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The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to you in the capacity of President and Vice-President (Postdoctoral Scholars) of Public Service Alliance of Canada Local 901, representing over 1,600 Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows and Postdoctoral Scholars at Queen's University.

We met you at today's Town Hall meeting in Kingston, Ontario and brought to you the case of Gina Bahiwal, who has filed a Humanitarian and Compassionate application and is scheduled for removal from Canada on January 15, 2017 at 9:30pm. You advised us to write you a letter regarding Gina's situation and to give it to our Member of Parliament, The Honourable Mark Gerretsen, who will bring this letter to your personal attention.

Gina came Canada from the Philippines in 2008 under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). Since then she has advocated tirelessly for the rights of migrant workers, particularly among migrant women. She has volunteered her time providing mutual aid and services to other workers, and has engaged in pivotal work exposing the exploitative practices of recruiters.

Gina gave a deputation on migrant rights to the 2016 parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development (HUMA) in Ottawa. Gina was also a key participant in the 2016 J4MW Harvesting Freedom campaign calling for permanent residency for farm workers and all temporary workers in Canada. PSAC Local 901 was the Kingston host for the Harvesting Freedom caravan when

migrant workers walked from Leamington to Ottawa, and our 1600 members sponsored campus talks, a film screening and community events across Kingston.

Gina clearly made a significant impact on the HUMA temporary foreign worker program parliamentary review. In the final report, her testimony is singled out for providing essential evidence about the conditions of female migrant workers in Canada, and the authors quote at length Gina's testimony at pages 56 and 58 of the Report:

Gina Bahiwal provided an important gendered lens in understanding the temporary foreign worker program and the particular vulnerability experienced by women:

Access to health care is a problem for migrant women and injured workers. Migrant women who get pregnant and fired from work do not have access to health care. Injured workers who are being sent home cannot access health care here in Canada.
– *Gina Bahiwal, Member of Coalition for Migrant Worker Rights Canada*

The horrific reality of ignoring the medical needs of workers was highlighted by witnesses:

Women migrant workers who get pregnant while working here in Canada get fired, so they don't have access to health care. One worker who I talked to last month lost her baby. She had to hide her tummy and put on a girdle so the employer would not see that she was pregnant, because she was afraid of being fired, and what happened is that she lost her baby. – *Gina Bahiwal, Member of Coalition for Migrant Worker Rights Canada*

Gina is someone your own government relied on to help improve the system for others – why should she now be deported? Your government recently announced the removal of the “4-in-4-out” rule and committed to developing pathways to permanent residency to allow temporary workers to more fully contribute to Canada. Gina worked hard along with other migrant justice activists to help bring about this important result. Her deportation would create significant hardship for her family and for all of us who have gotten to know and respect Gina as a friend, fellow and community member in this work. Canadian society as a whole would lose an important and strong advocate on migrant rights issues in this country.

We understand that Gina's application for permanent residence is close to being finalized, surely she should remain with her family and community while she awaits the completion of her immigration process. **For all these reasons, we are asking you to intervene and cancel Gina's removal from Canada, which is scheduled for January 15, 2017 at 9:30pm.**

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely yours,

Craig Berggold (President)

Silja Freitag (Vice-President Postdoctoral Scholars)

CC: David Van Kesteren, M.P. (Chatham-Kent—Leamington)
Tracy Ramsay, M.P. (Essex)