



The Honourable Kathleen Wynne,
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

October 18th, 2017

Dear Premier Wynne,

The Filipino Workers Network (FWN) is a network of Filipino-Canadian union members and labour advocates in the Greater Toronto Area, supported by the Toronto & York Region Labour Council. Its main purpose is to reach out and engage our members on workers' issues and provide a venue for Filipino-Canadian workers to support each other.

We are deeply concerned as Filipino workers because most workers in our community are employed in precarious and vulnerable jobs. Since the 1990s, Philippines has been in the top 3 countries from which Canada receives temporary foreign workers. Most of these workers have become permanent residents and are now part of the workforce. Most of them end up in the service and hospitality sector.

Filipinos come to Canada, work hard and contribute to the economy. Most are employed in the health, service and hospitality sectors. Our community is a community of many young workers. As workers, most are uninformed and scared to speak up. As new immigrants, the first work we usually end up with after being caregivers or new arrivals is contract work and with temporary agencies. We work for years in jobs at minimum wage and with no benefits, holding 2-3 contract minimum wage jobs, with no time for self-care or family life.

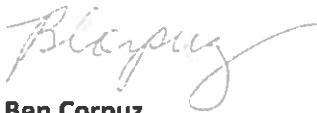
The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 (Bill 148) will help in alleviating the circumstances that our Filipino-Canadian workers are mired in, and with amendments to the Bill there is a great opportunity to ensure that the Employment Standards Act (ESA) and Labour Relations Act (LRA) address the issues that vulnerable and marginalized workers face today. The Filipino community would also benefit from further changes. In the ESA, there should be stronger rules to protect temporary agency workers from unequal pay and from being employed temporarily for long periods of time. Domestic work should not be exempted from the LRA. Nor is there any reason why workers in the hospitality industry should not be able to form unions using card-based certification.

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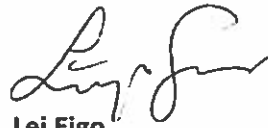
We strongly believe that if Bill 148 is improved and passed, there would be very positive improvements, not just for the immediate present but also for generations to come. Our society, in general, has suffered greatly because we failed to provide good jobs and fair workplaces. We have families separated by economic distance and insufficient time. Our migrant workers who have been separated from families for years and when reunited find themselves in a situation that does not allow them to spend time together because they have to work 2-3 jobs, unreasonable work schedules and most of all, no protection because it is most difficult for them to join unions.

The Filipino Workers Network calls on you to provide public leadership to improve and pass the amended Bill 148 in soonest possible time. We, like many millions of workers (including their children and families) in this province, are hopeful that your government will strengthen our labour laws.

Sincerely,



Ben Corpuz
Co-Chair, Filipino Workers Network



Lei Eigo
Co-Chair, Filipino Workers Network

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