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Releases

Two-thirds of British Columbians support a $15 an hour minimum wage

VANCOUVER - A recent poll shows the public is unsatisfied with the BC Liberal government's meager lift to the minimum wage, and continue to support the call for $15 an hour.

"This poll is evidence that Premier Clark and Minister Bond got it wrong when they increased the minimum wage a pathetic 20 cents," said Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour.

A poll conducted by Insights West shows that two-thirds (68%) of British Columbians continue to support increasing the minimum wage to $15 an hour.

"Despite the BC Liberals best efforts to convince the public otherwise, British Columbians do not think it's acceptable for a minimum wage worker to live in poverty," said Lanzinger. "78% of people agree it is necessary to ensure the minimum wage puts a worker above the poverty line."

Highlights of the poll include:

• Three-in-four (76%) think the increase is "inadequate" knowing that it puts BC's minimum wage 10th out of 13 provinces and territories in Canada;
• Almost four-in-five (78%) think it is necessary to ensure that a person who makes minimum wage in British Columbia lives above the poverty line; and
• Two thirds (68%) support the $15 an hour plan.

People were asked a series of questions related to the campaign to increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour, to which a majority of British Columbians continue to support:

• 62% agree that a $15 an hour minimum wage is acceptable given the current economic conditions in British Columbia;
• 69% agree that a $15 an hour minimum wage is an important part of a comprehensive poverty reduction plan;
• 67% agree a $15 an hour minimum wage would help to combat income inequality in BC;
• 68% agree an increase to the minimum wage would boost the economy because workers spend in their local communities; and
• 70% agree that considering the cost of living, $15 an hour is a fair wage.

“Without any consultation, the government’s actions have guaranteed a minimum wage earner to a life of poverty,” said Lanzinger. “In a province as wealthy and prosperous as BC, this is simply unacceptable.”

“More than 100,000 people in BC earn the minimum wage. They are mothers, fathers, seniors and students. They are real people working full-time, trying to make ends meet,” said Lanzinger. “When the government can give a huge tax break to the top 2% of earners in BC, they can afford to ensure the bottom 6% are not living in poverty.”

The poll was conducted by Insights West from March 24 to March 27, 2015, with a survey sample of 813 British Columbians aged 18 and over. Results have a margin of error of ±3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The BC Federation of Labour is continuing the Fight for $15 Campaign to increase the minimum wage to $15 an hour.

For more information on the campaign visit www.fightfor15bc.ca.

Insights West poll results attached.