

Public forum aims to overcome 'wall of disbelief' over abuse of migrant workers

Social justice lawyer Fay Faraday will speak at a Cooper Institute public forum in Charlottetown

By Kevin Yarr, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 22, 2017 7:00 PM AT Last Updated: Mar 22, 2017 7:00 PM AT

A public forum in Charlottetown will aim to shine a light on the situation migrant workers face in Canada.

Fay Faraday, a Toronto-based social justice lawyer who will speak at the forum, told *Mainstreet P.E.I.* these events are important.

"The degree of exploitation and the nature of exploitation of these workers is really quite shocking," said Faraday.

"What we're often faced with is a real wall of disbelief that this kind of treatment can happen in Canada."

Faraday has been working with migrant workers since 1990, and said she can still be shocked by the stories she hears.

Treatment a product of the immigration system

The abuse can start before workers arrive, said Faraday.

Recruiters can charge large fees to find workers a place in Canada, which can put workers in debt before they have even earned their first dollar.

Once in the country, they are reliant on their employer, Faraday said. Their work permits are only good for one job, in one place, with that one employer.

If the work is not what they were told it would be, or the pay is lower, or even if the work is dangerous, it can be difficult for workers to assert their rights, she said, and those who do can face deportation.

"The level of rights erosion is really shocking to the Canadian consciousness and there's a reluctance to believe it's true," said Faraday.

The system is set up to put migrant workers at a disadvantage, she said, and it should not come as a surprise to anyone that others will take advantage of that.

Immigration system skewed by class

Temporary status is the only option open for labourers who want to come to Canada, said Faraday.

Skilled workers and professionals have access to routes to immigration that are not available to labourers.

"There is a need for working class workers in our economy, there always will be, and to close the door to permanent immigration is a problem," she said.

The forum on migrant workers, sponsored by the Cooper Institute, will be held at the Farm Centre in Charlottetown on March 27.

- **MORE P.E.I. NEWS** | [UPEI establishes teaching, knowledge garden to help 'indigenize' curriculum](#)
 - **MORE P.E.I. NEWS** | [Charlottetown encourages water conservation with rain barrel sale](#)
-

Explore CBC

CBC Home	Music	Documentaries	Digital Archives
TV	Life	Comedy	Games
Radio	Arts	Books	Contests
News	Kids	Parents	Site Map
Sports	Local	Indigenous	

Stay Connected

Apps	RSS	Podcasts	Newsletters & Alerts
------	-----	----------	----------------------

Services and Information

Corporate Info	Reuse & Permission	CBC Shop	Jobs
Public Appearances	Terms of Use	Help	Doing Business with Us
Commercial Services	Privacy Policy	Contact Us	Renting Facilities
