



# WOMEN OF INSPIRATION

Offering Support, Knowledge Transfer & Education  
and Outreach to Women Injured at Work

28 February 2019

Tom Teahen  
President  
Workplace Safety & Insurance Board  
200 Front St. W.  
Toronto, ON M5V 3J1

Dear Mr. Teahen:

## Re: Status of Universal WSIB Coverage

We continue with our efforts to see Ontario's workforce fully covered. Pertaining to this, the issue of Universal Compensation Coverage is paramount. This letter requests that the Workplace and Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) reassess its current coverage of workers. We are writing to you, Mr. Teahen as we feel that you are aware of the rise of precarious work and the increase of injuries within the world of precarious work. The purpose of this letter is to ask for a reevaluation of coverage amongst employers in Ontario based on the following points.

### The "New Economy" and coverage of new sectors

The lack of universal coverage is worse, today, than when it was documented by the Jackson report of June 1996. The "new economy" has brought forward new jobs, new industry fields and more precarious hours and condition. Sadly, the most dangerous, less structured and non-covered jobs are held by vulnerable workers such as women, newcomers and racialized communities. This is due to a link between the lack of other job prospects and economic vulnerability of these groups. An example of the "new economy" and its effects can be seen in the rise of food delivery employment such as Uber Eats, Foodora and Skip the Dishes.

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### **A changing workforce**

The recent Market Place investigation highlighted just how much the world of work has changed. The misclassification of these workers delivery workers has caused a negative impact on the most vulnerable workers. In its investigation Market Place found that only one of the food delivery company actually has WSIB coverage for its workers. The investigation also found that there were many inconsistencies across the sectors; whereby some couriers were covered and others were not depending on which company employs them. In the event a non-covered worker is injured during the course of employment and there is no benefits to help cover expenses, they often develop mental health injury caused by the stress of not having any financial support. Needless to say if coverage was mandatory for all employers the impact of a work related injury would be minimized.

Another example within the changing workforce is we see a vast influx of newcomers into the workforce. According to a CBC report, Canada's workforce will drastically change over the next 20 years. Twenty years ago, less than one in five Canadian workers were born in a different country. By 2031, that ratio is expected to rise to one in three. Whereas in 1996, one in 10 Canadian workers, were part of a visible minority group. By 2031, that's expected to be more like one in three. And even if immigration stopped completely from this point on, the percentage of Canadian workers who are of a visible minority would still be more than one in five by 2031. As these newcomers enter the Canadian workforce, they are often unaware of their basic rights to be compensated fairly if they become injured at work. We see many examples of this, in the Domestic Worker job category. This job category is performed mainly by female workers. If a worker becomes injured they are put in a vulnerable position by relying on the employer; usually a private entity for support. This obviously can and has put the worker in a unfair and precarious position. We feel the WSIB must take the necessary steps to ensure that all workers; and especially vulnerable workers are protected; thus ensuring that these workers stay safe as they strive to become significant contributing members of Canada's society and economy.

### **Gender Bias**

We cannot write this letter without addressing the glaring gender bias in today's workforce. As previously communicated to Honourable Kevin Flynn, August 17, 2016 by Chris Buckley, President of the OFL, the most significant non-covered worker groups are those that disproportionately represent women. They are women who work in

health care, social assistance and the education field. These sectors hire a higher percentage of women than in manufacturing and construction. Data from the 2006 census shows that although women make up 48% of Ontario's workforce, they represent 67% of the education workforce and 83% of the healthcare and social assistance sector. This can be contrasted with 14% women the resource sector, 12% in construction and 30% in manufacturing.

Further, we are aware of a large sector that is yet to be covered: the finance and insurance sector. The majority of workers in these sectors are female. Job duties within these industries relies heavily on repetitive work, such as keyboarding, filing, long periods of inactivity and chronic mental stress. 51% of professional positions in these industries are held by women; 71% of them are clerical workers and 98% of "secretaries" are women. We request for this sector to be covered.

Further, we are asking you to please update us on the following issues:

1. Is your administration, like previous administrations, advocating for universal coverage with the government?
2. What is the current level of coverage in Ontario, and how does it compare to the level of coverage documented in the Cam Jackson report?
3. What is the Board doing with respect to the rise of the "informal" or "gig" economy, which leaves workers uncovered or open to mis-classification, such as at Uber Eats?

Thank you in advance for your work on these important issues and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,  
Women of Inspiration  
Per:



Cc: LIWAC

Laurie Hardwick – Ontario Federation of Labour  
Willy Noiles – Ontario Network of Injured Worker Groups  
Carol Mundley – OPSEU's Provincial Women's Committee

