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Ontario Workers Receive First Paycheques with New Minimum Wage

Higher Wages Will Help Increase Business Productivity, Decrease Employee Turnover
Many workers across the province have now seen Ontario's increased minimum wage reflected in their weekly pay. The general minimum wage rose from \$11.60 to \$14 on January 1, 2018, and will increase again to \$15 on January 1, 2019.

Minister of Labour Kevin Flynn visited HotBlack Coffee in Toronto today to meet with workers who received their first paycheques following the increase. They discussed the benefits a higher minimum wage brings for both workers and employers, including happier, more motivated employees and better workforce stability.

Other provisions that came into effect on January 1, 2018 include:

Expanding personal emergency leave to 10 days per calendar year for all employees, with at least two paid days per year for employees who have been employed for at least a week

Ensuring workers are entitled to at least three weeks' vacation after five years with the same employer

Providing workers with up to 17 weeks off without the fear of losing their job when a worker or their child has experienced or is threatened with domestic or sexual violence, including a paid leave for the first five days

Increasing family medical leave from 8 to 28 weeks per year

Changes to make it easier to form a union and reach a first collective agreement

To enforce these changes, the province is hiring up to 175 more employment standards officers. It is also launching a program to educate both employees and businesses about their rights and obligations under the Employment Standards Act.

Ontario's plan to create fairness and opportunity during this period of rapid economic change includes raising the minimum wage, free tuition for hundreds of thousands of students, easier access to affordable child care and free prescription drugs for everyone under 25 through the biggest expansion of medicare in a generation.

QUICK FACTS

The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 responds to the final report of the Changing Workplaces Review. It was the first-ever independent review of both the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and Labour Relations Act, 1995.

The report estimated that more than 30 per cent of Ontario workers were in precarious work in 2014. In 2016, the median hourly wage was \$13 for part-time workers and \$24.73 for full-time workers. Over the past 30 years, part-time work has grown to represent nearly 20 per cent of total employment.

Studies show that a higher minimum wage results in less employee turnover, which increases business productivity.

"Our new legislation addresses the needs of the modern workplace and provides a minimum wage that workers can actually live on. The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act will help ensure everyone who works hard has the chance to reach their full potential and share in Ontario's prosperity."

— Kevin Flynn, Minister of Labour

"As the Owner of HotBlack Coffee, I am very supportive of the provincial increase in the minimum wage as it gives us the opportunity to pay our entry level staff better. By raising the minimum wage across Ontario, our coffee shop, our colleagues and our competitors are able to afford to pay the entry level staff more and we can all stay competitive. We believe that this will contribute greatly to the reduction in inequality in our society, and any eventual increase in inflation will be more than offset by the pay increase for those that need it most."

— Jimson Bienenstock, Owner, HotBlack Coffee



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