

ISARC welcomes proposed changes to minimum wage, employment standards

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The changes proposed by the Premier to the Cabinet addressing employment standards, raising the minimum wage to \$15, removing barriers to collective bargaining and setting new standards such as paid sick leave are welcome moves, says ISARC, the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition.

“Each of these actions should improve productivity and ultimately lower business costs and provincial health and social assistance costs,” said Susan Eagle, chair of ISARC. “We urge the government to act quickly to debate and pass these improvements in the legislature and fully implement them in this calendar year. These changes should especially benefit low-paid, low-skilled workers. We encourage the Cabinet to adopt these changes.”

ISARC, The Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, is a provincial network of faith groups working together to contribute to new public policies based upon greater justice and dignity for Ontarians marginalized by poverty.

ISARC is responding to reports that the Liberal government of Premier Kathleen Wynne will review the feasibility of implementing significant reforms to Ontario's employment laws. Among those changes are increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, enhancing protections for workers in vulnerable low-paid jobs, giving all employees in Ontario a minimum number of paid sick days, and increasing annual paid vacation from the two-week minimum to three weeks.

ISARC believes that paying the same compensation to all workers doing identical work will provide a strong measure of economic and social justice. The removal of some barriers to collective bargaining is also welcomed for workers in precarious sectors of the economy, such as in the fast-food industry.

The adoption of a minimum standard of paid sick leave for all workers especially if it follows the formula of one hour for every 35 hours worked to a maximum of seven days per year will protect other workers and clients from being exposed to illnesses from workers who would otherwise feel obliged to come into work to safeguard their take-home pay.

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