

Fight for Decent Work: The Changing Workplaces Review

The Changing Workplaces Review (CWR) is a consultation process on employment and labour law initiated by the provincial government. This is the first time in Ontario that the Labour Relations Act (LRA) and the Employment Standards Act (ESA) have been reviewed together. By organizing unionized and not-yet-unionized workers to fight for progressive changes to the law we can make a difference in the lives of all workers in Ontario. Changes to the ESA can raise the floor for all workers, giving them greater job and income security. Changes to the LRA can make it easier for people to join a union, still the best way to improve working conditions above the floor set in the ESA, and can help secure their rights once they join a union.

The CWR Interim Report was released on July 27, 2016. It includes more than 50 areas of the LRA and ESA that could be subject to amendment. It also provides a number of options for changes in each of these areas. Some of these options would be very beneficial to workers. Here is a short list of some of the things that CUPE Ontario, the 'Make it Fair' campaign, and the 'Fight for \$15 and Fairness' campaign will be fighting for:

- **Card-check certification:** Workers should have the right to join a union without interference from their employers. Card-check certification would give unions bargaining rights for workers when they can demonstrate that they have majority support from workers through the signing of membership cards.
- **Successor Rights:** When workers unionize they deserve to maintain the job security and collective agreement benefits that they have negotiated. Employers should not have the power to undermine workers through contracting out. Successor rights protect workers' jobs and their collective agreement even when their employer contracts the work out. We had this right in the 1990s, and we deserve to have it back.
- **Paid sick days for all workers:** Nobody should have to go to work sick. And nobody should lose income for being sick. It's a matter of human decency to allow people to take the time to get well.
- **Better enforcement of the ESA:** Employers regularly violate the ESA, denying workers of their rights and income (e.g. unpaid overtime, vacation pay or holiday pay). Over 90% of claims are made after people leave their jobs because they are afraid their employers will try to punish them for enforcing their rights. Greater protections, including more preventative investigations, and allowing 3rd parties to file claims on workers' behalf, will make for stronger enforcement.
- **Protections for Vulnerable Workers:** Agricultural workers, workers hired through Temporary Help Agencies, and Migrant workers are amongst the most vulnerable people in the labour market. There are many options in the CWR interim report that would improve protections for these workers, including making it easier for them to unionize, and improving ESA standards specifically designed for these types of work.

This is just a partial list of some of the key issues. We will be fighting for these, and other priorities in order to make workers' lives better.

Join us in the fight to make these important changes. Come to the October 1, 2016 Rally for Decent Work at Queen's Park and make sure the government knows that improving the ESA and LRA for all workers must happen.