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Releases

National Day of Mourning: We must recommit ourselves to safe, healthy, violence-free, workplaces

Vancouver – The following is a statement from Irene Lanzinger, president of the BC Federation of Labour, marking the National Day of Mourning:

“Every year we mark April 28 - the National Day of Mourning - to draw attention to the significant number of people who have died, been seriously injured or made ill because of their work. We do this to demand action from government and to insist on increased vigilance from employers so that every worker comes home healthy and safe after a shift.

In 2017, 198 BC workers were killed on the job or died from occupational diseases. That’s 198 too many – especially when we know every workplace death, injury or illness is preventable.

We must do better. We must ensure workers’ full, active participation in all aspects of health and safety in the workplace. We must hold employers to account when there is negligence, hold government and the regulator to account when there are weak laws and weak enforcement, and demand full compensation for workers and their families facing life-altering circumstances.

This year we are also turning our attention to workplace violence – because for too many workers violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and intimate partner violence, is a common

occurrence on the job. We all have a responsibility to challenge workplace violence and harassment when we see it – the labour movement, employers, the regulator and the government. Turning away perpetuates the problem, and works to silence the damage it has on people's lives.

On this National Day of Mourning, we remember all those who have lost their lives, been injured or become ill because of their work. And we honour the families, friends and co-workers who are left behind, or who must care for their family members who have been seriously injured or sick. And we recommit to doing everything we can to make BC workplaces healthier and safer. Today we will mourn for the dead, and fight for the living."

The National Day of Mourning is recognized in over 100 countries. It began with a resolution passed in 1984 by the Canadian Labour Congress, and was officially adopted by the federal government in 1991.

The BC Federation of Labour encourages everyone to attend a Day of Mourning ceremony in your community, fly your flags at half-mast, and observe a minute of silence at 11:00 am on April 28, 2018.