



Manitoba Federation of Labour

Policy Book

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INTRODUCTION

The Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) is Manitoba's central labour body, chartered by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) to represent the interests of affiliated unions, and to advance the social and economic welfare of all working people in Manitoba.

Our affiliated unions represent 100,000 unionized workers from the public and private sectors, from workplaces as diverse as hospitals, schools, manufacturing plants, retail stores, construction sites, packing plants, arts and cultural facilities, group homes and day programs, mines, hydro-electric projects and many more.

The MFL is structured and run democratically, directed by policy resolutions that are debated and adopted at triennial Conventions attended by elected delegates from our affiliates.

The MFL retains records of all policy resolutions passed at convention. These provide a comprehensive record of all adopted policies since the MFL's establishment in 1956.

Recognizing that these records are growing larger and larger with every new set of Convention resolutions, making it more cumbersome to search and use, starting in 2006 the MFL created a separate "Policy Book," which provides a high-level overview of the the MFL's most current and active policy resolutions, organized by topic area (rather than by the Convention year in which they were adopted).

The present document, "MFL Policy Book 2018", has been updated to reflect policy direction arising from the most recent MFL Convention, held in Winnipeg in May, 2018.

1.0 TRADE UNIONISM

Preamble:

The strength of the labour movement is built on solidarity and respect among workers. We are committed to the goals of worker democracy, social justice, equality and peace. We are dedicated to making the lives of workers and their families safe, secure and healthy.

Every worker is entitled, without discrimination, to a job with decent wages and working conditions, union representation, free collective bargaining, a safe and healthy workplace and the right to strike.

All human beings are entitled to basic human rights, political freedom, strong public services, good democratic government, a safe and sustainable environment, a just and equitable society and a peaceful world.

Diversity in our society must be protected, promoted and celebrated. We believe that every worker is an equal member of the human family and has the right to share in the benefits of union membership, regardless of gender, gender identity, colour, creed, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation or age. We stand for an inclusive society and stand against abuses of human rights in our workplaces, our communities, our country and around the world.

The MFL speaks out forcefully for our affiliates and their members to employers, government and the public to ensure the rights of workers are protected and expanded.

We defend and promote the principles of democracy and equality and hold true the ideal of human rights for all. In solidarity, we pursue social, economic and political justice – the goals on which the labour movement was founded.

The MFL exists to:

1. Support the principles, policies and activities of the Canadian Labour Congress, including working across borders in solidarity.
2. Promote the interests of affiliates and respond to requests from affiliates for help with activities such as union education, organizing and collective bargaining.
3. Work to advance the economic and social welfare of all Manitoba workers, including those who are unemployed or retired.
4. Speak for labour on provincial issues and work for laws that protect and promote union principles, such as free collective bargaining, worker's rights, the right to strike and the security and well-being of all workers.
5. Promote union principles and the benefits of unionization through media, other communication and education, building greater understanding of the labour movement and the importance of extending union representation to workers not yet in a union.

6. Encourage the sale and use of union-made goods and services through the use of the Union label and other symbols.

7. Provide leadership in political action and encourage greater worker participation in the political process.

Celebrating Workers' Achievements and Struggles:

The Manitoba Labour movement has a rich and lengthy tradition of celebrating the accomplishments of workers and their struggles on both Labour Day (a date fixed by Parliament in 1894 as the first Monday in September) and on May Day (May 1st - recognized as an annual event in 1891 by the Second International, an organization of socialist and labour parties formed in Paris on July 14, 1889).

Manitoba's labour movement will also mark the important centennial anniversary of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike in 2019 with a series of events, educational and legacy projects.

2.0 EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Manitoba Labour Movement recognizes and is very proud of the diversity of our union membership, and we recognize the need to ensure that all workers are made to feel welcome, included and safe within their workplaces, their communities and within our union structures. Diversity is vital to the strength of the union movement and a healthy society, and more work is needed to extend the great benefits of union representation to workers from all walks of life.

