

## Supporting Ontario's Vulnerable Workers

*Province Strengthening Worker Protections, Making Minimum Wage More Predictable*

NEWS

July 16, 2014

Following Ontario's June 1, 2014 minimum wage increase to \$11, the province is introducing legislation today to provide more fairness for both employees and businesses, and ensure its minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living.

The Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014, supports Ontario's Poverty Strategy, and is designed to further increase protections for vulnerable workers. The act would, if passed, help workers and companies by:

- Tying future minimum wage increases to the Consumer Price Index;
- Eliminating the \$10,000 cap on the recovery of unpaid wages and increasing the period of recovery from six and 12 months to two years for employees;
- Prohibiting employers from charging fees and seizing personal documents like passports from temporary foreign workers; and
- Making temporary help agencies and their clients liable for certain employment standards violations, helping to decrease the number of companies that hire individuals solely to work in unsafe conditions.

The government will also boost the number of enforcement officers in the province to ensure more workplaces are inspected and employees are protected.

Protecting vulnerable workers and making the minimum wage fair is part of the government's plan to invest in people, build modern infrastructure and support a dynamic and innovative business climate.

### QUOTES

"Taking the politics out of setting the minimum wage provides fairness for workers and predictability for businesses. This legislation, if passed, would also protect the most vulnerable workers and level the playing field for employers who play by the rules. These are the right steps to take; they will make Ontario a better place to work and run a business."

— Kevin Flynn, Minister of Labour

"These are important changes for Ontario workers and businesses that will help protect those in minimum wage, temporary, and precarious work while setting clear standards for employers. This legislation, if passed, would contribute to creating a stronger system for all involved and a fairer province that supports those who need it."

— Ann Hoggarth, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour

## QUICK FACTS

- The proposed legislation acts on the [recommendations](#) of Ontario's Minimum Wage Advisory Panel, which included business, labour, youth and anti-poverty representatives.
- If passed, increases to the minimum wage would be announced by April 1 of each year, and come into effect on Oct. 1.
- The number of temporary foreign workers in Ontario has risen from 91,000 in 2008 to 120,000 in 2012.
- If passed, Ontario will join other provinces and territories that have set longer time limits for the recovery of wages, allowing workers more time to get the wages they are rightfully owed.
- The act, to be introduced later today, is a combination of the Fair Minimum Wage Act, originally introduced on Feb. 25, 2014, and the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, originally introduced on Dec. 4, 2013.
- The act builds on work reflected in recent reports such as the United Way/McMaster University "It's More Than Poverty" report prepared by the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario research group and the "Vulnerable Workers and Precarious Work" report by the Law Commission of Ontario.

## LEARN MORE

Know your rights under [Ontario's Employment Standards Act, 2000](#).

Review the [Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act](#).

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