

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM31.45	ACTION			Ward:All
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Support in Principle for Bill 148, The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 - by Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor John Filion

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Joe Mihevc, seconded by Councillor John Filion, recommends that:

1. City Council express its appreciation for the provincial government's leadership in seeking passage of Bill 148 improving worker rights.
2. City Council express its specific support for the proposed increases to the minimum wage and the phasing-in period.
3. City Council express its support in principle for the changes in Bill 148 to the Employment Standards Act raising and extending minimum employment standards for workers.
4. City Council express its support in principle for the changes in Bill 148 to the Labour Relations Act that aim to remove barriers for workers seeking to unionize and to improve their capacity to secure collective agreements.
5. City Council direct that a copy of its decision be forwarded to the leaders of each of the provincial political parties for their information and to urge their support in the Legislature.
6. City Council direct that a copy of its decision be forwarded to the Ontario Association of Municipalities.

Summary

More than half of all jobs in Toronto (52 percent) are now considered precarious - part-time, casual, temporary or via temporary agencies. Women, people of colour, and other equity-seeking groups are over-represented among those in low-wage, precarious employment and among those without union protection.

Provincially, 30 percent of workers earn less than \$15 an hour. The current minimum wage leaves a full-time worker with earnings that fall 17 percent below the poverty line.

Poverty-level wages means workers are less healthy and contribute fewer tax resources. All too often, misclassification as independent contractors - instead of employees - means workers lose their statutory entitlements to Employment Insurance, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board benefits and Canada Pension Plan and increased reliance on social assistance in times of need. Misclassification also results in the forfeiture of both employer and employee contributions to these critical programs.

Lower pay for part-time, temporary and casual workers disproportionately impacts women and workers of colour and contributes to the gender wage gap and inequality, and makes it harder for them to access Employment Insurance and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board benefits.

1.7 million workers have no job protection in the event of a personal emergency such as a child's hospitalization, and current laws provide no paid medical leave whatsoever.

Both of these factors affect women disproportionately, as they still shoulder a greater share of family caregiving responsibilities.

The Ontario government has tabled legislation - Bill 148: The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 - as an effort to partially fulfill its mandate of improving labour and employment laws to properly protect workers, curb the structural sources of precarious employment, and extend access to union protection.

Medical evidence shows that improving income is a key social determinant of health. The evidence shows that a \$15 minimum wage, fairer scheduling, paid sick days, equal pay between part-time, full-time, temporary, and casual workers, and other such legislative initiatives will not only improve workers' lives, but also strengthen the local economy, promote better health outcomes, and increase tax revenue for public services.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM31.45