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Growing Together

Brad Vis, MP
Official Opposition Shadow Minister for Small Business
Member of Parliament for Mission – Matsqui – Abbotsford
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Temporary Foreign Worker Program Serves Canada

Dear Mr. Vis,

Earlier this fall, the Canadian Franchise Association (CFA) sent correspondence to the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Pierre Poilievre, regarding comments made by members of the Conservative Caucus concerning the Federal Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program. In their comments, they implied that these temporary workers were filling roles that could otherwise be held by Canadians. Additionally, members of your caucus highlighted several franchise brands that use the program. In his response, Mr. Poilievre suggested that the CFA reach out to you in your capacity as Shadow Minister of Small Business. As the voice of franchising in Canada, the CFA would like to clarify some of these points, which we believe would be beneficial to you and your colleagues regarding the role franchisees play in local communities from coast to coast to coast.

Franchising provides everyday Canadians, in every community across the country, with the opportunity to own their own small business through the power of franchising. These small business owners gain access to a proven business model, brand, and processes while operating their own businesses. Additionally, the franchisor provides the franchisee with ongoing support and assistance needed to assure the long-term success of the franchise, which leads to the long-term success of the franchise system as a whole.

The strength of the franchise business model lies in the foundational franchisor-franchisee relationship.

While many franchise brands are recognizable in Battle River—Crowfoot, across Canada, and around the world, each individual franchised business is owned and operated by a small business owner who lives, works, and contributes to the communities they serve. Nearly 78,000 franchised small business owners across Canada are projected to contribute \$133 billion to the economy and employ close to 2 million Canadians by the end of 2025. These businesses are deeply rooted in their communities, supporting local charities and sponsoring Little League teams, local business initiatives, and job creation from coast to coast to coast.

Small businesses have great potential to continue helping to grow the economy both locally and nationally, but too often that potential is unrealized because they are unable to find the workers they need to properly operate their businesses. Despite a national youth unemployment rate of 14.5% in August, it is clear that Canada's youth are not taking the low-skilled jobs they once did. In a 2024 study by Statistics Canada, it was shown that between the 2001 and 2021 census, the number of low-skilled jobs decreased, with immigrant workers and TFW's largely backfilling Canadian-born workers as they moved away from lower-skilled roles and to managerial, professional, and technical roles. Much of this transition can be attributed to the increase in the number of Canadians who received a college or university credential, leading the G7 at 57.5%.

As a result, small business owners across the country have been increasingly forced to rely on the TFW Program to secure the workers they need to operate their businesses. This process is far more time-consuming and costly compared to hiring a worker in their local community. It is not uncommon for the cost associated with a TFW application to exceed \$8,000 after preparing the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), applying for work permits, job advertising costs, and legal and consulting fees. This is also in addition to the 2-3 month wait time for Employment and Social Development Canada to process the application. Still, many Canadian small businesses have no choice but to endure these costs and delays in order to keep their doors open.

Small businesses are the backbone of Canada's economy, and franchised small business owners play a vital role in supporting local communities, creating jobs, and driving economic growth. The TFW Program is not a first choice, but it is a necessary alternative for many of these businesses to remain operational in the face of persistent labour shortages. We urge you and your caucus to consider the realities faced by small business owners and the necessary role the TFW Program plays in sustaining their operations.

The Canadian Franchise Association welcomes the opportunity to engage with you and your colleagues to share further insights and work collaboratively on solutions that balance the needs of Canadian workers with the realities of today's labour market.

CFA Members will be on Parliament Hill on April 16, 2026, for our annual Franchise Awareness Day and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you. Together with you and your colleagues, we can develop solutions that balance Canadian workers' needs with the realities of today's labour market. Please feel free to reach out to me directly at drobotson@cfa.ca.

Sincerely,



Derek Robertson
Head of Government Relations & Strategic Partnership
Canadian Franchise Association

About the Canadian Franchise Association

The Canadian Franchise Association (CFA) is the national, not-for-profit association of more than 600 corporate members representing over 40,000 franchise small business owners of nearly 68,000 franchise establishments.

The CFA is the voice of the franchise community and the recognized authority on franchising in Canada. The CFA represents an industry that impacts the lives of every Canadian in every community across the country.

Canadian franchises contribute almost \$133 billion per year to the Canadian economy and create jobs for nearly 2 million Canadians. They enable 78,000 Canadians to be their own boss as the owner of their own franchised small business location, serving their neighbours in communities from coast to coast to coast. These enterprises contribute over \$33.4 billion in federal and provincial taxation revenue and pay nearly \$70 billion in wages each year.

CFA members represent a diverse cross-section of businesses and over 60 sectors in Canada. Our members range from large, established franchise systems, to smaller or emerging franchise brands. Members share the conviction that their commitment to excellence improves franchising for everyone involved, including franchisors, franchisees, suppliers, and everyday Canadians.