

BILL 59 TURNS BACK THE CLOCK ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

ALL QUEBEC WORKERS DESERVE SAFER WORKPLACES

1 Workers lose rights, employers gain more power
Employers will have sole power to decide when a joint Health and Safety Committee meets, to select the physician in charge of occupational health cases, and to define the terms of prevention programs. Employers will no longer be required to seek joint agreement with workers' representatives on such issues.

2 Prevention requirements cut in industrial workplaces
Less time will be allocated to prevention work and employers with multiple plants will be allowed to create a single health and safety committee - with only one workers' representative - regardless of how many facilities.

3 Employers will be incentivized to challenge compensation claims and cheat
New risk categories will be created for employers, based on compensation costs, creating incentives for employers to challenge claims and possibility to cheat. Under Bill 59, mines can be considered medium-risk workplaces and factories handling explosives can be considered low risk!

4 Workers denied access to crucial information
Workers will be at increased risk as employers will no longer be required to disclose lists of hazardous materials and contaminants in the workplace.

5 Greater restrictions on recognition of injuries and occupational illnesses
More restrictive criteria will be imposed for compensation for occupational deafness, various forms of cancer and psychological illness.

6 Attending physicians are losing some of their power
More power will be given to doctors hired by employers or by the CNESST (Quebec's workplace health and safety agency), minimizing the role of a worker's attending physician.

7 Preventive withdrawal benefits for pregnant women under attack
It will be more difficult for a pregnant worker to qualify for "preventive withdrawal" benefits in cases where the woman's job poses a risk to her health or that of her unborn child. The process will be based on as-yet unknown protocols and on the advice of a doctor chosen by the employer rather than the woman's personal physician.

8 Forced return to work
Employers will have greater power to force a return to work for injured and sick workers, even if they are still being treated, or before they have recovered from their injury or illness, or before their condition has stabilized.

9 Ending benefits for workers over age of 55
Currently, injured and ill workers who are unable to return to work can receive compensation benefits until age 65. Bill 59 will allow for benefits to be cut off for such workers over age 55.

10 A race to the bottom
Currently, health and safety prevention measures apply only to a minority of Quebec workplaces, with the majority of employers exempted. Rather than expanding safeguards to all workplaces, Bill 59 does the reverse, gutting existing protections, with no progress for exempted workplaces.

