



NORTH BAY & DISTRICT
LABOUR COUNCIL

Media Release

Contact: Henri Giroux
Phone: (705) 471-7746

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, April 27, 2017

Attention: Labour Council reacts to Liberal Budget

The Liberal Government introduced its budget today, although it includes some decent announcements to help families, the budget remains a missed opportunity to raise the floor for Ontario workers by introducing a higher minimum wage. A higher minimum wage is a fundamental issue of equity—it is women, racialized workers, immigrants and young people who are most likely to earn low wages and be stuck in precarious work.

"The Changing Workplaces Review got some mention," says Giroux, "but this budget doesn't address that fact that workers doing the same work are getting paid less through temp agencies, that workers need paid emergency leave, like victims of domestic violence, and that scab labour prolongs bargaining like what happened with the CAS lockout—the Liberals haven't addressed these critical issues."

"If we keep allowing places like temp agencies to skim off the backs of workers, employers will keep choosing to use them," says Giroux. "The Liberals have all the tools to fix this problem but for some reason they just don't get it."

"There's no headhunting going on for minimum wage jobs, so why do we allow temp agencies to exploit precarious workers," asks Giroux. "What community lets businesses take advantage of weak employment standards in Ontario—as leaders we're supposed to protect and assist vulnerable people, not monetize a scheme that siphons the financial future straight out of our economy."

"Seeing investment into childcare is reassuring, but if the Liberals decide to use of very costly P3-style financing to build 24,000 new daycare spaces then we're in for a real surprise," states Giroux.

"To truly invest in childcare the Liberals will need to require existing and new centres to hire permanent, fulltime, and highly trained workers. The Liberals have an opportunity to drive the economy with this, but it must include decent jobs."

The bottom line, the budget appears to be designed to help families, but whether it can grow the economy through investment in front-workers remains to be seen.