



FORWARD TOGETHER

A Canadian Plan

Rebuilding our economy that is disaster proof and works to the benefit of all Canadians will mean addressing the failures and weaknesses revealed by the pandemic. We need a plan that's rooted in helping workers - on health care, on jobs and in how we care for each other. Forward Together addresses three critical priorities to help our country recover and keep us safe in the future.



Replace Lost Jobs with Better Ones

Canada's economic shutdown hit people hard - especially women, youth, people of colour and vulnerable workers in precarious forms of employment. We need the Canadian government to help kick-start local economies by investing in public infrastructure, public services, and a made-in-Canada procurement strategy.

Many people who lost their jobs lost their drug benefits. But they still need their meds. Let's make prescription drug coverage part of public health care.



There are shovel-ready projects waiting for the Liberals to say yes. It's time to get people back to work.



Strengthen Canadian Public Healthcare

Canada is the only country with a universal health care system that doesn't include prescription drug coverage. We also know 3.5 million Canadians can't afford the medication they need. It doesn't add up - and it's only going to get worse in the pandemic. Our best policies are ones where we stick together.

Disaster-Proof our Social Safety Net

Canada has weathered the pandemic better than most places because we all worked together. Support a plan that's rooted in our way of doing things like making sure Employment Insurance is there for everyone who needs it, investing in a plan for child care and keeping communities strong with better affordable housing.

Some people who pay money into EI aren't even eligible to claim it. And many precarious workers can't access it at all. That's why we needed CERB in the first place. Fix EI.



PRAIRIE VOICE

Alberta Edition

It is an understatement to say that these last nine months have been difficult. Numerous members have lost their jobs due to the pandemic shut down or had to adjust to working from home practically overnight, many working in less than ideal circumstances while managing childcare responsibilities. Other members have continued to go into work, often risking their health and the health of their family. To say the least, life has been challenging.

Unfortunately, like the rest of the country, the typical work of the union will not be getting back to normal any time soon. We have been trying to adjust as best we can, adhering to public health recommendations, while ensuring we put the health and safety of members and staff first.

It has not been easy. Core functions of the union have had to be done completely different. As anyone who partic-

ipated in the recent ratification votes knows, there have been a number of growing pains. I appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate this new normal.

To aid my work and that of PSAC, I am asking for your feedback. I have prepared a survey for you to fill out online. To do this, please scan the QR code at the bottom right hand corner. I would like to know how you want to get or stay connected with your union in lieu of face-to-face activities, what kind of online education opportunities you would find useful, or what kind of local initiatives PSAC committees could be supporting, among other things.

Life throughout this pandemic is uncharted territory. Please take the time to complete the survey so we can get a better sense of how to continue to serve you during this uncertain and difficult time.

Additionally, I wanted to acknowledge further challenges Alberta is going through because of some recent UCP government decisions. I am concerned about the impact Bills 1, 30, and 32 will have on your family and friends, and the province as a whole. Included in this leaflet is information regarding each piece of legislation as well their consequences on Albertans.

If what you read troubles you too, consider joining the Alberta Federation of Labour's Community Action Teams (CAT). Take action in your community with other concerned Albertans to show the UCP government that they are moving Alberta in the wrong direction.

In Solidarity,

Marianne Hladun
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SCAN THE QR CODE TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY.
PRAIRIES.PSAC.COM

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THE ISSUES



Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act

As the title suggests, the UCP government recently passed this piece of legislation because apparently workers had too much power in the workplace over their employers. I know it sounds ridiculous because it is ridiculous. The UCP has made several changes to the Labour Relations Code, which covers unionized workers as well as the Employment Standards Code, which covers every working person in Alberta. Overall, these changes make it easier for employers to pay workers less, give workers less rights in the workplace, and undermine the power of unionization.

There are so many changes made with Bill 32 that they all cannot be included here. However, below are the key takeaways.

Labour Relations Code

UNION FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Kenney's government wants union members to think their union has something to hide, so if you are a union member and you want to see the financial statements, simply reach out to your union. Unions don't make it habit of sharing copies of these documents far and wide to avoid them getting

into the hands of employers. Under Bill 32, unions would have to share copies of their financial records with the Labour Relations Board and each member. Employers getting access to union financial statements would undermine the bargaining process and potentially hurt unions' negotiating power. Good for employers, bad for workers' wages and benefits.

