



Sunday May 29, 2011

**Wage Theft Continues:
Two Live-in Caregivers owed over \$350,000 in unpaid wages
and wrongful dismissal**

[Toronto] Outdated Employment Standards and lack of enforcement are failing workers. Two Live-in Caregivers are forced to take court action against their former employers for over \$217,000 in unpaid wages and over \$137,000 for wrongful dismissal.

Date: Monday May 30, 2011 at 10 am

Location: Queen's Park Media Studio

What: press conference

Two caregivers have been forced to file suits against their former employers to recover their unpaid wages and entitlements.

Vivian worked 24 hours a day, 6 days a week caring for her elderly employer with medical problems and her two adult children with special needs. She worked 132 hours a week without any overtime pay. "I gave my life taking care of their family," said Vivian. "They kept adding to my job, more work, more hours, yet I was afraid of losing my job and I didn't know what the rules are. The government needs to pay attention to us and make employers follow the law." Vivian is owed over \$55,000 in unpaid wages, overtime and vacation pay. After working 10 years with her employer, Vivian is claiming over \$104,000 for wrongful dismissal.

For two long years, Lilliane cared for 2 small children, working from 8 am to 11:30 each night. "These children were like my family," says Lillian. "Working almost 110 hours a week, I was paid \$100 a month." The last 3 months she worked there, she received no pay at all. "My employer told me not to tell anyone about my salary. They told me I would never get a job caring for another family. I was scared about losing my job. I was scared because my boss kept saying she was going to call immigration and I thought I would be deported."

"The Ministry of Labour fails workers like Vivian and Lilliane who have no protection from working long hours with little pay," says Pura Velasco, Caregiver Action Centre. "Employers are confident they can get away with paying less than minimum wage or require long hours without overtime pay. In our experience, we find that the *Employment Standards Act* (ESA) is not enforced in Ontario workplaces, especially where workers are forced to live in the employer's home." Deena Ladd, Workers' Action Centre, says that "outdated time limits and limits on money recoverable under the ESA create barriers for workers to get their unpaid wages. This forces workers like Lilliane and Vivian to do the government's job of enforcement."

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Press Conference held by the Caregivers' Action Centre, Workers' Action Centre and Parkdale Community Legal Services