Unions have established many different and evolving democratic structures to provide members of equity-seeking groups with forums to raise and work on critical issues and develop strategies to deal with them. These structures play important roles in our movement. They serve to identify critical emerging issues for the union movement and its leadership at large and to provide education for workers and the community. They also provide invaluable advice and strategies on how to ensure that fairness and equity remain foundational to our movement and society.

The MFL has created a series of structures intended to empower and support equity-seeking groups within our structures:

- The MFL's Executive Council has constitutionally-protected gender parity requirements;
- The MFL supports an active Women's Committee that works on feminist and gender equity issues;
- The MFL supports three Equality Caucuses: Indigenous Workers, Workers of Colour, and Solidarity and Pride (LGBTQ2SI) to advance human rights and equality issues; and
- The MFL provides for representation of union retirees on its Executive Council.

The MFL is strongly committed to continuing to work within the labour movement and broader civil society to combat sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism and other forms of discrimination that seek to divide and weaken us. We believe in equality and social justice for all workers and all people.

2.1 Women Workers

The labour movement is a powerful force for women's equality and positive change, at the workplace and in society. Unions help to make workplaces safer, and challenge harassment and discrimination. Unions have helped to open doors for women working in trades and technology, and to build women's leadership and political participation. Many challenges remain, especially for women who face additional barriers because of race, disability, Indigenous status, age, sexuality and gender identity and expression, and so we remain committed to eliminating barriers to equity and full participation.

Gender discrimination remains a shameful feature of the history of Canada's workplaces. Women are much more likely than men to be lower paid, work part-time rather than full-time jobs, and be self-employed or work in other forms of precarious employment. Women

are also far more likely to live in poverty, especially senior women. Women continue to perform the majority of unpaid care-giving work related to raising children, supporting families and caring for aged parents, and are more likely to be supporting a family on their own.

The MFL is committed to developing and supporting campaigns and strategies to tackle inequities faced by women in the workplace and community, including:

- Ending gender-based violence;
- Supporting victims of violence through networks of well-funded shelters, and accessible paid domestic violence leave;
- A properly supported National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG);
- Campaigning for universal, affordable and high quality child care, including investigating a model of public delivery;
- Demanding equal pay for work of equal value;
- Calling for full implementation of the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry to improve the child welfare system;
- Championing reproductive health and abortion rights, fully funded and delivered by the public health care system;
- Fostering the development of women trade union leaders, activists and staff representatives;
- Achieving concrete employment equity goals in the public and private sectors; and
- Establishing education and action plans to end sexual harassment in the workplace and society at large, and foster consent culture.

2.1.1 Pay Equity / Closing the Gender Pay Gap

The MFL strongly supports the right to equal pay for work of equal value, or what the labour movement calls pay equity. Fair pay demands that the work that women and men do is equally respected and valued, which is not the reality for many workers in Canada, where large pay gaps remain between what women and men earn. Thanks to the labour movement, this pay gap is already much less for women with unions¹, but more needs to be done to achieve full income equality for all working women.

The MFL urges the provincial and federal governments to introduce and implement proactive pay equity legislation, with lessons learned from provincial legislation in Ontario and Quebec, and informed by the 2004 federal Pay Equity Task Force. Jobs must be evaluated on their skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions – in this way, very different jobs can be compared for their value in the workplace. Pay equity legislation must also recognize that wage discrimination exists for workers with disabilities, Indigenous workers and racialized workers.

¹ In Canada, unionized workers earn \$5.28 / hour more than non-union workers. But for women workers, the 'union advantage' is even greater: women with unions earn **\$7.10 / hour more** than women without.

The MFL also supports 'respect campaigns' seeking to raise awareness and build support for the need to significantly enhance currently poor wages and working conditions in many women-dominated fields, including early learning and child care, child welfare, community living and other social services.

We further call on government to develop a jobs strategy that promotes women's participation in the workforce, and improves access to education and training, child care and other services so women can balance work and family responsibilities.

Making it easier for women to join unions is also a critical part of closing the gender pay gap, as women with unions earn more than women without unions. Collective bargaining allows women and their unions to negotiate pay that reflects their skills, education and responsibilities. The MFL condemns the Pallister government's elimination of card-check certification, which makes it harder to join a union and seeks to reduce union representation. We also condemn the Pallister's government trampling of collective bargaining rights through the imposition of wage-freeze legislation.

