



TAIC Board of Directors

17 November 2021

Subject: ***Input to Bill 27, Working for Workers' Act, 2021***

Pam Aujla
Brahma Kumaris

Members of the Legislative Committee,

Liz Chappel
Bahá'í

The Toronto Area Interfaith Council is a multi-faith Council in Toronto that is concerned with the spiritual and material wellbeing of the residents of the City and especially those who live at the margins. One of these groups are workers, most of whom are not unionized and even where unionized, have less power over their conditions of employment than is possessed by their employer.

Sidney Ikeda
Buddhist Church

Zul Kassamali
Ismaili Muslim

While Bill 27 the Working for Workers Act amending various pieces of labour legislation purports to improve the lives of workers, some of its schedules fail to do so.

Chander Khanna
Hindu

Rev. Prakash
Lohale
Roman Catholic

Schedule 2 amends the Ontario *Employment Standards Act, 2000*. While Section 3 of Schedule 2 requires employers with 25 or more employees to develop and circulate a policy for "disconnecting from work", it does not cover employees in smaller populated workplaces, who have similar needs. In addition, and more importantly, there is no enforcement mechanism to ensure employees get this disconnected time or a remedy where that time is denied. To fill the latter gap, Section 3 should have a further provision, namely a new 21.2. That section should have three subsections.

Rev. John
Joseph
Mastandrea
United Church of
Canada

Rabbi Shalom
Schachter
Jewish

Subsection 1 should oblige every Employer to notify each of their employees of their work hours and pay the employee their regular wages for each of the hours that the employee works.

Rev. Earl Smith
Church of
Scientology

Subsection 2 should entitle any employee to notify their Employer of the hours outside of the assigned work hours that the employee wishes to be disconnected from work.

Sam Vesuna
Zoroastrian

Subsection 3 should provide that where the Employer contacts the employee during the chosen disconnected time, each hour from the end of the employee's last hour of work as designated by the Employer to the commencement of the next period of work as designated by the Employer shall be deemed to be hours worked by the employee and the Employer shall be obliged to pay the employee the employee's regular hourly wage for each of those hours.

Bob White
Roman Catholic

Jeana Wilson
The Church of
Jesus Christ of
Latter-Day Saints

Schedule 6 which amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act 1997 addresses the current surplus in the WSIB Fund. It proposes to permit a refund of some of these monies to Employers. That is completely the wrong direction to take regarding the temporary surplus. Firstly the surplus may significantly drop due to the future costs created by COVID in workplaces.



More significantly these funds are part of the Employers' total compensation costs for workers. Workers are paid less in other areas because of the Employers' obligation to pay WSIB premiums. If there is any reduction in the Employers' prior payments, the monies should be reallocated in a way that ensures the beneficiaries are workers.

The route Schedule 6 should take is to improve the level of benefits already in the Act and to extend the coverage of the Act to those Employers who are not currently obliged to participate in WSIB.

One such example are Retirement Homes. These operations, as well as Long-term Care homes have been the most heavily affected by COVID. Many Retirement Homes retain private insurers to deal with workplace incidents and most such insurances only cover workplace accidents and not diseases that are contracted by workers in their employment. The non-availability of WSIB to these workers may force them on to social assistance and delay their recovery and return to active employment in a sector where there is already a serious staff shortfall.

We call on you to completely re-write Schedule 6 to accomplish the objectives set out in this submission.

We look forward to your favourable response to our submissions.

Sincerely,

Zul Kassamali

President

Toronto Area Interfaith Council