

Janet Paterson
President – On Leave

Willy Noiles
Acting President

Wayne Harris
Executive Vice-President



Jeannie Howe
Secretary

Carol Moore
Treasurer

For Immediate Release

June 25, 2024

SCRAP THE AGE CAP ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR OLDER INJURED WORKERS

Thunder Bay – The Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG) is holding a hybrid press conference to demand that the provincial government scrap the discriminatory age cap on Loss of Earnings (LOE) benefits for older injured workers at the WSIB.

According to the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA)*, injured or ill workers only have access to WSIB LOE benefits until age 65 or for a maximum of two years if they experience injury or illness at age 63 or older. This section of the *WSIA* is a clear example of age discrimination.

ONIWG has been raising this issue for many years with governments and parties of all political stripes. Since 2022, ONIWG and advocates have met with the Minister of Labour (MOL) and Ministry officials about this very issue; however, the Progressive Conservative (PC) government has failed to introduce legislation to amend the *Act*, which would end this age discrimination once and for all.

In St. Catharines, Willy Noiles, Acting President of ONIWG, states: “Doug Ford claims that his PC party has workers’ backs. Yet, when it’s time for the government to step up and get rid of the discriminatory age cap for workers’ compensation benefits, the government leaves older injured workers high and dry.”

In Thunder Bay, Eugene Lefrancois, President of the Thunder Bay & District Injured Workers Group, states: “This issue is becoming an increasing problem for workers in Ontario, as more and more remain employed beyond age 65 due to low income jobs without pensions. Statistics from the WSIB bear out this trend. From 2012 to 2023, lost time claims for workers aged 60 to 64 increased by a whopping 73%, while lost time claims for workers aged 65 or older increased by an alarming 164%.”

In Toronto, Executive Vice-President of ONIWG, Wayne Harris, states: “The law as written is wrong, plain and simple. The PC government has had years to right this wrong, but would rather give handouts to their rich friends.”

The press conference is scheduled for Wednesday, June 26, 2024 from 1:00 PM – 1:30 PM in Thunder Bay at the OPSEU Office located at 326 Memorial Avenue, P7B 3Y3. You can attend in-person or via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89911478976?pwd=PWZC0INHOAR0tNi1YKCisfIUFXRThL.1>
Meeting ID: 899 1147 8976 and Passcode: 136247

###

For more information, please contact:

Willy Noiles, ONIWG Acting President, Phone number: 289-219-4473