2.1.2 Child Care:

Working families depend on quality, accessible, affordable child care to go out and make their living, whether its parents returning to work, taking classes to upgrade their skills, or getting their first job.

Child care costs make up a significant part of household budgets, and worrying about getting a child care space at the right time can be stressful for families.

Knowing you can get a licensed child care space when you need one, and at a cost that won't break the bank, allows working parents go to work or school, with the peace of mind that their kids are being cared for in a safe, happy and enriching environment.

A strong, publicly-funded child care system is also an important bridge to women's equality. More women are working in the paid workforce than ever before. Child care gives women the opportunity to pursue our dreams – to get a decent job to support our families and build a career, to further our education or skills training, and more. Child care is critical for reducing the pay gap between women and men workers.

The MFL sees child care as fundamental to women's equality, as enriching for child development, and as a means of giving everyone a fair start in life regardless of income or social backgrounds. Unions have demanded and won better maternity and parental leave, better vacation time, leave to look after children when they are sick, and have helped to establish some workplace child care centres, but without a real early education and child care system that ensures access and quality, child care will remain a matter of luck, which isn't fair.

The MFL is committed to the collective right of society to a universal child care and early education program that meets the needs of Canadian women and families. We will continue to lobby the provincial government, and through the CLC, the federal government for a child care system that is:

- Universal, publicly planned and equitably available to all families;
- Affordable, publicly supported and not-for-profit;
- High quality, including developmental programming and cultural enrichment;
- Accountable to parents and communities; and
- Provides for well-trained and fairly compensated early child care educators (replacing dependence on poorly remunerated and an almost entirely female workforce). This includes fair pension plans for early childhood educators.

2.2 Indigenous Workers

The labour movement recognizes that Canada's colonial history, including the shameful experience and legacy of residential schools, has significantly harmed and disrupted First Nations, Métis and Inuit societies and economies, including Indigenous workers, and entrenched inequalities, compounded by racism, exploitation, injustice and systemic discrimination. It is deplorable that Indigenous communities are continuing to struggle to access basic necessities, like clean drinking water, education, health care and social services, and we call for investment in measures to immediately augment public services in Indigenous communities.

We are committed to working in partnership to re-build relationships with Indigenous communities to better support the struggle for justice. The MFL is committed to supporting strategies that will lead to recognition within the Constitution of the national identity of the Indigenous peoples, of full rights of their language and culture, self-government and satisfaction of land claims. The MFL supports the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) calls to action, adequate resourcing for the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and campaigns for child welfare reform, and will continue to stand in solidarity with survivors and families in calling for equity and justice.

We also recognize the under-representation of Indigenous workers in the labour force – unions have been strong voices calling for strategies to eliminate educational, employment and income gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans and Canadians. We are committed to working for education and training, employment opportunities and pay equity strategies to support good jobs and end racism against Indigenous workers.

We are also committed to ensuring that the House of Labour is safe and welcoming for Indigenous workers. We will work with Indigenous workers to strengthen their voices and presence in the labour movement. The MFL has established an Indigenous Workers Caucus to provide a forum for Indigenous workers from the MFL's different affiliated unions to come together to discuss challenges and opportunities to advance the interest of Indigenous workers and communities, working in collaboration with Convention and the MFL Executive Council.

The MFL will continue to work on issues such as:

- Expanding union representation and all the benefits of unionization for Indigenous workers;
- Combating racism against Indigenous workers and racialized workers, and ending discrimination in hiring, promotion and pay;

- Better access to education / skills training, good jobs, dignity and safe working conditions for Indigenous workers and all workers;
- Respect for Indigenous and Treaty Rights; and
- Providing for decent and fair living conditions, such as access to clean drinking water, safe housing, and ending discrimination against Indigenous children in the delivery of child welfare services.

2.3 Workers of Colour

Racism and division are not union values. The labour movement will always work with our allies to push for change and to build a better and more equitable world for all. Unions have been at the forefront of the struggle against race-based discrimination and xenophobia in our workplaces and in our society at large.

