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Releases

BC Federation of Labour brings good jobs message to Victoria

VICTORIA – Representatives with the BC Federation of Labour are in Victoria today making the case that good jobs are the backbone of a strong economy.

Increasing BC's minimum wage, improving access to apprenticeships, and addressing weak successorship laws and contract flipping are the issues being brought before Ministers and MLAs today during a series of meetings.

"Ensuring that working people are paid decent wages, provided opportunities and have job security is vital to growing an economy that works for everyone," said Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour.

"The government plays an important role in these areas and the choices our legislators make impact the lives of workers right across this province."

Increase the minimum wage:
At the current minimum wage in BC of $10.25/hour, a full-time worker is falling thousands of dollars below the poverty line.

"We are talking about mothers and fathers, seniors, and students – real people trying to make ends meet and support their families," said Lanzinger.

“In the last budget, the government saw fit to give a tax break to the top 2% of earners in the province but ignored the rest of us. The hundreds of thousands of low-paid workers working full-time and living below the poverty line deserve a raise, and that means increasing the minimum wage to $15/hour.”

Public role in apprenticeship:
Lanzinger said that the government must take steps to ensure public infrastructure projects are leveraged to provide much-needed apprenticeship opportunities.

“BC is simply not producing enough journeypersons to meet the needs of our growing economy. Skilled good-paying jobs require intensive on-the-job training, and by mandating apprenticeship ratios on government capital projects we can train British Columbians for the jobs of tomorrow.”

Strengthening successorship laws:
Lanzinger pointed to constant disruption in the long-term care sector as evidence that weak successorship laws have an impact on workers, patients, and communities.

“There are many care facilities in BC that exploit weaknesses in the Labour Code, and engage in continual contract flipping as a way to drive down wages and undermine union activity,” said Lanzinger.

For example, at Inglewood Care Facility in West Vancouver, 230 workers have been given pink slips. This will be the sixth change in subcontractors since 2003.

“These short-sighted actions hurt workers and the seniors they care for. The government must take steps to strengthen successorship laws and put a stop to contract flipping.”

“These are not complicated or costly ideas,” said Lanzinger. “They are clear steps towards the long-term health and sustainability of our economy and our communities.”

The BC Federation of Labour organizes an annual lobby day to highlight issues affecting working people. This year, 35 representatives from affiliated unions are participating in meetings with MLAs from both government and opposition. Participants are also meeting with the Minister of Jobs,

Tourism and Skills Training, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Advanced Education, and the Leader of the Opposition.

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Attached:

Backgrounder: Time to raise the minimum wage

Backgrounder: Public role in apprenticeships

Backgrounder: Protecting successorship

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