



**Media Release
For Immediate Release
February 21st, 2018**

**Indexing the Third Lowest Minimum Wage in Canada, Will Entrench
Workers' Poverty: Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour**

St. John's, NL – The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour (NLFL) expressed deep disappointment at Tuesday's announcement by Labour Minister Hawkins, regarding the province's minimum wage.

NLFL President Mary Shortall stated, that the plan to index the minimum wage once a year, based solely on the national Cost of Living, falls far short of what minimum wage workers in Newfoundland & Labrador (NL) deserve, and need, in order to lift them out of poverty. She believes that without a significant increase to the minimum wage, this move by government will only entrench workers in an unacceptable income level, and that NL will continue to have one of the lowest minimum wage rates in Canada. The NLFL is advocating for a \$15/hour minimum wage.

In 2016, there were 13,000 minimum wage earners in NL. Two-thirds of them were women, most of them worked fulltime, and more than half of them were over 25 years of age.

“Our consultation with government on this issue, included recommendations for incremental increases to the minimum wage to \$15; that would lift workers out of poverty first, followed by annual increases based on the inflation rate in NL, not nationally, to prevent workers from falling behind,” says NLFL President Mary Shortall. “It's more than disappointing that government has failed to see the benefit to workers, business, and our economy, by having more money in the pockets of minimum wage earners in our province.”

Shortall says the time has come for a complete review of both the Labour Relations and Employment Standards Acts, to legislate a \$15/hr minimum wage, and also to address current employment and labour realities, against outdated and inadequate protections for workers.

Similar reviews in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, have produced better employment standards, labour laws, and a promise of a \$15 minimum wage. Shortall notes that not coincidentally, all three provinces are experiencing positive employment and high economic growth.



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“Government can and should do much better for these workers and their families,” concludes Shortall. “It’s about creating a more equal society for all our citizens, and building a strong economy where everybody benefits.”

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