



Source: ONIWG

June 01, 2021 07:30 ET

Injured Workers Demand Immediate Changes in Province Wide Day of Action

TORONTO, June 01, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- June 1st marks the 38th Annual Injured Workers Day. While the usual rally at Queen's Park cannot be held in person due to Covid-19, injured workers are still taking action this year across the province by putting MPPs on notice that they refuse to be ignored any longer. Particularly noting the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on workers, injured workers are demanding immediate changes to the WSIB system and labour laws in Ontario.

Frustrated injured workers have come together and drafted a letter to the Government of Ontario, which will also be posted on MPP office doors across the province on June 1st. Over 35 MPP offices in different cities will be targeted including Toronto, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Kenora, Niagara, Guelph, Peterborough, Brantford, Brampton, Mississauga, Caledon, Vaughan, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Markham. A rally is also being held online that has been organized by the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG) with the theme of #InjuredWorkersWontBeForgotten.

Among their demands, injured workers are calling for universal coverage in the workers' compensation system in Ontario, along with automatic coverage for anyone who gets sick or injured as a result of COVID-19, including undocumented and migrant workers. Juan Jose Ariza, a migrant farmworker said, "The WSIB has been ignoring workers voices for many decades, especially the workers in racialized precarious workplaces like migrant farmworkers and other workers. Those workers are essential as bringing food to our table, but the system has been treating them like they are disposable. Already this year, 8 migrant farm workers have died. Our voices are getting louder and stronger in solidarity demanding justice for all".

The Workers Comp is a Right Campaign was launched in 2017, calling for:

- an end to unfair deeming practices in which injured workers' loss of earnings benefits are reduced based on jobs that do not actually exist.
- the elimination of denying benefits based on pre-existing conditions.
- and demanding that WSIB listen to injured workers' treating health care professionals' recommendations.

However, the government has taken no action to address any of these harmful practices that WSIB has been using to benefit employer's profits while destroying the lives of workers who have suffered permanent injuries and illnesses on the job.

Janet Paterson, President of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG) asks "Why is our government more worried about employers instead of workers who have lost their health and livelihoods so that employers can make more profits? The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated existing systemic issues that consistently place workers at risk of injury and death, and then leave them behind once they are injured at work.

We refuse to return to business as usual following this pandemic, and this year, we are letting the government know that injured workers will no longer be forgotten."

To see the full letter of demands, [click here](#).

For more information, please contact Janet Paterson, President of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG) at 807-472-6910 or oniwgexec@gmail.com.