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Releases

BCFED launches Fight For $15 campaign to increase the minimum wage

VANCOUVER – The BC Federation of Labour has launched the Fight For $15 campaign, calling on the provincial government to increase the minimum wage to $15/hour.

“At the current minimum wage, working full-time is not enough to lift a worker out of poverty,” said Jim Sinclair, President of the BC Federation of Labour. “It has been almost three years since the last increase to the minimum wage. Workers fall behind when their wage is stagnant, yet the cost of living goes up each year.”

There are more than 120,000 British Columbians earning the minimum wage. Minimum wage workers include mothers, fathers, students and seniors. 47 percent are older than 25, 63 per cent are women, and 8 per cent are 55 or older.

BC’s minimum wage is one of the lowest in the country. Yet our province is the most expensive and unequal according to Statistics Canada data. BC is also the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction plan.

Increasing the minimum wage to $15/hour would put a full-time worker 10 per cent above Statistics Canada’s low-income-cut-off.

Other cities, including Seattle and San Francisco are already moving to a $15/hour minimum wage.

“Seattle and San Francisco know that increasing the minimum wage gives a boost to local economies,” said Irene Lanzinger, Secretary Treasurer of the BC Federation of Labour. “ Low wage earners are more likely to spend their money at businesses in their neighbourhood. Businesses may also experience improved employee retention and productivity when employees feel valued and respected.”

A recent public opinion poll, conducted by Insights West, suggests that British Columbians agree it is time to increase the minimum wage.

· 72% support an increase to $15/hr
· 75% support making a significant and immediate increase to the minimum wage
· 93% support reviewing and adjusting the minimum wage on a regular basis

“A lift for our lowest paid workers is long overdue,” said Sinclair. “$15/hour is a fair wage. We need to build an economy that works for everyone.”

More information on the campaign can be found at Fightfor15bc.ca