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Releases

Labour Code changes help restore fairness and balance

Proposed revisions to the BC Labour Code will help restore much-needed fairness at unionized worksites across the province.

“British Columbia remains a low-wage province, and precarious work is on the rise. The best antidote to economic inequality is greater union density,” says BC Federation of Labour President Laird Cronk. Fewer unions means lower pay for everybody.

The BCFED welcomes government’s move to expand successorship rights that protect workers when contract services are retendered. “The contract retendering process is used and abused to arbitrarily terminate collective agreements and maintain poverty-level wages,” says Cronk. Contract flipping is rampant in sectors such as construction, food and building services, security and health care.

“Contract flipping promotes a race to the bottom. Workers can lose pay and benefits - or even their job - when their employer’s contract is retendered or flipped. They need to reapply for their own jobs,” says Cronk.

The BCFED welcomes Labour Code amendments that ensure workers’ Charter right to join a union but is concerned that the two-step certification process remains in place, albeit with a shorter time frame.

BC’s Labour Code will preserve a secret-ballot vote for employees who want to join a union, but with a reduced delay of five days from the current ten. “A second vote in any form is a delay tactic that favours those with power in workplaces without a union, and that’s the employer,” says Cronk.

A second vote should not be necessary when more than 55 percent of employees in a workplace sign cards saying they want to form a union. “My signature is good enough to get a passport, a mortgage or to vote. My signature on a union card should be enough to indicate that I want to bargain collectively with my employer, without a delayed second ballot.”

“We welcome the new rules that limit employer interference during the five-day delay before the second certification vote. The labour movement will be closely monitoring the impact of these Labour Code changes at worksites across the province,” adds Cronk.

The BC Federation of Labour’s “Workers Deserve Better” campaign emphasizes workers’ stories that show how broken and unfair current labour laws are. The Minister for Labour Harry Bains and BC Green Party leader Andrew Weaver have received over 4,000 emails asking for fairer labour laws. Weaver has indicated that he does not support changing the existing two-step certification process.

The BC Labour Code regulates when and how employees can join unions and the rights and obligations of unions and unionized employers.

The BC Federation of Labour represents over 500,000 members from affiliated unions across the province, working in every sector of the economy.