

Manitoba Federation of Labour calls Paid Sick Leave for all

On March 13, the largest labour body in Manitoba, the Manitoba Federation of Labour, is calling on the provincial government to step up and protect Manitoba workers during this unprecedented health and economic crisis. The MFL, which represents over 100,000 workers in the province, says the provincial needs to follow the lead of the federal government and act quickly to support Canada's workforce. The federal government announced measures to allow quarantined to seek Employment Insurance. MFL president Kevin Rebeck.

"The Government of Manitoba can play its part in addressing this situation by changing the rules to allow all working Manitobans to take 14 paid job-protected days per year. This protection needs to be available to all workers – not only those who have been with their employers for prolonged periods of time. It also needs to be made available to workers whose employers misclassify employees as "independent contractors" to avoid their obligations under Employment Standards rules."

As of March 27, the federal government has promised every Canadian who is losing income due to the pandemic will be eligible to apply for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, which offers \$2,000 per month for up to four months. The Manitoba Government has not announced any direct financial assistance for Manitoba workers.

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, representing approximately 100,000 workers in Saskatchewan, has called the recent COVID-19 response from the province full of "half measures" and "boutique benefits that apply for narrow groups of people."

On March 20, the Government of Saskatchewan announced that residents who have been ordered to self-isolate and are not eligible for the federal supports can apply for the province's self-isolation support program. The program provides recipients with \$900 over two weeks. The province has said this will mainly benefit self-employed workers. The federal government has allowed for workers specifically quarantined.

SFL president, Lori Johb said "these are unprecedented times, and an opportunity for the provincial government to show respect for working people who are most impacted by COVID-19." The SFL is calling for a comprehensive approach that includes:

- Non-repayable grants of \$1,000 per month to every Saskatchewan resident;
- Paid leave (wage-replacement) for workers who must self-isolate, with no maximum;
- At least 14 days of paid sick days for all workers;
- Compensation of lost wages if a worker's workplace has closed due to COVID-19;
- An injection of more funding into all public services and facilities to ensure workers are well-equipped to tackle increased demands from COVID-19;
- An indefinite stoppage of late payment and interest charges for utilities and all provincially-regulated transactions, and a ban on any service cut-offs and evictions;
- Wage replacement for workers who must stay home to provide care due to school and any childcare closures;
- Guaranteed recall for all workers laid-off due to COVID-19.