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May 28, 2007 - For Immediate Release - JUNE 1ST IS INJURED WORKERS DAY

**MINISTER OF LABOUR COMMITS TO ABOLISHING PHANTOM JOBS
FOR INJURED WORKERS - WILL THE WSIB DO IT?**

Injured workers and their supporters will gather at 12 Noon at Queen's Park for the 23rd anniversary of Injured Workers' Day on June 1, 2007 to highlight the principle that injury should not mean poverty and to celebrate their work together as a community.

Key to this year's event will be presentations by Minister of Labour, Steve Peters and Chair of the WSIB, Steve Mahoney.

The recently adopted anti-poverty budget contains reforms to the workers' compensation system, which the Minister promises will help to improve the lives of injured workers. The Minister's major reform was intended to eliminate deeming--the practice of calculating loss of earnings benefits as though the injured worker has an income from a job they don't have and cannot realistically obtain.

Injured workers say deeming condemns them and their families to poverty. In spite of the Minister's commitment, injured workers and their advocates worry that the Board will not make the necessary policy changes.

"We have seen this before," says Peter Page, President of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG). "In 1990, then Minister of Labour, Gregory Sorbara brought in a new system with the promise to critics that it would not involve deeming. It did." Mr. Page asks the Minister and the Chair of the WSIB, "What will be different this time?"

"There is also a terrible irony in this budget bill," says Steve Mantis, Secretary of ONIWG. "If deeming is not eradicated, the increase in the minimum wage will actually reduce compensation benefits for many unemployed injured workers. In fact the WSIB has already begun to do this."

In the meantime, the injured worker community makes it clear that much more needs to be done to address the poverty and dignity of those who have been injured or made sick at work. The Minister of Labour, and the leaders of the Conservative and New Democratic Parties have been invited to tell injured workers their plans to restore the system to its important founding principles.

Attention: A 24-hour VIGIL will start at noon on, Thursday, May 31st at Queen's Park

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