

Employer Group Supports Immigration Proposals

Toronto ON, April 3, 2008. The Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC) - Canada's only organization devoted to advancing the interests and issues for workforce mobility - today voiced its support of government plans to modernize Canada's immigration system.

CERC Executive Vice President Stephen Cryne said, "We are pleased to see government has taken these steps to modernize our immigration system. The proposed changes to cut waiting times for skilled immigrants are good for the economy and good for Canada's future prosperity. Without an improved immigration system, one that serves to encourage rather than deter people from coming to Canada, our ability to compete in a global marketplace will be in serious trouble."

The announced changes seek to expedite the processing of skilled workers, so desperately needed in Canada's economy. Government data suggests that the number of skilled workers currently waiting to enter the country exceeds 600,000 applicants. Many of those have been waiting over six years to enter the country. By comparison in Australia and New Zealand, competitors for Canada's immigrants, the processing time is six to twelve months. Canada's backlog of skilled worker inventory has increased by over 60% since 2000. In 2006 Canada admitted just over 130,000 immigrants in the skilled worker class.

According to CERC, immigration and the mobility of skilled workers are key parts of the solution to Canada's future labour shortage. "Without increased immigration the workforce will cease to grow past about the year 2011", said Cryne. "Canada," he points out, "is not alone. It is predicted that 19% of the entire U.S. workforce holding key management and administrative positions will retire within the next five years. Our economy is shifting and we are creating more of these knowledge based jobs. We are competing with other countries for people with the necessary skills and experience to fill these jobs."

The Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC) represents the interests of leading organizations across Canada involved in the movement of employees. The organization has been pressing for change to Canada's immigration system since 2004. Relocation of employees is vital to a vibrant and prosperous economy.

CERC is hosting national symposia on Canada's labour shortage in five key cities in May and June 2008, where some of the most influential leaders from business, government and academia will discuss this urgent challenge.

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