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Releases

BCFED calls for labour law reforms to remove barriers for workers to join unions

Vancouver - The BC Federation of Labour met today in Victoria with a special government panel to outline a dozen recommendations for much needed reforms of BC's labour laws to make it easier for workers to join unions.

"For 16 years, the BC Liberals tilted labour laws in favour of employers," says Federation President Irene Lanzinger. "It's time to restore fairness and balance to the laws and the Labour Relations Board."

The BCFED's submission calls for action to:

• remove barriers for workers to exercise their constitutional right to join a union, including a return to signed union card certifications—a process already in place in eight Canadian jurisdictions;
• prevent employers from interfering in union organizing drives;
• end rampant "contract flipping" that enables employers to keep wages low for tens of thousands of workers; and
• ensure that the LRB has the financial resources it needs to do its job and make timely decisions.

"These recommendations will go a long way to level the playing field for working people," Lanzinger says. "Increased unionization gives workers more power to bargain better wages and conditions. That's part of the solution to the rampant inequality problem we face here in BC."

Lanzinger says the Liberal legacy of unfair and unbalanced labour laws includes radical pro-employer changes to the labour code, and the infamous Bills 27, 28 and 29 which tore up signed contracts for 150,000 health care workers and teachers, provisions of which were declared illegal by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Other Liberal legislation cut pay for tens of thousands of workers, and enabled “contract flipping” to allow employers to evade collective bargaining relationships and maintain poverty level wages primarily in construction, food and building services, and health care.

Lanzinger, who met with the government’s special review panel earlier this morning, is available to speak with media through the day. The complete BCFED submission can be downloaded at www.bcfed.ca. The labour code review panel is holding hearings in 10 BC communities through mid-April.