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***Celebrating the 40th anniversary of
the Canadian Hispanic Congress***

Ontario Teachers Reject Ministry's Request for Extended Work Hours

The Ontario Teachers' Federation has rejected a request from the Ministry of Education to allow retired teachers to work longer hours, arguing that the government needs to address staffing shortages with a real solution.

While they had previously allowed retired teachers to extend the work period, working for 95 days a year instead of 50 to mitigate COVID-19 effects, they've declined to continue this measure for this year, emphasizing it was meant to be temporary. The Ontario Teachers' Federation pointed up that relying on retired teachers is not a sustainable solution to the staffing challenges.



This decision has received support from major teachers' unions, which represent public elementary, secondary, and English Catholic teachers, stating that Ontario is witnessing the departure of tens of thousands of qualified individuals from the teaching profession. They attribute this trend to the failure of the government to tackle the underlying issues, which include the learning and working conditions in Ontario schools, along with a

decade-long wage suppression and inadequate acknowledgment of teachers' credentials and expertise.

The Ministry of Education expressed disappointment, arguing that the use of retired teachers was a sensible solution supported by various education associations. However, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association noted that while the retired teacher rule change was temporary, it could have provided vital support amidst ongoing staffing challenges in schools.



Crisis in Canadian Independent Cinema: Streaming Services and Studio Rules Threaten Theatres

The independent cinema industry in Canada is facing a crisis due to challenges from streaming services and Hollywood studio rules.

A report by the Network of Independent Canadian Exhibitors (NICE) reveals that 60% of independent movie theatre operators were operating at a loss, with two-thirds stating they need increased public funding to stay open. Major concerns include restrictive studio rules such as “clean runs” which require dedicating screens to one film for weeks, impacting small-town theatres particularly hard. Independent cinemas, vital cultural and economic entities, struggle with unique market dynamics and often face precarious financial situations.



Despite their importance, independent cinemas receive limited support, with only one funding opportunity available through Telefilm, which provides insufficient assistance, supporting cinemas with a maximum of \$5,000 per cinema or a maximum of \$10,000 per corporate group.



Additionally, the practice of giving Cineplex “first dibs” on films and competition from streaming services add to the challenges. The situation is exacerbated by the pandemic’s impact and a lack of financial support for arts organizations. Independent theaters, particularly in English-speaking Canada, represent a delicate ecosystem wherein each establishment must innovate independently to ensure survival, leaving them susceptible to market fluctuations. For example,

for years there has been a lack of independent physical cinemas in Halifax, which is Canada’s 13th most populous city and a significant provincial capital, and theatres like the Gem in Grand Forks, B.C., serve as vital community spaces beyond screening films, highlighting the broader implications of their potential closure.

NICE calls for emergency relief and ongoing support to preserve the diversity and significance of independent cinemas across Canada. They advocate for increased funding, similar to programs seen in Quebec, in which Québec-based NICE members have received between \$25,000 and \$60,000 annually, to ensure the longevity and vitality of independent cinemas as essential cultural hubs in communities nationwide.

Canadian Visa Program Causes Frustration Due to Palestinians Stranded Amidst Application Limits



Canada's Immigration Minister, Marc Miller, announced that Canada will allow more individuals trapped in Gaza, who have family members in Canada, to apply for temporary refuge.

This is an extension of the family reunification program launched in January, which initially limited applications to 1,000. Although, despite the increased eligibility, logistical challenges persist as none of the applicants facilitated by the Canadian government have managed to leave Gaza due to border restrictions. Miller emphasized Canada's efforts to persuade Egypt and Israel to facilitate the exit of these individuals for security screening and visa processing. As of March 4, nearly 1,000 applications were accepted for processing, but only 12 individuals successfully completed the screening and were approved to enter Canada.

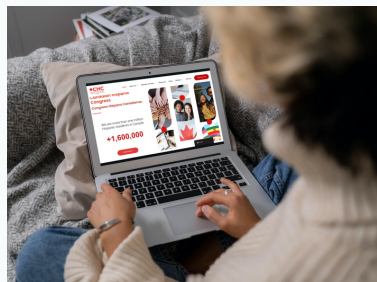
Nevertheless, the Canadian government has confirmed that Palestinians who fled Gaza but didn't complete their application for a special visa program to reunite with family in Canada before leaving are no longer eligible for the program. Those who escaped to Egypt before completing the application are now advised to apply through other immigration programs. This policy has caused frustration among Palestinian-Canadian families, many of whom are stuck while waiting for their loved ones.

CHC Community Services

The Canadian Hispanic Congress invites you to visit our website and learn about the different resources and support made available by the government and community organizations!

<https://canadianhispaniccongress.com/>

NEED HELP?



Visit our Webpage

Learn about the different resources and supports for the entire family.



Quebec's Plea for Full Immigration Authority Denied by Trudeau

Quebec's Premier François Legault sought greater control over immigration during a meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, citing concerns about the province's capacity to absorb more asylum seekers and temporary workers.

Trudeau declined full transfer of immigration powers to Quebec, citing the need to find solutions rather than focusing solely on jurisdiction. Despite Trudeau's refusal, he showed openness to transferring some powers, such as managing temporary workers. Legault highlighted Quebec's strained resources due to a sharp increase in asylum seekers, noting the impact on the declined percentage of French speakers, particularly in Montreal, and requested \$1 billion reimbursement from Ottawa to address the strain on resources caused by the influx of immigrants, especially in housing and healthcare.

