



NEWS RELEASE

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Provincial government must implement sweeping COVID-19 response focused on workers

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) is calling on the provincial government to implement a sweeping COVID-19 response focused on workers.

“Now is not the time for half-measures or boutique benefits that apply to narrow groups of people. It’s time for a comprehensive, sweeping response to COVID-19 that focuses on the real wealth-creators in our economy – working people,” said SFL President Lori Johb, “workers are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, and their families are starting to feel the economic pain of self-isolation, lost shifts, childcare, businesses closing their doors, and only limited responses from the provincial government to help,” she added.

A comprehensive COVID-19 response focused on workers must include:

- Non-repayable grants of \$1,000 per month to every Saskatchewan resident;
- Paid leave (wage-replacement) for workers who must self-isolate, with no maximum;
- At least 14 days of paid sick days for all workers;
- Compensation of lost wages if a worker’s workplace has closed due to COVID-19;
- An injection of more funding into all public services and facilities to ensure workers are well-equipped to tackle increased demands from COVID-19;
- An indefinite stoppage of late payment and interest charges for utilities and all provincially-regulated transactions, and a ban on any service cut-offs and evictions;
- Wage replacement for workers who must stay home to provide care due to school and any childcare closures;
- Guaranteed recall for all workers laid-off due to COVID-19.

“These are unprecedented times, and an opportunity for the provincial government to show its respect for working people who are most impacted by COVID-19,” said Johb, “at this point, the provincial government needs to do everything possible to stabilize people’s income and access to services so we can all focus on combating COVID-19 and staying healthy,” she added.

The federation of labour is also calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to help lobby the federal government to remove the one-week waiting period for Employment Insurance (EI), and remove the weeks allowable for workers that are currently on EI due to seasonal work, maternity leave, etc.

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