The MFL is committed to elevating the voices of workers of colour, and has established a Workers of Colour Caucus to work with the MFL Executive Council and Convention to shape and respond to issues, needs and opportunities to end systemic racism and promote good jobs, dignity, equality and fairness for all.

We will:

- Promote the involvement and leadership of Workers of Colour in the building and strengthening of the union movement, and betterment of our workplaces and communities;
- Fight for public education / skill building and job creation programs for newcomers to Canada and other populations with high unemployment or a high concentration of low wage workers, including Indigenous and northern communities;
- Stand against racism and xenophobia, including Islamophobia, especially in this time of widespread anti-Muslim discrimination;
- Fight for migrant worker rights, including health care, fair wages and benefits, safe working conditions and full immigration status; and
- Working for the creation of high quality jobs needed by millions of unemployed, under-employed and precariously-employed workers, including many workers of colour and Indigenous workers.

2.4 Workers with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities, including workers injured in the workplace, are seriously disadvantaged in terms of employment. In Manitoba, about 13% of the population between 15 and 64 years of age live with a disability; only about half of these have paid jobs, and many of those who are working are under-employed and earning low wages.

Workers with disabilities face many forms of systemic discrimination that limit their employment and income levels - from social and cultural stereotypes and stigma, to physical workplace obstacles and barriers to full participation.

Workers and all people with disabilities should be entitled to full human rights and freedoms without discrimination. Unions must do even more to advocate for disability

rights in the workplace and promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all spheres of life. True equity demands that we recognize and respect differences and respond to individuals according to their needs and abilities.

The MFL endorses full, comprehensive and timely implementation of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*, introduced by former NDP Minister, Sister Jennifer Howard, passed unanimously by the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. Progress has stalled under the Pallister PC government, denying people with disabilities of their fundamental human rights.

An important part of union efforts to advocate for disability rights includes advocating for workers who are injured or made sick on the job, resulting in a disability. Fair workers compensation and safe return-to-work practices are strongly linked to the need for appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Internally, greater efforts are also needed by labour in encouraging and supporting the participation of their members with disabilities in union activities and ensuring that any barriers to their participation and advancement are eliminated.

2.5 LGBTQ2SI Workers

The labour movement condemns discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, intersex (LGBTQ2SI) workers and other people, including violence. The MFL recently (2015) established a Solidarity & Pride (LGBTQ2SI) Caucus and corresponding Executive Council Vice-President position to add voice to the MFL Executive and provide a forum to advance issues, concerns and opportunities of LGBTQ2SI workers. This area of equality and anti-discrimination advocacy requires greater focus and attention from our movement.

2.6 Young Workers

The labour movement understands that young members are critical to the strength of our movement today and in the future. Many of our campaign priorities – such as the fight for a \$15 living wage, and calls for a high-quality job creation strategy as an alternative to the increasing prevalence of precarious work – centre around young workers.

The safety of young workers (and future workers) has also been a major priority for the MFL and all unions. Safe Workers of Tomorrow is an important labour partner, originally born out of the labour movement, that teaches high school students and other future workers about workplace health and safety and their safety rights.

The MFL runs an active Young Members Committee to give expression and action to issues facing young members in their unions and their workplaces. There is also a designated Young Members Vice President position on the MFL Executive Council, elected at Convention by a Caucus of Young Members.

The MFL Young Members Committee administers an annual \$1,000.00 scholarship, named in honour of long-time labour and political activists Al and Alma Cerilli. The Committee has also been active on affordable tuition policy and campus safety.

3.0 HUMAN RIGHTS

The labour movement in Canada and Manitoba has devoted substantial efforts and resources to promoting human rights. It is our goal to make our workplaces and communities safe places that are free of harassment and discrimination for all workers, no matter what their gender / gender identity, their race or colour, their physical and mental abilities, their religion, their sexual orientation, their age or any other differences between us. We are committed to defending human rights, trade union rights and equality for all.

Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and all forms of discrimination are the natural enemy of human rights; they are anti-worker and anti-union.

