

13. Labour Legislation

Working people have a fundamental right to secure employment. They have a right to decent pay and working conditions. Work is an integral part of a healthy and satisfying life. Everyone deserves dignity, respect and security at work. Whether that work takes us into a classroom, a factory, a hospital, a retail store or our own homes, the basic rights remain the same. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

In the years since June 1995, there has been a steady erosion of this right in Ontario. Too many Ontario workers have seen their job security slip away. Our right to control our work environment through collective action has been under steady attack.

Unions play an essential role in society. Working people have a right to join them and act collectively to improve their standard of living. Governments are not innocent bystanders in this. They have an obligation to ensure that workers have both the right and the ability to take advantage of union membership. Government must provide protection against unfair labour practices.

The recent trend by our provincial government has been to intervene directly on behalf of those employers who would take advantage of these unfair practices. This must be reversed and the government must take an active role in setting standards of fairness, justice and dignity. It must be willing to enforce workers' rights.

Recommendations for A People's Charter:

We call on the provincial government to:

- ***Recognize that everyone has the democratic right to join a union of their choice, free from employer interference and abuse.***
- ***Give the Labour Relations Board the power to deal with bosses who break the law when workers attempt to organize.***
- ***Modernize the Labour Relations Act to give "new economy" workers - from contract employees in the tech sector to home workers in the garment industry - the same right to organize as everyone else.***
- ***Abolish all exclusions in the law that shut the door on collective bargaining for certain groups of employees.***

- ***Implement the Supreme Court's decision on agricultural workers without delay, giving them the unfettered right to collective bargaining.***
- ***Make it mandatory for non-unionized employers to post and provide employees with information on the legal steps that need to be undertaken to unionize.***
- ***Remove the obligation for employers to post de-unionization material in unionized workplaces.***
- ***Respect free collective bargaining for public sector employees rather than fixing collective bargaining by reducing the transfer of funds, legislating "no deficit" laws, or otherwise intervening in the arbitration process.***
- ***Reinstate the anti-scab laws.***
- ***Reinstate equality of successor rights for Crown employees.***
- ***Refuse to provide tax dollars to employers who use sweatshop practices.***
- ***Enact a law barring suppliers who break minimum employment standards from receiving government contracts.***
- ***Restore all other NDP labour law reforms repealed by the Conservative government in 1995.***