December 3, 2018 |

Statements

December 3: Celebrating International Persons with Disabilities Day

The BC Federation of Labour is joining with members with disabilities in celebrating the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities Day, and this year's theme of empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.

To honour and celebrate members with disabilities, the BCFED is asking affiliates to recognize the unique needs and challenges of members with disabilities by encouraging them to form workers with disabilities working groups or committees. Workers with disabilities need a platform from which to educate and lobby on behalf of their constituents.

The Federation is also encouraging affiliates to address the accessibility needs of members with disabilities at conventions, conferences and educational opportunities. Unless accessibility needs are addressed, members with disabilities will continue to experience exclusion and disempowerment in the labour movement.

The BCFED also applauds Premier John Horgan and the BC NDP government for taking action to institute a number of changes that benefit citizens with disabilities. The new Community Benefits Agreement (CBAs) will not only ensure public infrastructure jobs help British Columbians from equity-seeking groups—including persons with disabilities—achieve improved access to meaningful employment, CBAs will also help persons with disabilities realize access to decent pay.

As part of its early learning and childcare agreement with Ottawa, our NDP government has also committed to an ambitious plan to improve access to inclusive childcare for children with disabilities, thanks to a three-year, $30 million investment. This will help children with disabilities become future leaders and activists in the labour movement.

And just recently, our government introduced legislation that will restore a human rights commission in British Columbia. Nearly half of all human rights complaints are launched by people with disabilities each year. A new human rights commission will provide improved access to legislative rights under the BC Human Rights Code for persons with disabilities.

These real and immediate changes on behalf of the province’s citizens with disabilities bring us one step closer to the dream of inclusiveness and equality, both of which will help empower our members with disabilities to fully participate in our society and in our labour movement.