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Statements

Care, compensation, dignity and justice: BCFED statement on Injured Workers' Day

June 1 is Injured Workers' Day in Canada, when we rededicate ourselves to the fight for justice for injured workers.

In British Columbia, that fight has made important strides in recent years. The BC NDP government has reversed many of the most vicious cuts to workers' compensation made under John Rustad's old government. Their changes have brought BC closer to a worker-centred system it was always intended to be.

But there is still a long way to go. Some of the most serious shortcomings at the Workers' Compensation Board have yet to be addressed. And the Compensation Employees' Union members delivering WCB services still don't have the resources they need to do their jobs in the way they know injured workers deserve. The result: those workers often still pay the price.

For example, workers with psychological injuries still don't get the same level of respect as those with physical injuries. Most of them still have to jump through bureaucratic hoops to prove their injury was caused by their work — an added mental strain when they should be able to devote their attention instead to healing.

Or take claim suppression: an insidious problem where employers fail to file reports after a workplace injury, and discourage or intimidate injured workers into not filing a claim either. Yet few employers are ever held accountable.

So today, let’s recommit to fighting for that accountability. And let’s finally build a workers’ compensation system that treats injured workers with the care they need, the compensation they’re owed, and the dignity they deserve.