

The *Keep Alberta Working* Labour Review Consultation Survey

Background

The Government of Alberta has allotted just five weeks for a review and consultation on the Alberta Labour Relations Code and the Alberta Employment Standards Code. Ontario's government is allotting a full two years for consultation on their labour laws and regulations.

We also note that the government's online survey on employment standards provides no context, such as noting that Alberta workers earn far more on average (18%) than workers elsewhere in Canada. Neither does it note that a bigger percentage of the Alberta population is employed today than populations in other provinces. It also fails to acknowledge that Alberta is just now emerging from a deep recession and that Alberta businesses must be competitive if they are to keep Albertans working and hire new workers as the economy improves. In important respects: wages and benefits and active employment, Alberta continues to lead Canada. Those facts are relevant in any review of labour legislation.

The Alberta government has opted to conduct discussions on the Labour Relations Code through labour expert Andy Sims. Labour code law is complicated and proposed changes have significant implications. Based on information from numerous credible sources we know that the government is contemplating significant changes all of which impose greater costs and restrictions on employers and, we believe, will also limit opportunity for many workers.

The government chose not to use a survey to gather broad public input on changes to the Labour Relations Code (LRC). Below we attempt to remedy that by asking participants to respond to possible changes to the LRC.

Unfortunately, the government fails to provide context to help Albertans understand how Albertans fare as responsible and fair employers, such as noting that very few labour stoppages have occurred in Alberta due to strike or lockout in the last decade. Nor do they acknowledge that under Alberta's current process for certifying unions, scores and sometimes over a hundred new unions have been certified in a single year. We trust the survey below provides participants with the options and latitude to more fully reflect their views.

Thank you in advance for completing our survey. Should you choose to, participants are invited to provide their name, address and email address so that we can submit their survey to their MLA, to the Minister of Labour and to the Premier. Unless they choose otherwise the identities of survey participants will not be revealed, but the survey results and comments will be shared with the government and will be made public.

Survey

1. Do you think Alberta should change its labour and employment laws just because they may be different in some ways from other provinces or the federal government?

YES NO

Comment:

2. The Ontario government is taking two years to review their labour legislation, while Alberta has allocated only five weeks. Should the Alberta government be taking more time to conduct the labour review?

YES NO

Comment:

3. A higher percentage of Alberta's population is employed compared to the populations of other provinces. Should the government take into account how changes to labour laws and regulations impact an employer's capacity to compete, make a profit, employ current workers and hire new workers?

YES NO

Comment:

4. Alberta employers pay worker 18% more than the nation average. Should the ability of employers to make a profit so that can pay workers well be a consideration in this review?

YES NO

Comment:

5. Do Alberta's current labour laws strike the right balance between keeping businesses profitable, workers employed and ensuring that workers are treated workers fairly?

YES NO

Comment:

6. Do you believe the Government of Alberta should be imposing extra costs, restrictions and red tape on Alberta business as Alberta recovers from a recession?

YES NO

Comment:

7. Should workers maintain the right to a secret ballot vote when deciding whether or not to form a union?

YES NO

Comment:

8. Do you think the government should expand the types of workers who can be unionized (e.g., contractors; certain professionals who are currently excluded; farm and ranch workers)?

YES NO

Comment:

9. Should the government impose wage settlements from one workplace on to all unionized workplaces in the same sector?

YES NO

Comment:

10. Should employers accused of unfair practices be assumed to be guilty until they are proven innocent?

YES NO

Comment:

11. Do you agree with increasing the cost and notice requirements of group terminations?

YES NO

Comment:

12. Do you agree with adding new obligations upon employers to provide leaves of absence for employees?

YES NO

Comment:

13. Do you think the government should devote more resources to enforcing minimum employment standards?

YES NO

Comment:

14. Should union members have the right to see how the union is spending his or her money through legislation that requires unions to fully open their books to union members?

YES NO

Comment:

15. Many unions are proposing, and the government is considering introducing mandatory arbitration to impose collective agreements on employers in first collective agreement negotiations or when strikes or lockouts have lasted a certain period of time. Do you agree with this intervention?

YES NO

Comment:

16. Do you think the government should be expanding the powers of the Labour Relations Board?

YES NO

Comment:

17. Should the Labour Board be able to order an employer to be unionized in response to unfair practices, even without employee support or a vote?

YES NO

Comment:

18. Employers in a strike or lockout are currently allowed to hire replacement workers to continue operating. Some unions suggest this should be outlawed or limited. Do you agree or disagree with them?

YES NO

Comment:

19. Should all employees in a unionized workplace be required by law to pay union dues, even if they don't support the union and the employer doesn't agree?

YES NO

Comment:

I consent to allow the results of this survey, my name, address and email address, to be forwarded to my MLA, and other elected government officials.

Name:

Address:

Email address:

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