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Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce

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Keep Ontario Working Coalition: Ontario Deserves Evidence-Based Reform

Changes Will Hurt Job Creation, Consumer Costs and Economic Growth

TORONTO, May 30, 2017 – The Keep Ontario Working coalition, in partnership with the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), today expressed concern that the Government of Ontario’s *Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs* Plan, commits to unproven sweeping reforms without ensuring protection against unintended consequences, including job losses, rising consumer costs, and economic hardship.

The Keep Ontario Working Coalition (KOW) is a broad-spectrum group of business sector representatives concerned with sound public policy to help produce jobs and grow Ontario.

As noted in the Business Prosperity Index of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce’s 2017 Ontario Economic Report, despite projections that Ontario will lead Canada in economic growth in the coming years, diminished profitability, lower labour market participation, and sluggish market activity; along with other key factors have resulted in a risk-averse atmosphere that businesses are disinclined to grow production. Businesses are questioning if they should grow in Ontario or expand offshore.

Despite that, Ontario’s private sector is still doing its part to support workers. As the Government pointed out in Budget 2017, 98 per cent of all new jobs since the recession in Ontario have been full time, and 78 per cent in above-average wage industries. This positive economic activity by Ontario’s private sector demonstrates a clear commitment to good jobs throughout our province.

Statement

The following is a statement by the Keep Ontario Working Coalition on the Government’s proposed workplace reforms:

“We share in the Government’s desire for broadly inclusive growth. However, in order to achieve this, we need to ensure that we are not risking job losses, rising consumer costs, and economic hardship as a result of over-regulation.

“Government cannot regulate prosperity. To demonstrate true fairness and compassion for workers, we must ensure Ontario has a strong economy to help create jobs and increase economic growth.

“That is why we are urging the government to take time this summer to have an independent third party conduct a comprehensive economic impact analysis on the proposed reforms to consider the unintended consequences to employers. In addition, as the province’s biggest employer, the government must fully understand what these changes will cost in relation to the provincial treasury as well as social services and other government agencies.

“Why is evidence-based policy important? Only three years ago, the Premier’s own Minimum Wage Advisory Panel conducted extensive research and concluded: ‘In the Canadian context, researchers have generally found an adverse employment effect of raising minimum wages especially for young workers...typically those studies find that teen employment would drop by 3 to 6 per cent if the minimum wage is raised by 10 per cent.’

“While the Changing Workplaces Review cautioned that any regulatory change shouldn’t impair the competitiveness of businesses in the province, the reforms outlined in *Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs* Plan thus far do not provide the balance needed to help ensure a competitive environment for Ontario.

“But we have time. Now we must work cooperatively with government to identify the scale of the economic impact of these changes and help employers transition into any new policy regime. We will continue to be cooperative partners with government to find solutions that will, where possible, inhibit negative impacts on the growth of Ontario’s economy, our people, and our communities.”

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Keep Ontario Working Coalition Members

Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services (ACSESS)

Canadian Franchise Association (CFA)

Food & Consumer Products of Canada

Food and Beverage Ontario (FBO)

National Association of Canada Consulting Businesses (NACCB Canada)

Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA)

Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC)

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA)

Restaurants Canada

Retail Council of Canada (RCC)

Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO)

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