

August 3, 2016

The Honourable. Kathleen Wynne, Premier
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Honourable Kevin Flynn
Ontario Ministry of Labour
400 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 1T7

Dear Premier Wynne and Minister Flynn:

I was pleased to see the release of the Changing Workplaces Review Special Advisors' Interim Report last week. The length and breadth of the report speaks to the immensity of the challenge in reforming outmoded employment laws, as well as the urgent need to do so.

In reading the report, it is very clear that the independent review has been an undertaking of much consideration, care and analysis on the part of the Special Advisors C. Michael Mitchell and the Honourable John C. Murray. The Ontario Federation of Labour commends their efforts and the rigour and attention to detail which they have so fruitfully applied. In addition, we congratulate the staff at the Ministry of Labour and the Premier's office for their dedication to this project. We were pleased to see the recommendations of the labour movement and our community partners in the report, as well the sentiments and experiences captured in the overarching values that informed it.

The labour movement has been heartened by your government's leadership role in recognizing its responsibility to create a fairer, more equitable Ontario. This must begin with access to decent work for everyone. A steadfast commitment to decent work must shape both the final recommendations and any legislation proposed by the government over the next year.

The OFL is in absolute agreement with the International Labour Organization (ILO) as it describes decent work as the summation of the aspirations of working people. As per the ILO, decent work:

"involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all men and women."

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Today, Ontario falls far short of this goal in innumerable and devastating ways – including access to basic rights and a real voice at work through a union. This is why I am writing to convey our hope for the future of employment in Ontario. The province is now at a precipice where the choices we make will have serious implications for generations to come. What is required is a major overhaul to both the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Labour Relations Act* – we cannot be simply satisfied with the tweaking of legislative details.

Unionized and non-unionized workers alike are suffering on account of the gravely outdated legislation that governs employment. While the OFL formally represents one million workers across Ontario, we are concerned with the well-being and rights of the approximately 7 million working people who keep our economy moving. It is absolutely crucial that efforts related to the Review add up to concrete changes for Ontario workers, particularly those workers in precarious employment. As seen by the outpouring of participation in the process thus far, Ontario workers, unions and advocates are deeply invested in the Changing Workplaces Review and expect tangible changes in the laws.

The OFL will continue to be fully engaged in the Changing Workplaces Review process, working alongside unions and community partners right across Ontario towards changes that will benefit all Ontario families and workers.

I commend this excellent undertaking and I am optimistic that it will result in the much needed improvements to our outdated employment laws. We firmly expect that responsive and fair legislation will result from this process to better reflect the current realities of work in Ontario.

Sincerely,



CHRIS BUCKLEY
President
Ontario Federation of Labour

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