



**Women Need Good Jobs**



Women are now 50% of the workforce. Good jobs that offer good pay, benefits, pensions and that are full-time or permanent part-time, are under attack. Public sector jobs have traditionally meant higher pay with benefits and pensions for women workers. It is one of the first sectors to come under attack by the pro-business forces. The Harris/Eves government implemented privatization and cuts to the public sector and downloaded many services to the municipal sector. The McGuinty government has not undone the damage and job losses that followed. His government has continued to privatize and cut public sector jobs.

The manufacturing sector is a source of good jobs providing women with higher pay, benefits and pensions. Women account for 27% of workers in this sector, in jobs like food manufacturing, auto, auto parts, aerospace and general manufacturing. Massive job losses in the manufacturing sector have a severe impact on women. Public sector workers are also affected when plants and mills shut their doors forever. Public services that all women and their families need are scaled back when decent jobs disappear. Loss of good manufacturing jobs means that families have less to spend on goods and services in their communities.

The way work is organized has changed drastically over the last 30 years. Governments are contracting out or privatizing jobs. The manufacturing sector is in a job loss crisis. The loss of well-paying manufacturing and public sector jobs and the growth of low-wage, part-time and precarious work, impacts on the standard of living for women workers and their families.

Ontario has 4,200 temporary agencies which have no licensing requirements. One in four people are now working part-time, are in temporary or contract jobs, and are juggling two or three jobs to pay the rent and feed our kids. Minimum wage jobs with no benefits and little or no job protection is becoming the economy's new job growth. The majority of workers in these "new" jobs are women, immigrants, youth and people of colour. Most are working for minimum wage with no benefits and little employment protection. The Harris/Eves government supported a pro-business agenda that left this vital sector to market forces. They weaken employment standard legislation and weaken enforcement. The McGuinty government has quietly carried on with the same agenda.

Study after study has shown that unionization is the key to good jobs. These studies also show that women want unions. The Harris/Eves government repealed and hacked away at Ontario's labour laws. McGuinty has left in place so many of Harris/Eves laws, and done so little to enforce existing laws, that women face many barriers to unionization.

**Since 2003 the McGuinty Liberals:**

- Continued their own brand of Conservative privatization of hospitals, used restructuring to include cuts and moving services out of communities, and maintained a system of competitive bidding in home care that favour for-profit companies.
- Taken a "don't worry, be happy" approach to manufacturing job loss. McGuinty speaks of the sector restructuring and job loss as being offset with the rise of "new" jobs. He doesn't say that many women are working 2 or 3 of those "new" jobs and still can't make the rent and feed the kids.
- No action on temp agencies, such as regulations and licensing requirements.
- Only increased the minimum wage after a massive grass roots campaign for a \$10 minimum wage swept the province. McGuinty announced an increase from \$8 to \$10 – but phased in over three years.
- Increased employment standards enforcement budget by \$3.6 million but no movement to reform an outdated system.
- No action on increasing fines for employers who violate employment standards by not paying minimum wage or paying wages earned.
- Introduced labour legislation, only in the building trades sector, to allow certification of a union when the majority of workers voluntarily sign union cards. Excluding many sectors of our economy that have women workers, such as clerical, sales and service jobs.

**What Women Need**

Women need a government that recognizes the importance of good jobs that can pay the rent and feed our kids. We need jobs that are secure, well paid, ensures that retirement does not mean living in dire poverty, and if we choose, unionized. Women want our right to employment standards protection enforced.

**Ask Your Local Candidate:**

- Will your government implement a good jobs strategy?
- Will your government create a Jobs Protection Commissioner?
- Will your government regulate temporary agencies?
- Will your government update Ontario's Employment Standards Act?
- Will your government remove barriers to women's rights to unionization?

**For more details go to the following websites: Ontario Federation of Labour:**

[www.jobsworthfightingfor.ca](http://www.jobsworthfightingfor.ca); Workers' Action Centre: [www.workeractioncentre.org](http://www.workeractioncentre.org)  
Ontario Need A Wage Campaign: [www.incomesecurity.org/campaign](http://www.incomesecurity.org/campaign)

