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Releases

No Joke! BC now has the lowest minimum wage in the country.

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Public opinion supports a move to $15/hour

Vancouver – Today might be April Fools' Day, but it's no joke that BC has the lowest minimum wage in the country, says the BC Federation of Labour.

"Today is the day that British Columbia officially moves into last place with lowest minimum wage in Canada," said Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour. "Despite having the highest cost of living, Premier Clark and the BC Liberals have chosen to leave hundreds of thousands of low-wage workers in poverty."

The BC Federation of Labour continues to call the on BC Liberal government to increase the minimum wage to $15/hour to ensure that a person working full-time and earning the minimum wage can live above the poverty line.

"There are more than half a million workers earning less than $15/hour in this province. That's 27% of our entire workforce earning a wage that is at or below the poverty line," said Lanzinger.

There is a growing list of jurisdictions in North America moving to a $15/hour minimum wage, the most recent being the State of California. The Premier might be happy to turn her back on the

growing ranks of low-wage earners in this province, but British Columbians disagree with her on this issue.

A poll conducted by Insights West reveals that 83% of British Columbians think it is necessary to ensure a person earning the minimum wage lives above the poverty line.

Further, 76% support raising the minimum wage to $15/hour.

“Growing poverty and income inequality in BC is something the public cares about. It impacts families, communities and our economy,” said Lanzinger. “It is time for the Premier and her government to take this issue seriously. No more tinkering around the edges – British Columbians want real action.”

“We need a government that works for the people, not against them,” said Lanzinger. “This is their chance to do the right thing and put a plan in place that lifts the minimum wage to $15/hour.”

Minimum wage poll highlights (**full poll attached**):

• Four-in-five (83%) think it is necessary for a person making minimum wage to live above the poverty line
• Three-in-four (76%) support raising the minimum wage to $15/hour
• 72% agree that a $15/hour minimum wage is an important part of a poverty reduction plan
• 71% agree that an increase to the minimum wage would help boost the local economy
• 74% agree that a $15/hour minimum wage is fair considering the cost of living
• Three-in-five (62%) will look for political parties to commit to raising the minimum wage in the next election

Minimum wage rates across Canada:

The current minimum wage in British Columbia is $10.45/hour. Liquor servers receive $9.20/hour.

Nunavut $13.00

Northwest Territories $12.50

Ontario $11.25; $11.40 as of October, 2016

Alberta $11.20

Manitoba $11.00

Yukon $10.86

New Brunswick $10.65 as of April 1, 2016; will move to $11 TBD 2017

Nova Scotia $10.60

Quebec $10.55; $10.75 as of May 1, 2016

Prince Edward Island $10.50; $11.00 as of October 1, 2016

Newfoundland $10.50

Saskatchewan $10.50

BC $10.45

Who earns less than $15/hour in BC? (2014 Labour Force Survey, Stats Can)

There are 509,400 working people in BC earning less than $15 per hour. That is 27% of all workers.

- 60% are women
- 82% are 20 or older
- 13.5% or 68,800 are 55+ (seniors)
- 69% work for employers with more than 20 employees
- 51% work for employers with more than 100 employees
- 68% do not live at home with their parents
- 53% have some post-secondary education
- 59% have been in their job for more than 12 months

More information on the Fight for $15 campaign can be found at www.fightfor15bc.ca