Historically, one out of every five complaints received by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission contains allegations of harassment in the workplace, underscoring the close inter-dependence between human rights and workplace rights, and the clear need for unions to play a leadership role in the struggle for human rights.

Among other activities, the MFL will advocate for human rights and equity by:

- Pushing for a national anti-racism framework, a plan to meet targets set by the United Nations' World Conference Against Racism and the establishment of an Anti-Racism Council to coordinate national, provincial, territorial and municipal anti-racism and human rights policies and legislation;
- Calling for adequate funding for programs that support diversity, fight discrimination and assist equity-seeking groups;
- Working with disability rights organizations to ensure our governments honour our commitments under United Nations Conventions;
- Supporting LGBTQ2SI members and activists who are working to broaden social equality; and
- Championing policies and legislation that promote values of respect, dignity and fairness for all in an environment that promotes and supports diversity as well as equal attainment of life opportunities for all community members.

The MFL will also urge all governments to respect and uphold the provisions of **Jordan's Principle** by guaranteeing the delivery of critical public services to those in need first, and settling inter-governmental jurisdictional disputes later, whether on or off reserve.

The MFL also supports the call of the national labour movement to have clean water recognized by the United Nations as a human right, to be ensured to all.

4.0 LABOUR LAW

4.1 Labour Relations

The Manitoba Federation of Labour is firmly committed to ensuring that every worker has the democratic right to join a union, the right to free and fair collective bargaining and the right to strike. We see these as essential and fundamental rights, and recognize them as rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There have been many encroachments on these rights by right-wing governments at the federal and provincial level over the years, which the MFL has actively resisted and opposed. Protecting and championing these fundamental rights will always be core to the MFL's mandate, as the provincial central labour body for Manitoba.

Current law appropriately recognizes these rights as vitally important to the public interest, as explained in the preamble of *The Manitoba Labour Relations Act* (emphasis added):

it is in the public interest of the Province of Manitoba to further harmonious relations between employers and employees by encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining between employers and unions as the freely designated representatives of employees.

The MFL supports a fair, equitable and balanced framework for unions and employers to bargain – this balance should always be maintained within *The Manitoba Labour Relations Act*, including with respect to applications for union certification, as well as to all applications related to bargaining and implementation of collective agreements.

The MFL has always spoken out against measures that tilt the balance of labour relations in favour of employers, to the disadvantage of workers and their unions. The Pallister government has already made several major moves to unbalance labour relations in our province: the elimination of card check certification, forced union inter-mingling representation votes in health care, wage freeze legislation and the elimination of Project Labour Agreements are among the most significant interferences with fair labour relations and collective bargaining instituted by the Pallister government.

The MFL supports the following democratic provisions for Labour Relations legislation:

- The re-instituting of card check certification;
- A democratic, simple majority threshold of 50% + 1 for card check certification;
- A ban on the use of replacement workers during strikes or lockouts (anti-scab); and
- Fair first contract and binding arbitration provisions.

We oppose:

- Interference with free and fair collective bargaining, including legislating wages or any other part of collective agreements;
- Back-to-work legislation;

- Right-to work legislation / interference with the RAND formula;
- Overly aggressive 'essential service' provisions that have the effect of weakening labour's position in bargaining and labour action;
- Forced union inter-mingling votes, which disregard the democratic decisions already made by workers about their union representation; and
- Super-majority (greater than 50% + 1) thresholds for card check certification.

The MFL is committed to defending workers and their unions against the imposition of anti-worker and anti-union laws and policies in all forms and at all occasion as they arise.

4.2 Employment Standards

The labour movement has always fought passionately to improve the lives and working conditions of all workers, both unionized and non-unionized. Many of the most basic rights and standards that were first won by unions have now been extended to all workers, like the minimum wage, over-time pay, holiday time, and maternity leave and parental leave. Overtime, the labour movement has pushed and shaped *The Employment Standards Code*, setting out basic, minimum standards for work, which all workers are entitled to. It is a core part of the MFL's work to lobby and campaign for extending and enriching this framework for socially accepted and demanded rights and standards for all workers, to help counter the real power imbalance that exists between employers and workers in all workplaces, especially workers without a union in their corner.

