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Statements

BC Federation of Labour Statement on Pride

The following is a statement from BCFED president Irene Lanzinger:

Vancouver - The BC Federation of Labour would like to wish working people in British Columbia a happy Pride season.

Already tens of thousands have celebrated pride in communities across the province including Prince George, Victoria, Surrey, New Westminster, and the Okanagan. Soon the biggest pride event will unfold in Vancouver August 6. In all these communities, the labour movement has been there reflecting the LGBT face of our membership to both celebrate and advocate for change.

Over the course of the last year there have been a number of successes strengthening the rights of the LGBT community. For example, the Federal Government passed legislation in June adding gender expression and gender identity under prohibited grounds for discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

This follows on provincial legislation first raised by NDP MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert in 2011. Spencer and the BC NDP fought tenaciously for five years to win greater protections, finally doing so last year. It set in law gender identity and gender discrimination as prohibited grounds for discrimination in the provincial rights code.

And after an election in which a record number of openly LGBT candidates ran, our new NDP government has pledged to create a Human Rights Commission. With hate speech and hateful incidents on the rise, a new commission will have more teeth to protect rights –and to set and enforce consequences when they are violated.

It is important to recognize and celebrate legislative progress, but is equally important to continue to be vigilant on the issue of rights of the LGBTQ community, and to stand up for LGBTQ rights in the workplace.

At work, unions are the best advocates against discrimination on the job here in BC. The BCFED encourages its affiliate unions to negotiate collective agreement provisions that protect workers from discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression and ensure employers are complying with the newly amended Human Rights Code in BC.

We look forward to connecting with community members this season at events across BC.

Irene Lanzinger will be attending the Vancouver Pride Parade on August 6th.