



# VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



March 12, 2020

Honourable Harry Bains, MLA  
Minister of Labour  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

VIA Email: [LBR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LBR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Minister Bains:

**RE: Emergency Legislative Action Required to Protect Sick Workers**

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On behalf of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, I am writing to urge the BC government to act immediately to amend the Employment Standards Act to provide paid sick leave for all workers as one of the measures necessary to combat the spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus. For some time, the labour movement has called for the introduction of paid sick leave provisions. The emergence of the new virus and its rapid spread throughout the world, including BC, calls for emergency measures to protect working people.

The provincial health officer, the Ministry of Health, and others, have called for workers who are experiencing any symptoms of illness to stay home in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, these words fall flat when faced with the reality that many working people cannot afford to take unpaid time away from work. The reality is that workers are faced everyday with the choice of feeding their family and making their rent or staying home from work.

The government's efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 must include measures to protect all workers. This particularly must include the nearly fifty percent of the workforce who have no paid sick leave. If this is not addressed there will undoubtedly be workers who are left with no reasonable choice but to risk attending work despite feeling ill, and this promotes the potential spread of COVID-19. Likewise, those who do stay home from work will experience increased economic hardship due to lost income. This is especially true for those who may face fourteen days of quarantine, thereby losing an entire pay period worth of wages.

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Re: Emergency Legislative Action Required

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We therefore urge immediate action to provide paid sick leave for all workers through the Employment Standards Act, without the requirement to provide a doctor's note. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Yours Truly,



Stephen von Sychowski  
President, Vancouver and District Labour Council

Cc: VDLC Executive

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