



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

## B.C. Fed news: Canadian action long overdue to combat child labour

Vancouver - The B.C. Federation of Labour is demanding Canada's federal, provincial and territorial labour ministers take action to ratify the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention 138 on Minimum Age - the international standard dealing with child labour.

Today is the World Day for Decent Work, which embraces the ILO notions of worker rights.

"It is embarrassing that Canada is in the company of countries such as Afghanistan, Burma, India, Iran and Korea, which are well-known for exploiting child labour and have also not yet ratified this convention," says Jim Sinclair, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

Labour representatives will deliver a statement to every labour minister in Canada reminding them of this country's 12-year-old responsibility to the ILO to ratify its Convention 138. The Canadian government has taken far too long negotiating changes to non-complying legislation across the country. The Canadian Labour Congress has released a list of federal and provincial legislation which is in non-compliance to the Convention.

Here in B.C., changes introduced in 2003 by the Campbell government allow children as young as 12 years old to work outside the home. Since then there has been a dramatic increase in work-related injuries to children between the ages of 12-14. In 2003, six children in this age group reported workplace injuries. Every year this number has increased, and from 2004 to 2008, 98 children aged 14 and younger have filed claims for injuries that occurred at work.

"We don't have to study this problem any longer," Sinclair says. "We want all Canadian jurisdictions to take concrete steps toward immediate ratification. We also need to take a closer look at the child labour practises here in BC and reverse the changes that allow children in workplaces at far too young an age."

*October 8, 2009*

