report notes, Canada has the largest, longest-standing and most elaborate system for skilled labour in the OECD. Canadians can be proud of our immigration system, yet we cannot become complacent. The Canadian Chamber, its network and members are willing partners in supporting the design, development and implementation of policies and programs that further the above recommendations.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Hon. Perrin Beatty, P.C., O.C.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Chamber of Commerce