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'IN UNITY THERE IS STRENGTH'

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QUEEN'S PARK – 26TH ANNUAL INJURED WORKERS' DAY

RALLY AND OVERNIGHT VIGIL

On June 1st every year, injured workers and labour activists gather at Queen's Park in Toronto to mark Injured Workers' Day. On June 1st 1983 thousands of injured workers came to Queen's Park to speak against the government's proposal to eliminate the permanent disability pension. The government listened to injured workers and set aside the proposal.

Peter Fonseca, Minister of Labour, Steve Mahoney, WSIB Chair, and Andrea Horwath, NDP leader will speak at the event. Peter Page, President of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups, is the chair. Unions and injured workers groups will participate. Skits, musicians, poets, puppets and props will ensure this is a lively and colourful event.

Injured workers are calling on the government to:

- address injured worker poverty by eliminating deeming and fully adjusting workers' compensation to keep up with inflation
- extend workers' compensation coverage to protect all workers and to cover all occupational diseases, from both physical hazards and occupational stresses
- end the Experience Rating program that rewards employers who fail to report workplace injuries and drains hundreds of millions of dollars from the system every year
- restore the independence of the Appeals Tribunal from WCB/WSIB policy, independence that existed by the law prior to the Harris government

"This morning we released our study on the poverty of injured workers. The rates of poverty, depression and family disruption are horrific. Will the WSIB join us on the road to justice?" asked Peter Page, President of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups. "Injured workers are still paying for the last recession through benefit cuts by the Harris government. Don't ask us to pay for this one. Workers' compensation was created to be a system of justice in good and bad economic times. Employers are protected from lawsuits in good times and tough economic times. Injured workers must be protected from poverty at all times as well."

Overnight Vigil by Injured Workers

Injured workers will begin an overnight vigil outside the main doors of the Legislature until Question Period June 2nd. Eddie Tilley, injured worker activist, said "We want to remind our MPPs that a lot of us can't sleep because we're in pain and we can't eat every day because we can't always afford it. Changes to workers' compensation are pretty urgent, we are suffering."

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For more information call:

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