



New Brunswick Common Front for Social Justice

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According to the most recent statistics (2014), there are 20,900 workers paid at minimum wage in the province. They almost all work in non-unionized workplaces; mostly in the retail, cultural, accommodation and food services sectors. Almost half of them worked full time and 65% are 20 years old and older. Also, 13,100 of the workers were women, compared to 7,800 men.¹

It is important to underline that the number of workers receiving minimum wage and working part-time has more than doubled from 4,200 in 2004 to 11,200 in 2014.

Today the Common Front for Social Justice is launching a campaign to create awareness, educate and take action called :

Fight for \$15 + Justice

This campaign aims at improving the situation of the low income and non-unionized workers; the thousands of women and men who, day after day, participate and contribute to our economy. Presently, these workers are paid an inadequate salary and have to rely on the provincial employment standards legislation for protection in the workplace. If it wasn't for the provincial and federal child benefits and credits, the situation of these workers' families would be even more disastrous than what it is.

The Common Front proposes an improvement of the labour standards including increase of the minimum wage so that it reaches \$15.00 per hour.

We have prepared a document that explains the proposed amendments on among others items, sick leave, overtime pay, the purchase and cleaning of uniforms and pay equity. See : *Proposed Changes to the New Brunswick Employment Standards*.

In another document we present an analysis of the financial situation of these workers. Today we are launching our petition and we will be meeting with the political decision-makers to make them aware of the need for these changes.

Twenty-six (26) community and labour organizations are already endorsing our campaign.

This campaign for the improvement of the work conditions is part and parcel of the Common Front for Social Justice fight against poverty.

We consider that employment should allow the worker and his or her family to live above the poverty line. Presently our minimum wage is at \$10.30 per hour which is the lowest of all Canadian provinces.

Our minimum wage brings a net annual income that does not permit an individual, a single parent family or a couple with children to provide for all of their basic needs. We have analyzed the economic situation of seven different types of families, and we have discovered that their annual deficit falls between \$1,501 and \$12, 661. The details of our analysis can be found in the document : *An Economic Reality: Living on Minimum Wage*.

Given that the vast majority of workers earning minimum wage are in non-unionized workplaces, they don't have any organisation to defend their rights and they have to rely on governments to regulate the work conditions. Justice requires governments to intervene in order to protect the most vulnerable in our society and it is for that reason that minimum labour standards were adopted. They must be kept up to date in order to respond to today's needs. Social justice demands this.

Every day, thousands of workers go to work and contribute to the economy and society, yet they are not paid a salary that enables them to have a decent life.

This needs to change!

All documents can be found on our website : www.frontnb.ca

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¹Labour force estimates for employees earning adult minimum wage or less. Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation - 2014.