[Date]

Hon. Marc Miller
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
Minister@cic.gc.ca

[Local MP name]
[Email address]

[Local MPP name]
[Email address]

[Local Municipal name]
[Email address]

Dear [insert names],

I am writing to you regarding the recent changes by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) eligibility for international students. Under these new guidelines, international students completing Developmental Services Worker (DSW) programs in Ontario are no longer eligible for a PGWP. As a [insert whether you are a family member, caregiver, support staff, agency, constituent, etc here] I am deeply concerned about the impact this will have for families and individuals who require the support of these skilled professionals.

Families and individuals with disabilities across Ontario are already in crisis and this news is a devastating blow to an already overburdened and underfunded system. We know that post-secondary institutions across the province are raising alarm bells over fears that DSW programs, who rely heavily on international students, will be forced to shut down. For Northwestern Ontario, this will essentially eliminate any new DSW staff entering the workforce. With over 80% of Confederation College’s DSW student enrollment being international, these new regulations will place our local DSW program at risk. We know that international students are not going to sign up for a program that does not guarantee them the ability to live and work in Canada post-graduation. If we lose the DSW program here we are losing the only one that provides education and training that is specific to the disability community. We already have families who are desperate for these specialized workers and agencies who are struggling to maintain minimum staffing levels.

DSWs play a unique and vital role in the human services sector and offer specialized skills in behaviour supports, augmentative and alternative communication, educational support, health and wellness, preventative care, life skills, and so much more. These are skills that are not provided in other programs such as those for personal support workers, child/youth workers and social service workers. We are at a time when it is critically important to build the DSW workforce, not deplete it, and without access to the international student population, the sector is at risk of a more severe crisis than it already has been experiencing. [USE THIS SECTION IF YOU ARE A FAMILY MEMBER As a family member, I rely on trained support staff who understand the unique needs of my loved one and can provide the care and support that is essential to good health, quality of life, and dignity, which everyone in our society deserves].

We strongly urge the federal government to reconsider the exclusion of DSW programs from PGWP eligibility. By including these programs, Canada would enable international students to contribute to a growing. skilled and diverse workforce that enhances Ontario's commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and community integration for all citizens with disabilities.

Thank you for considering the impact of this policy on Ontario’s developmental services sector.

Sincerely,

[Name]