



Points system ignores trades

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Re:GTA middle class struggles

May 2

Professor David Hulchanski misses the mark in his reasoning why many new immigrants are unable to land well-paying construction jobs. Construction unions have not "locked out" these workers; it is the intransigence of both Liberal and Conservative governments to properly reform Canada's immigration system.

In fact, construction unions, builder associations and community groups have fought for many years to allow foreign workers to legally enter Canada. The current points system favours academic credentials and English proficiency that places a bias in favour of white-collar workers over trade workers.

When so-called "undocumented" construction workers were being deported in record numbers in 2006, the above triumvirate rallied to prevent the expelling of newcomers who had been making great contributions to city building.

Hulchanski is correct in pointing out that many skilled newcomers do end up cleaning offices and hotels, driving taxis and cooking meals, but these are often individuals with professional and other qualifications that are not recognized by regulating agencies. Ontario introduced legislation last year to help break down barriers for newcomers. Unfortunately, the federal government has just tinkered with temporary foreign worker programs that do not address the structural reforms

needed to attract skilled construction workers on a long-term basis.

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