



## VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



### Press Release

February 13, 2008

## **YOUNG WORKERS SAY “We Can’t Live on \$8.00 per hour”**

Vancouver, BC, February 16, 2008, the Vancouver and District Labour Council Young Workers’ Committee (VDLC Young Workers’ Committee) is organizing a rally in front of Premier Gordon Campbell’s office (3615 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave) in support of the campaign to increase the minimum wage to \$10 per hour and eliminate the \$6 per hour “training wage”.

Endorsed by many organizations, including the Vancouver and District Labour Council, the BC Federation of Labour, and the Canadian Federation of Students, the rally sends a unified message to Premier Gordon Campbell. The \$8 per hour minimum wage is below the poverty line and not sufficient for minimum wage workers to live on.

“\$10 per hour is a reasonable demand and one that can easily be met in our booming economy,” said Stephen Von Sychowski, the chair of the VDLC Young Workers’ Committee. “Young workers are being taken advantage of and paid insufficient wages to live a life that they deserve because of this government’s inaction.”

The minimum wage in BC has not been increased since 2001. According to 2005 Statistics Canada numbers, in order for a minimum wage to earn above the poverty line, they would have to earn at least \$10 an hour in 2005 dollars. Inflation has made the situation even worse today.

“We need to change the minimum wage in BC so the term young worker is not synonymous with poor worker,” says Emily Ottewell, who will be speaking at the rally on behalf of the VDLC Young Workers’ Committee. “Gordon Campbell has told the people of BC who counts – his own MLAs just got huge raises. Thousands of people who earn minimum wage are still waiting for theirs.”

The guest speakers for this event include Jim Sinclair, President of the BC Federation of Labour; Emily Ottewell from the VDLC Young Workers’ Committee; and Shamus Reid will be speaking on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Students. There will also be two minimum wage workers who will be telling their tale of living and surviving as minimum wage workers.

More than 50,000 British Columbians have signed the “\$10 NOW” petition. Many provinces in Canada have already increased their minimum wages. It is time for British Columbia’s government to legislate a living wage for BC’s young workers.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

VDLC Young Workers’ Committee Chair Stephen Von Sychowski 778-231-4635	Strategic Communication Advisor Siavash Rokni 604-782-1950
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