POLITICAL ACTION

OPT-IN: This is a blatant attempt to silence government critics and defund progressive campaigns. To do this, Bill 32 divides union budgets into two distinct categories: (A) "political activities and other causes" and (B) all other activities of the union including collective bargaining and grievance handling. Unions must determine the dollar amount or percentage of their budget spent on category A activities and then run votes to explicitly get members to opt-in their approval. It acts as right-to-work for political and educational activities of the union. It also completely ignores the fact that if members want to be a part of their union's decisions on political action, any member can do that by participating in local union meetings.

Could you imagine having this kind of government interference in business and corporate budgets? Yeah, we can't either.

Union members and leaders have better things to do than jump through Kenney's hoops designed to prevent progressive campaigns like Resist Kenney's Cuts.

WORKER INTIMIDATION:

In addition to the requirement that unions run votes to have members opt-in to political activities, unions then must share how each employee voted with their employer! So employers – who control working conditions, hiring and firing - are getting a record of how their employees vote regarding their unions' day-to-day activities. It is unimaginable that legislation like this would exist in a democratic country with constitutional guarantees related to freedom of association and expression.

CERTIFICATION TIMELINES:

Bill 32 removes mandatory statutory timelines to complete a certification or revocation application. A reasonable and established timeline is in the interest of all parties. Delaying the process only benefits bad employers who want to engage in unfair labour practises and intimidate workers from certifying a union. Another benefit to employers.

STRIKES AND PICKETING:

During a strike, picketers already have to refrain from "wrongful acts" but the changes made in Bill 32 will make delaying a per-

son crossing a picket line even for a minute a "wrongful act" and therefore illegal. The changes also prohibit a picket at a secondary location without permission from the Labour Relations Board. Withdrawing labour and involving the surrounding community through a picket is the last resort workers have in obtaining a fair contract. These changes, once again, tip the scales in favour of the employer.

Employment Standards Code

OVERTIME: Under Bill 32, employers can force "averaging agreements" onto workers, meaning hours can be averaged over the entire year so the employer can avoid paying the employee as much overtime as they actually worked or overtime all together. Before, 12 weeks was the maximum amount of time that hours could be averaged over and workers had a choice.

NOITCE OF SHIFT CHANGE:

Originally, workers had to be given a minimum of 24 hours notice for a shift change, allowing workers some time to be able to plan their lives. With Bill 32, employers can decide what a reasonable amount of time is for them – 12 hours, 1 hour, it's up to them. How is that fair or reasonable?

BREAKS: This bill reduces the

mandatory breaks employees are given to only 30 minutes (paid or unpaid) in a 10 hour shift. Previously, workers received a 30 minute break (paid or unpaid) in their first 5 hours of consecutive work, and another 30 minute break within their work period after that.

LAY OFF NOTICE: Under Bill 32, workers could come into work one day, receive a layoff notice and be gone, no 2 weeks notice required. The requirement of 2 weeks notice has been removed for employers.

GROUP TERMINATIONS:

Previously, the more employees getting laid off, the more notice the employer would have to give to the workers and government. The goal of this policy was to avoid flooding a community with unemployed people all with similar skillsets at the same time. Additionally, government was notified so skills and education training could be put in place to help get people back to work. Under Bill 32, group terminations all have the same timeline of 4 weeks notice – whether there are 50 or 2000 workers getting laid off at once.

YOUNG WORKERS: Expanding the types of jobs that 13-and-14-year old children can do without the employer first obtaining a permit is a notable element of Bill 32. This comes on top of Bill

2 and the new youth minimum wage which cuts the minimum wage for people under the age of 18 by \$2. What is next, paying seniors less because they are seniors? A lower wage for young people existed in the past but it was phased out in the 1990's because of employer abuse. Lower wages based on age does nothing for Alberta except help employers pay workers less.

EXEMPTIONS FROM THE

CODE: Bill 32 enables employers to apply for exceptions to the Employment Standards Code, either individually or as an industry, meaning employers would no longer have to adhere to these minimum labour standards. A version of this was previously allowed however the exemption would need clear justification and have a time limit. Now, employers do not need any justification for the exemption and no longer have an expiry date. Therefore, entire industries could be exempt from minimum standards for an indefinite amount of time. How does that do anything to help workers?

Every change made with Bill 32 reduces employees' workplace rights while helping employers treat workers as disposable. Employees are more than just workers, they are human beings and members of our community. Alberta needs labour legislation that treats workers as such.

BUT WAIT THERE IS MORE. GO TO PRAIRIES.PSAC.COM