

Stop the \$6 million cut to employment standards enforcement

STOP WAGE THEFT!

Workers deserve a fair day's pay for a fair day's work without the pressure of working excessive overtime or juggling two or three jobs. Unpaid wages throw workers into financial hardship and stress.

One in three people in low waged work surveyed by WAC faced unpaid wages. People are working hard; without rights; without protection in our workplaces.¹

Now the government wants to cut \$6 million out of employment standards enforcement.

Wage theft is at a crisis.

Workers surveyed reported:

- 22% earn less than minimum wage
- 39% didn't get the overtime pay they were owed
- 33% were owed unpaid wages

Higher paid stable jobs are being replaced by lower wage unstable jobs in the service sector. That's where the majority of wage theft takes place. Now more than ever workers need protection from wage theft in our workplaces. Yet less than 1% of workplaces ever get inspected. There's no cost to employers who break the law.

Pulling resources out of employment standards enforcement will hurt workers, communities and our economy. It will force responsible employers to compete with bad bosses and drive down wages and working conditions. Unpaid wages mean workers can't purchase essentials in local economies which is critical for economic recovery.

We urgently need the government to keep the \$6 million in employment standards enforcement.

The McGuinty government promise:

The McGuinty government said in its poverty reduction strategy that:

"employment standards in Ontario are not always followed as closely as they should be. This can result in workers losing money owed to them, such as overtime, vacation pay and termination pay. The result can mean hardship for workers and their families, with particularly serious consequences for those Ontarians already facing challenges."

That's why the McGuinty government promised to put more protections for workers against wage theft. In 2008, McGuinty said:

*"As part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, we will invest an additional \$10 million annually to hire new employment standards officers, improve employment standards Act compliance and reduce the backlog of claims."*²

WORKERS' ACTION CENTRE

STOP THE CUTS! STOP WAGE THEFT!

Take Action

- ▶ Call your MPP and ask them to make sure the government does not cut \$6 million from employment standards Enforcement. A sample phone script is on the back. Find out who your MPP is at www.elections.on.ca/en-ca
- ▶ Email Premier Dalton McGuinty at www.workersactioncentre.org
- ▶ Share this information with others in your community and urge them to take action.

PHONE SCRIPT – Stop the \$6 million cut to employment standards enforcement

Thanks for your help contacting your Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) to ask them to stop the \$6 million cut to employment standards enforcement. Feel free to share your own story of wage theft with your MPP.

You can find out who your MPP is and their contact information at www.elections.on.ca/en-ca

If you get a voice mail message, feel free to leave a message. If the MPP is not available, you could also give this message to the assistant who answers the phone.

Here are a few guidelines of what you could say when you talk to your MPP:

Hi could I speak with _____ [Name of MPP]

My name is _____ and I am a member of your riding.

I am very concerned about the issue of wage theft.

Here is what happened to me: [explain what happened and how it affected you and your family in a few short sentences]

Despite the fact that workers rights violations are increasing, the Ontario government is cutting \$6 million from employment standards enforcement.

I am calling you to ask you to make sure that the government does not cut \$6 million from employment standards enforcement and that you take action to stop wage theft in your riding.

Will you call the Minister of Labour and the premier to ask that the \$6 million stay in the budget?

[Record their response] _____

If you are leaving a message:

Please call me back at _____ [your phone number] to let me know how you will be following up on this issue. Thank you.

WORKERS' ACTION CENTRE

- 1 Workers' Action Centre, Unpaid Wages, Unprotected Workers, May 2011
- 2 Government of Ontario, Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008.

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