

Peter Page
President
Steve Mantis
Secretary
Karl Crevar
Treasurer



HEAD OFFICE
310-500 Green Road
Stoney Creek, ON.
Canada L8E 3M6
Tel. (905) 662-7128
Fax (905) 662-9160
E-mail: oniwg@sympatico.ca

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Randy Hillier MPP Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington
Critic, Labour
Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario

Room 207, North Wing, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A8

Dear Mr. Hillier

I feel compelled to write this letter to you further to your comments during our discussion on June 1st, 2010, the 27th anniversary of Injured Workers Day. It was 27 years ago that 5000 injured workers demanded to be heard on issues that had a devastating impact on their lives and their families lives after suffering injury or industrial diseases (such as cancers) while in the course of their employment.

I am insulted and angry by your statement that this event was nothing but bullshit and partisan. Your statement shows total disrespect for those people who come year after year seeking Justice, Dignity and Respect.

Every Injured Workers' Day we invite guests from all political parties as you were, as well as representatives from the WSIB. We issue these invitations so that we can express our frustrations to all who should be concerned and also listen. It is also our hope and intention to encourage our politicians to do the right thing.

Let me reiterate what I said to you during our conversation. We have been very critical with all parties: the Liberal Party for Bill 162 (1990) which eliminated pensions for life and introduced deeming; The New Democratic Party for the introduction of the Friedland Formula (which limited cost of living adjustments) Bill 165 (1995); the worst, The Conservative Party (yours) for Bill 99 (1998) which virtually eliminated any cost of living, reduced benefit levels, allowed employer assessment rates to fall dramatically (even while the unfunded liability was supposedly of major concern), expanded experience rating (providing huge employer rebates and provoking harmful behavior towards injured workers), introduced the concept of LMR which thankfully finally has been recognized officially for its failure-- I could go on and on, however I believe you are all too familiar with this.

No Mr. Hillier, we are not partisan but the fact remains, your government, the Conservative Party of Ontario, hit injured workers the hardest.

The issue of the unfunded liability concerns injured workers greatly. Each time the issue comes up injured workers are blamed for the problem and are made to pay. You indicate that you think this is a financial situation that means the system is broken and you say it does not serve employers well.

Mr. Hillier, do not forget that workers gave up their right to sue their employers in exchange for fair compensation. In exchange, it is the responsibility of the business community to fund the system collectively. I am sure that you understand that our compensation system was set up on a pay-as-you go basis at the urging of the Canadian Manufacturers Association at the time the system was set up.

As a public system this is possible to do and the result is that more money stays in the hands of the employers. The "unfunded liability" is not a debt to be borne by the taxpayers of Ontario and certainly not by workers injured or exposed to industrial diseases. The WSIB is not broke. It has never had to borrow to pay the bills.

In the meantime, many injured workers and their families live in poverty: some have to use food banks, some have lost their families, others have lost their homes, some end up living on the streets and some even have committed suicide. I ask WHY is that.

There is enough blame to go around. It is time to stop playing political football with peoples' lives. Now is the time to restore faith in our system and treat injured workers and their families with the Dignity and Respect they deserve as we do for others.

Yours truly

Karl Crevar
Treasurer ONIWG

Cc Tim Hudak Leader PC Party
Syd Ryan, President OFL
Peter Page, President ONIWG
Steve Mantis, Secretary ONIWG