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Releases

Organized labour takes good jobs agenda to Victoria

Victoria, BC – Representatives of British Columbia's largest unions are in Victoria this week, making the case for good jobs.

The labour representatives focused on three aspects of good jobs: fixing the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, improving apprenticeships, and increasing the minimum wage.

"Our focus today is creating real opportunities for young people to find a solid footing in the workforce, and on lifting the lowest paid workers in our province out of poverty," said Sinclair. "It's not complicated, but it will take a commitment on the part of MLAs on all sides to make good jobs a focus."

On the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, Sinclair said that the Program is preventing young British Columbians from finding entry level positions. He called for changes to ensure British Columbians have the first shot at all BC jobs.

"Since the recession, nearly one-third of jobs created in BC have been filled by temporary foreign workers, while 170,000 British Columbians looking for work can't find it," said Sinclair. "Local hiring creates opportunities and builds communities. That's what good jobs are all about, and we are standing up for local jobs."

On apprenticeships, Sinclair said it’s time for government and its agencies to step up to the plate by providing apprenticeship opportunities on government funded projects and in government facilities.

“Many private sector companies do an excellent job training British Columbians through apprenticeships, but government is a notorious poacher of skilled trades people,” said Sinclair. “By mandating apprenticeship ratios on government capital projects, we can train young and out-of-work British Columbians for the jobs of tomorrow.”

And on minimum wage, the labour leaders made the case that a full week’s work should at least pay the bills at the end of the month. They argued for an increase to the minimum wage to $13 per hour, and for the wage to be adjusted annually to keep up with the real cost of living.

“In BC, $10.25 per hour doesn’t come close to paying the bills,” said Sinclair. “I think we can all agree that good jobs mean someone who works a full-time work week should be able to afford to raise a family.”

Sinclair noted that the B.C. Federation of Labour had first called for the wage to be increased to a minimum of $10 an hour in 2004. Ten years later, $10.25 leaves a full-time worker four hundred dollars short every month.