

### “WE ARE THE PEOPLE” CHANT THOUSANDS WHILE RALLYING IN SUPPORT OF A \$15 MINIMUM WAGE

Just nine days after the Ontario election, thousands flooded the streets outside the Ministry of Labour and marched to Queen’s Park last week in support of the \$15 minimum wage and fairer labour laws. People came in from Niagara to Ottawa, Brampton to Oshawa, and joined the rally carrying signs that read “WE are the people” “Hands off our \$15 minimum wage,” “Hands off our paid sick days,” “Hands off equal pay for equal work.” Some of Ontario’s new labour laws are scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2019.

“The people of Ontario expect a \$15 minimum wage on

January 1, 2019 and you can see from the crowd that I am not alone,” said Yvette LeClair, a Toronto worker. “Like so many people I know, I’ve been juggling two and three jobs, with no benefits for too long. The \$14 minimum wage, the right to equal pay for equal work and the paid sick days that came into effect this year are making a big difference, but I – and millions like me – are anxiously waiting for the increase to \$15 and fairer scheduling rules.”

After years of organizing by grassroots organizers and the labour movement, workers in Ontario won important labour law reforms in 2018 with the

passage of Bill 148: Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act. The Fight for \$15 & Fairness Campaign and the Ontario Federation of Labour held the joint rally today to send a message to the incoming government that the majority of Ontarians want and support decent work

“During the election campaign, we heard on the doorsteps of working people that \$15 is critical,” said Pam Frache, the provincial coordinator for Fight for \$15 & Fairness. “So if Doug Ford is truly for the people as he claims, if he wants to stand up to the elites, he has to implement the changes our com-



munities fought so hard for. Don’t believe the Big Business lobby. A \$15 minimum wage will transfer over \$5 billion in corporate profit to workers’ pockets. That’s good for workers, for our communities and for Ontario’s economy because what small businesses need most are customers.”

Co-founder of Canada’s Leap Manifesto Naomi Klein echoed Frache’s statement. “Margaret Thatcher once said: ‘The lady is not for turning.’ What Doug Ford is seeing today is that in Toronto, the workers are not for turning. Movements are not going to give up on the gains they

have won without a fierce fight. If Ford tries to ram his austerity agenda through anyway, his base will see once and for all that he never was on their side.”

While running to be the leader of Progressive Conservative party, premier-designate Doug Ford had campaigned on cancelling the \$15 minimum wage and implementing a tax cut instead. But advocates and economists alike have said this will leave workers worse off.

“Ontario’s labour movement wants to be sure one thing is clear to everyone: a \$15 minimum wage is a better deal for workers than a tax cut,” said Ontario Federation of Labour President Chris Buckley. “Many minimum wage earners will not make enough money to qualify for Doug Ford’s \$800 tax cut. But a \$15 minimum wage will put almost \$2,000 more in workers’ pockets if they work full time. Our government should be lifting people out of poverty by raising the minimum wage, not

taking away the pay increase they need to feed their families.”

Leaders from the business community were also at the rally, endorsing a decent work agenda for Ontario. “I am here today to represent the more than 60% of smaller business owners who support a \$15 minimum wage. We know that most small businesses already pay more than minimum wage. In fact, it is the large, profitable corporations who rely most on minimum wage labour,” said Anita Agrawal, CEO, of Best Bargains Jewellery (a company listed among Canada’s top 100 women-owned businesses). “It is time to level the playing field for small business by insisting that all workers be paid at least \$15 an hour,” she said. “If Doug Ford is concerned about supporting smaller businesses, then he should do something about the massive commercial rent increases that are putting more and more of us out of business.”

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**STRONGER CANADA CHILD BENEFIT MEANS MORE MONEY FOR MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES**

Helping hard-working families provide the best start in life for their children is a top priority for the Government of Canada. That’s why two years ago, the government launched the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) to help families with the high cost of raising kids. The CCB – which is targeted to middle class families and those working hard to join it – is simpler, tax-free and more generous than previous child benefit programs.

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, announced that starting on July 20, 2018, the benefit will be raised to keep up with the cost of living. This change comes two years ahead of schedule, as was announced in the 2018 Federal Budget, and will give Canadian parents even more money each month to help them provide for their children.

Indexing the CCB sooner will ensure that it will continue to play a vital role in supporting Canadian families and reducing child poverty. This means that the CCB, for the 2018-19 benefit year, will now have a maximum annual benefit of \$6,496 per child under age 6 and \$5,481 per child age 6 through 17. As an example, for a single parent with \$35,000 of income with two children, the accelerated indexation of the CCB will contribute \$560 towards the costs of raising his or her children, for the 2019-20 benefit year. For this parent, this means up to \$12,992 in support every year.

Thanks to the CCB, 9 out of 10 Canadian families have more money. These families have received almost \$2,300 more on average per year than under the programs the CCB replaced. Since July 2016, the CCB has given over \$23 billion dollars each year to Canadian families to help pay for things like sports programs, music lessons and back-to-school clothes. And even more importantly, because of the CCB, more than half a million people—including 300,000 children—are being lifted out of poverty.

“The Canada Child Benefit has helped millions of middle-class Canadian families since its creation in 2016. Our Government is committed to ensuring that this tax-free benefit continues to help the middle class and those who are working hard to join it. The enhanced Canada Child Benefit will mean more money is on the way next month.”

– The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Member of Parliament for Québec Quick Facts

Every month, CCB payments support 3.3 million Canadians, helping lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty in Canada.

Over 860,000 families in Quebec received approximately \$5.4 billion from the CCB in the 2016-2017 benefit.

Across Canada, over \$23.3 billion in benefits were paid between July 2016 and June 2017.

The CCB, together with initiatives such as the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework with provinces and territories, and an Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework, is an integral part of a larger approach by the Government of Canada to support low and middle-income families and grow Canada’s economy.

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