November 16, 2023 |

Releases

BC makes progress, but key protections still missing for gig workers: BCFED

Today's announcement from the BC Ministry of Labour represents some progress for ride-hail and food-delivery workers, but still leaves these workers without the same set of protections provided to every other worker in the province, BC Federation of Labour President Sussanne Skidmore said today.

"These workers have had to wait for years for action, so we are relieved the government is now paying attention," she said.

"We're especially relieved that they heard us on the need for workers' compensation coverage. You'll recall we brought Aman Sood, an Uber driver who had been injured in an attack by a passenger, to meet with the Minister of Labour. I'm relieved it had an impact and we are seeing changes today," she said.

"But we are deeply concerned over where this plan falls short – especially because it denies workers key protections under the law, like paid sick leave."

"Two years ago, the province brought in paid sick leave for all workers in BC and told them to stay home when they're sick," said BCFED Secretary-Treasurer Hermender Singh Kailley. "But the message to gig workers seems to be, 'Keep picking up passengers and making food deliveries, no

matter how sick you are.' That's indefensible."

Skidmore added the government's approach to minimum wage coverage fails to include time spent waiting for an assignment or returning from an assignment.

"For most workers in BC, when you go to work each day, you get paid for all your time at work. But under this plan, workers are only covered for 'engaged time.' Even on a great day, workers have told us they're getting paid for — at best — 60% of their time. So while that 120% figure sounds great at first, it's hard to see how it gets them to the minimum wage."

Kailley said the government's approach makes important progress on pay and destination transparency, and on account suspension and termination. "These are two of the biggest pain points these workers face," he said.

"On the whole, though, the government's approach falls far short of the rights and protections gig workers deserve, especially considering that so many of them are racialized workers and newcomers," Skidmore said.

"We'll keep fighting alongside these workers until they get the full protection they deserve."

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Background:

- April 27, 2023 BCFED news release: Wide support for employment protections for app-based workers: poll – Research Co. factum(156 KB) (PDF)