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Releases

BCFED calls for full employment rights for ride-hail and food delivery workers

Despite new provincial regulations introduced today, ride-hail and food delivery workers still won't receive the same workplace benefits and protections as other workers in BC, the BC Federation of Labour said today.

“Under the rules announced today, ride-hail and food delivery workers are being denied basic protections like paid sick leave, statutory holiday pay and overtime,” said BCFED President Sussanne Skidmore.

Along with community organizations and ride-hail and food delivery workers, the BCFED has fought for several years to ensure these workers receive equal workplace protection. During the provincial government’s recent consultation process, the BCFED shared extensive evidence about the daily challenges of online platform work, including long hours, poor pay, lack of health and safety protections, and few benefits.

“Ride-hail and food delivery workers deserve dignity, fair compensation, safe working conditions and the ability to fully participate in community and family life. They deserve the same standard protections offered to other workers in our province,” said Skidmore.

She cited the “engaged time” model promoted by employers and adopted by the government, in which workers will be paid only for a portion of the time they work. Although the government proposed to compensate for that discrepancy with a top-up to the minimum wage, Skidmore said it’s far from enough.

“The evidence from other jurisdictions shows that, once you count all the time worked, that small top-up won’t even come close to bringing a typical worker up to the minimum wage — let alone ever earning more,” she said. “And with the expense reimbursement amounts set so low, vehicle drivers will still be subsidizing their employers' business expenses.”

“This is already precarious work. And this is a workforce that is predominantly made up of racialized workers and newcomers to our province,” said BCFED Secretary-Treasurer Hermender Singh Kailley.

“We are deeply concerned that low pay and limited rights will entrench the precarity of this work and the systemic discrimination these workers experience. This is an improvement over their current conditions, but it still falls short of the full, equal protections every worker should receive.”

He added that the BCFED welcomed measures such as the long-overdue coverage under workers’ compensation, but said unions will be watching to see if the final regulations would cover them for injuries sustained outside of “engaged time.”

The BC Federation of Labour continues to advocate for workers to have full access to bargaining rights and full protections under the *Employment Standards Act*.