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Media Advisory

**MONDAY MAY 31ST – OVERNIGHT VIGIL AT 3 P.M.
TUESDAY JUNE 1ST – INJURED WORKERS’ DAY RALLY AT 11 A.M.**

June 1st Rally - The Elephant in Queen’s Park

This is the 27th anniversary of Injured Workers' Day which highlights the principle that injury should not mean poverty and celebrates working together as a community. Injured workers will speak out about the “elephant in Queens’ Park” with skits, musicians, poets, puppets and props that will ensure this is a lively and colourful event.

Last year a survey of injured workers revealed nearly 4 times the rate of poverty in Ontario. Living on social assistance with depression, strained family relationships and loss of quality of life are common for injured workers and their families. But injured workers’ requests for improvements were rebuffed by new concerns alleging poverty of the WSIB. Cuts to pain killing medication, a review of the WSIB vocational rehabilitation program, statements by the new WSIB President and Deputy Minister of Labour all express sympathy for reducing compensation for the injured. Where does that come from?

“We’ve seen this movie before” said ONIWG President Peter Page. “First they invent a financial crisis, then they announce cuts to injured workers, and later they reduce the employers’ rates because the system is cheaper.” Injured workers see cuts to workers’ compensation coming and all roads lead to the report of the Provincial Auditor General. ONIWG disputes the claim that injured workers are an increasing financial burden on the Board. The Auditor General declined to participate in a public forum to discuss the report. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts invited the WSIB and Ministry of Labour but refused a request by the Ontario Network of Injured Workers’ Groups to appear before the Committee to present the concerns of injured workers. No one is talking about it but it appears to injured workers that the Auditor General’s Report is in charge of Queen’s Park.

Minister of Labour Peter Fonseca, WSIB Chair Steve Mahoney and Ontario Federation of Labour President Sid Ryan have agreed to speak, along with unions and injured worker groups.

May 31st - Overnight Vigil by Injured Workers - A group of injured workers will begin an overnight vigil at Queen’s Park outside the main doors of the Legislature until the rally begins. They will be there to remind MPPs that many injured workers cannot sleep because they have pain and poverty to worry about and reform of the workers’ compensation system is very important to people who are suffering.

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For more information call:

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and see www.injuredworkersonline.org