

# ImmQuest

"Qui bene interrogat bene docet" "He who questions well teaches well"

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## Ontario Government Introduces Legislation to Breakdown Barriers for Newcomers

Ed Corrigan

The McGuinty government in Ontario has introduced legislation entitled *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006* which, if passed, would help breakdown barriers for internationally trained professionals to work in their areas of expertise. The proposed legislation is the first of its kind in Canada. It would require thirty-four regulated professions in Ontario to ensure

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## Refugee Selection Abroad<sup>1</sup>

David Matas

### Part II

### III. Selectors

#### b) Country of Temporary Refuge

An example of choice by the government of the country of temporary refuge is the Comprehensive Plan of Action. The Indochinese

<sup>1</sup> Some of this text is drawn from the author's "Report of the Task Force on Overseas Protection" for the Canadian Council for Refugees, 1992.

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# Ontario Government Introduces Legislation

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that their licensing process and mechanism for assessing credentials is fair and clear.

The proposed legislation also includes the Fair Registration Practices Commission that would review the registration practices of regulated professions and ensure that they are in compliance with the new legislation. The Ontario Government also set up a new Access Centre for internationally trained individuals. This Centre would help those trained outside Ontario to obtain information and referrals to become established in their professions. This Centre would also serve as a Centre for Excellence on internships and mentorships for educational institutions, employers and community agencies.

The legislation has been received quite favourably by many in business and industry. Brian Hunt, President and CEO of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, said the Ontario Government is to be commended for introducing legislation to help internationally trained professionals integrate into the workforce. The Institute experience has shown that providing a transparent career path for the internationally trained not only benefits those individuals personally but also the province as a whole. Len Crispino, President and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, commented that getting these highly skilled workers into their chosen profession simply makes good economic sense — particularly given the current labour shortages, this legislation helps cut through the red tape and puts foreign trained professionals one step closer to the workforce.

Approximately 140,000 newcomers arrive in Ontario each year. In the past three years, more than half were university educated. Due to current demographic trends in Ontario, within five years

newcomers will account for all the provinces' net labour force growth. Even though many of these newcomers are highly skilled and experienced they are still struggling to get work in their area of professional training. According to the Conference Board of Canada it is estimated that the failure to recognize the skills and credentials for newcomers costs the Canadian economy as much as \$5 billion a year.

Recognizing the importance of newcomers to Canada through immigration, the Ontario Government has embarked on a number of initiatives to help ensure the successful entry of immigrants into the Ontario workforce and to help ensure that they become productive members of our society. One of the more notable initiatives is that the Ontario Government has doubled the number of training and assessment positions for internationally trained medical graduates. In the last two years, for the first time, more doctor's certificates have been issued to international medical graduates than to Ontario medical graduates. This is an important program that will help address the shortage of medical physicians that presently exists in Ontario.

These welcome initiatives from the Government of Ontario will help highly qualified foreign trained professionals understand the process of getting their credentials recognized in Ontario, and ensure that unnecessary barriers will not impede the process of them working in their field of training.

This program will help highly trained newcomers obtain work which will help to build our economy. Hopefully this legislation will be passed by the Ontario Government, and the thirty-four regulated professions in Ontario will seize the opportunity to bring new members into their respective fields and ensure that they meet the training requirements of those professionals practicing in those fields in Ontario.

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