Trudeau acknowledged Quebec's efforts in handling asylum seekers but emphasized collaborative measures to manage immigration. The Prime Minister also noted his government's efforts to address immigration issues, such as closing the irregular border crossing point at Roxham Road and reinstating visa requirements for Mexican nationals.

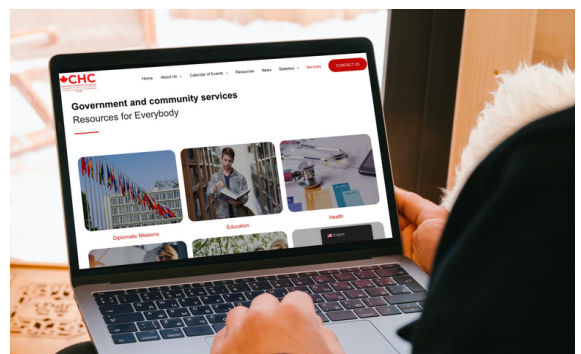
Critics, including Mostafa Henaway from the Immigrant Workers Centre, urged both governments to address barriers hindering migrants' integration into Canadian society.



Resources for Everybody

The Canadian Hispanic Congress displays details about government and community services available to all. From health and employment to free language courses and immigration assistance. For more information, visit:

<https://canadianhispaniccongress.com/education/>



Canada's Green Workforce Initiative Invests in Sustainable Job Training Amidst Legislative Delays

The Government of Canada is actively promoting the transition to a greener economy by investing in workforce training initiatives.

Minister Randy Boissonnault announced new funding opportunities aimed at helping workers and employers across the country gain skills for jobs in the low-carbon economy. The Sustainable Jobs Training Fund (SJTF) is set to provide over \$99 million over four years to support training projects in areas such as low carbon energy, green building, and electric vehicle maintenance.

Additionally, the Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy will launch a Sustainable Jobs stream to support unions in providing green skills training for workers in trades, benefiting around 20,000 apprentices and journeypersons.

However, while the funding is intended to prepare the workforce for a greener economy, the Sustainable Jobs Act remains stalled in Parliament. On February, climate and labor organizations sent a letter to the government urging them to expedite the passage of the bill. Nevertheless, the bill, which aims to create sustainable jobs and foster economic growth in a net-zero emissions economy, is facing controversy due to its delay and the remaining need to address the impacts of the energy transition and support workers in adapting to new job opportunities.

Although these initiatives reflect Canada's commitment to creating sustainable jobs and fostering a transition to a net-zero emissions economy, the timeline of these programs is in parliament's hands still waiting to pass this important legislation.



Message from the president

Dear friend of the Canadian Hispanic Congress,

The arrival of April is always a cause for much optimism. We joyfully welcome it with the hope that winter has already come to an end. Some celebrations of Spring include the arrival of daffodils and other spring flowers beginning to bloom. For me, an avid reader, it is the worldwide celebration of the Day of the Book, another of those joyous spring celebrations, and certainly my favourite.

Rubén Darío said that “A book is strength, it is courage, it is power, it is food; torch of thought and wellspring of love”.

On 23 April, the whole world celebrates the Day of the Book. This celebration of light and life that reading offers us, represents a small homage to one of the greatest privileges of humanity, the privilege of traveling and learning without the need to physically travel to the places of our imagination.

It dates back to April 23, 1929, according to some versions, and to 1916, according to others, but all agreeing that this worldwide celebration is connected to April 23, 1616, when William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra and the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega died. It has been said that April 23 is the day in which many giants of world literature such as Vladimir Nabokov and Manuel Mejía Vallejo were born or died. This worldwide tribute to the Day of the Book and authors rights seeks to honour and inspire the love of reading and honour the rights of writers.

According to the history of this celebration, in 1926 Alfonso XIII approved the request made to the Official Book Chamber by the Valencian writer Vicente Clavel Andrés, to designate a specific day for the celebration of the Day of the Book. In 1930, April 23 was officially recognized as the Day of the Book throughout Europe, Africa, and Mexico, eventually becoming a worldwide celebration.

We teachers say that children must first learn to read so they can then read to learn. It is impossible to overstate the value and importance of providing any additional assistance needed to help children to learn to read. Few experiences compare with the joy of being able to read any text that comes our way.

Discovering the pleasure of reading, on the other hand, leads us to discover a previously unknown joy, filling us with admiration and appreciation for those who give us the gift of those wonderful writings that teach us, entertain us, prepare us for the future and prepare us for today; those wonderful gifts that bring us out of loneliness and darkness.

Tell us what you like to read. We would love to hear about your favourite authors or perhaps read what you write and then share with us.

On April 23, 2024, the Proclamation of Spanish Language Day will be held by the City of Toronto under the auspices of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese of the University of Toronto and the Embassy of Spain in Canada. Congratulations to the organizers.

Wishing you an excellent start to Spring, we thank you for your support and your valuable time.

Sincerely yours,

Monique Forster

President, Canadian Hispanic Congress



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