

Today's News - Tuesday, May 30, 2017

From: Todays News (OPO) <todays.news@ontario.ca>
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Ontario is taking historic action to create more opportunity and security for workers with a plan for Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs. This includes hiking the minimum wage, ensuring part-time workers are paid the same hourly wage as full-time workers, introducing paid sick days for every worker and stepping up enforcement of employment laws. Over the past three years, Ontario's economy has outperformed all G7 countries in terms of real GDP growth. While exports and business investments are increasing and the unemployment rate is at a 16-year low, the nature of work has changed. Many workers are struggling to support their families on part-time, contract or minimum-wage work. Government has a responsibility to address precarious employment and ensure Ontario workers are protected by updating the province's labour and employment laws. To help safeguard employees and create fairer and better workplaces, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced today that the government is moving forward with a landmark package of measures, including:

- Raising Ontario's general minimum wage to \$14 per hour on January 1, 2018, and then to \$15 on January 1, 2019, followed by annual increases at the rate of inflation
- Mandating equal pay for part-time, temporary, casual and seasonal employees doing the same job as full-time employees; and equal pay for temporary help agency employees doing the same job as permanent employees at the agencies' client companies
- Expanding personal emergency leave to include an across-the-board minimum of at least two paid days per year for all workers
- Bringing Ontario's vacation time into line with the national average by ensuring at least three weeks' vacation after five years with a company
- Making employee scheduling fairer, including requiring employees to be paid for three hours of work if their shift is cancelled within 48 hours of its scheduled start time.

The government will also propose measures to expand family leaves and make certain that employees are not misclassified as independent contractors, ensuring they get the benefits they deserve. To enforce these changes, the province will hire up to 175 more employment standards officers and launch a program to educate both employees and small and medium-sized businesses about their rights and obligations under the Employment Standards Act.

Read a copy of the Premier's remarks attached.

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Our government's plan to build a stronger, healthier Ontario includes historic new investments in health care, including free medications for everyone 24 and under through OHIP+: Children and Youth

Pharmacare, **providing free tuition** to over 210,000 students and on-the-job learning opportunities to help land a great job, helping 100,000 kids access quality, licensed child care, **making everyday life more affordable by reducing electricity costs** by 25 per cent on average through our proposed Fair Hydro Plan, and **taking action to make housing more affordable** for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.