



Wayne Gates

MPP, NIAGARA FALLS

Hon. Laurie Scott, Minister of Labour
Ontario Ministry of Labour
400 University Avenue,
14th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1T7

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RE: WSIB

Minister Scott,

I am writing today to follow-up on a section of the government's economic statement regarding a Workplace Safety and Insurance Board review. Specifically, the update says "The government is launching a review of the workers compensation system to ensure it remains sustainable in the future. The review will assess whether risks are being appropriately considered while providing rate predictability for employers. It will also consider, as part of the review of Provincial agencies, whether the WSIB is operating efficiently and effectively, and whether the governance framework can fulfill its mandate."

As you know, workers' compensation was set up in 1915 to replace the courts and provide speedy and humane justice for people injured or made sick by their jobs. However, today in Ontario injured workers continue to fight for the right to live with dignity after they have been injured on the job. Statistics from the WSIB indicate that 39% of people who successfully completed a WSIB training program remained unemployed but their benefits are cut the same as if they were working. Recent research coming out of Trent University found that 46% of injured workers with permanent disabilities were living below or near the poverty line.

No worker should ever have to go to work and not know if they are going to come back home. If the unthinkable happens, and a worker is injured and cannot return to work it should not be a sentence to live in poverty. The official statement only mentions employers and not injured workers. This review must be independent, transparent and accessible to the people the WSIB is meant to serve – the injured workers.

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When the Ministry does its review to see if the WSIB is efficient and effective, will you make sure the WSIB is more efficient at actually helping injured workers to get real jobs – not phantom jobs - and more effective at compensating them for their lost wages? What changes do you plan to bring in at the WSIB and what initiatives are you taking to make Ontario safer for workers and fair for those who are injured?

Any information you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Best regards,

Wayne Gates
MPP for Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie

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