

Living wage policies are needed to help immigrant workers achieve more equitable pay

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Page: A6

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Re: New immigrant frustrated in low-paying job, May 1

Living wage policies are an important tool to address the shocking gap between the wages of new-immigrant and Canadian-born workers, described in The Sun.

Many of the 3,500 hospital cleaners and food service workers employed today by multinational corporations in our public facilities are recent immigrants. And many work two or three jobs to make ends meet and provide for their families.

Like Arlene Oropel, they came to Canada for a better life, expecting to be treated with dignity and respect. Instead, contracted-out hospital support workers find themselves struggling to afford a decent quality of life like school field trips for their kids, heat in their homes or modest savings plans for their retirement.

Despite these conditions, Sodexo, Aramark and Compass received more than \$643 million in public contracts with health authorities in the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island.

That's why the Hospital Employees' Union recently launched a living wage campaign that calls on health authorities to be accountable for ensuring these corporations provide fair, family-supporting wages and safe working conditions to the people who are on the front lines of infection control and patient care in our health care facilities.

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