



Poverty Roundtable

Hastings Prince Edward

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 23 2017

WORKERS WIN BIG WITH PASSAGE OF BILL 148

BELLEVILLE, NOV 23 2017 – Bill 148 passed Third Reading in the Legislature on November 22 marking a significant improvement in employment standards FOR Ontario’s workers and for more than 1.5 million workers a potential game-changing increase to Ontario’s minimum wage.

“Decent work is at the heart of a strong, healthy and sustainable economy,” said Bob Cottrell, Chair of the local Poverty Roundtable’s Employment and Income Security Work Group. “This is the first review of Employment Standards in over twenty years and it will ensure better protections for all workers, a minimum of two days of paid emergency leave for all workers and greater pay fairness for employees of temp agencies.”

Key changes to the Employment Standards Act will include:

- Raising the general minimum wage to \$14 per hour as of January 1 2018 and \$15 per hour as of January 1 2019.
- As of April 1 2018 requiring the same rate of pay as paid to full-time employees for employees doing substantially the same kind of work including temp agency staff, casual, part time and seasonal workers.
- Requiring the first two days of personal emergency leave to be paid with the remaining eight days unpaid
- Effective January 1 2019, changes to scheduling will also come into effect.

Cottrell also noted that the increase to the minimum wage has garnered much of the media attention including some major concerns among businesses and local Chambers of Commerce.

“We have heard these concerns each time there is talk about increasing the minimum wage,” said Cottrell, “and no one should be surprised! The Ontario government has just recently announced tax cuts for small businesses to assist them with the new minimum wage increase and I’m sure that will help but I am also confident that this is a real potential game-changer for local economies, workers and their families.”

Cottrell pointed out that his Employment and Income Security Work Group has also been working on calculations for a local Living Wage and that even with the proposed \$15 per hour minimum wage there will still be a gap of about \$1.40 per hour between their calculation of a Living Wage for the local region and the proposed minimum wage in 2019.

“Much of the focus on the increase to Ontario’s minimum wage has been on job loss. These fears are simply not being realized in jurisdictions which have moved to a minimum wage of \$15 and there has been almost no real discussion of what a significant boost this will be to workers’ pocketbooks and local community economies.”

The Bill still needs to receive Royal Assent.

ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME SECURITY WORK GROUP (EIS_WG)

The EIS WG is a Work Group of the Hastings-Prince Edward Poverty Roundtable. Its terms of Reference are as follows:

Employment Security

1. To identify the types of precarious employment and their impact on communities
2. To develop a profile of precarious employment in our local communities.
3. To engage workers experiencing precarious employment to tell their local stories
4. To engage business and community leaders to identify solutions to mitigate precarious employment.
5. To participate in community roundtables and government consultations on reforms to strengthen employment security through improvements or reforms to existing policies including employment standards and employment insurance.

Income Security

1. To identify the principal sources of income in our region for working and non-working persons with a focus on employment as the primary source of income.
2. To develop an up-to-date profile of ‘income security’ of local communities.
3. To develop and promote a Living Wage for working individuals in our region/local communities
4. To identify businesses and industry leaders who will champion a Living Wage for their employees.
5. To participate in campaigns, consultations and discussions that advocate for improvements to income security including the minimum wage, living wage, guaranteed annual income and pensions.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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