September 8, 2017 |

Releases

Throne Speech highlights new approach that puts people first

Vancouver – Today's Speech from the Throne highlights a new commitment to put people at the centre of government priorities, say BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger.

"For 16 years under the BC Liberals people have been left behind by a government who put their wealthy donors ahead of the everyday needs of working people and families," said Lanzinger. "Finally, today we see a government putting people first. We are encouraged by these first steps to address some critical challenges facing British Columbians."

"Lifting welfare rates, eliminating fees for ABE and ESL, free tuition for kids in care attending a post-secondary institution, and creating a poverty reduction strategy – these are actions that are long overdue."

The Throne Speech also referenced the establishment of a Fair Wages Commission.

The BC NDP had campaigned on a 2021 deadline to reach a $15/hour minimum wage, but recently announced that the deadline has been removed and the Fair Wages Commission will determine the implementation timeline.

"We have long advocated for a $15/hour minimum wage in BC. Our lowest-paid workers are living below the poverty line, and it is our position that we need to reach $15/hour as quickly as possible,"

said Lanzinger. “We will take the opportunity to aggressively push for a faster implementation.”

“Seattle has already implemented a $15/hour minimum wage. Alberta will get there by 2018 and Ontario shortly after in 2019. British Columbians should not have to wait, especially when we have the highest cost of living in the country.”

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