Precarious work is increasingly becoming the norm, especially for non-unionized workers, characterized by involuntary part-time hours, temporary employment, no job security, self-employment, poor rates of pay, no benefits, sub-standard health and safety standards and heightened vulnerability to threats, harassment and discrimination. This is especially true for vulnerable workers, including women, young workers, first-time workers, immigrants, temporary foreign workers, workers of colour, Indigenous workers and employees of small companies.

The Employment Standards Code should be regularly reviewed, updated and improved to reflect dynamic changes in the world of work and evolving societal norms of fairness and equality, which labour must constantly work to shape and influence. The Code should apply to all workers, regardless of occupation or circumstance, or union membership.

The MFL supports:

- Raising the minimum wage to a living wage of \$15.00-an-hour and indexing to reflect changes in the cost of living, because employment should afford all workers with sufficient income to live above the poverty line, with dignity and the basics of life;
- Reinstatement of the security guard special minimum wage scale, legislated by the NDP and cancelled by the Pallister government;
- Enhanced paid employment leave provisions related to domestic violence (a victory of the Manitoba labour movement and a Canadian first) – along with public awareness campaigns to ensure victims are aware of their rights;
- Paid sick leave and family leave;

- Paid breaks and fair time-off between shifts;
- Fairness for retail and other workers called upon to work Sundays or holidays;
- Stronger 'Just Cause' and 'Burden of Proof' protections; and
- Guaranteed employment leaves to allow workers to access improving EI benefits, including maternity and parental leave (new provisions for 18 months), critical illness and other benefits. [Relatedly, the MFL also supports the CLC's call for reforming federal EI to be fairer for everyone, including by reducing the number of qualifying hours, increasing the benefit period, increasing the wage replacement rates, investing surpluses in better training and labour adjustment programs, and proactively helping workers to balance work and family responsibilities].

5.0 WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH

The MFL has always fought for the right of every worker to be safe and healthy at work. All families have the right to expect their loved ones will return home safely at the end of each shift – no exceptions. The MFL runs a very active Health & Safety Committee and holds health & safety educationals and events on a regular basis, championing and advancing health and safety issues from a worker's perspective.

Workplace injuries, illness and fatalities do not have to happen – workplace tragedies are preventable. With the right laws, policies and investments, we can ensure that all workers stay safe and healthy on the job. The approach taken by our provincial government to workplace health and safety – including the degree of dedication to injury prevention, the strength of laws and regulations to protect workers, and the commitment to enforcement activities – has a big impact on whether or not workers can count on having a safe and healthy workplace.

Working primarily in partnership with NDP governments over the years, the MFL has won important improvements to Manitoba's health and safety framework:

- A bold Five-year Plan for Workplace Injury and Illness Prevention;
- Creation of a Chief Prevention Officer position, and a dedicated prevention agency, SAFE Work Manitoba;
- Enshrinement in law of the four essential workplace health and safety rights: the right to know, the right to participate, the right to refuse unsafe work, and the right to work and exercise these rights without being subject to discrimination;
- Stricter fines for employers who refuse to comply with health and safety rules.
- Expanded requirements for health and safety programs and health and safety representatives in more workplaces;
- Paid educational leave for joint health & safety committee members, and clearer requirements for employers to respond to committee recommendations.
- Amendments to *The Highway Traffic Act* to better protect construction and road workers;
- New rules for tackling violence, harassment and bullying in the workplace;
- Stronger rules around the right to refuse unsafe work, increased penalties for employers that discourage injured workers from filing WCB claims (claim suppression), and stiffer rules around employers who take discriminatory action against workers (e.g. reverse onus);
- Expansion of the ground-breaking Safe Workers of Tomorrow program; and
- Presumptive WCB coverage for all workers for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Despite these improvements, there are still far too many cases of worker illness, injury and deaths on the job. For instance, almost 29,000 Manitobans were injured at work in 2016, and 24 workers died from occupational injuries or illnesses. These are sobering statistics, which compel us to redouble our efforts.

It is of great concern to the MFL that the Pallister government has been moving backward, rather than forward, on workplace safety & health. Since their election in 2016, Pallister has already:

- Cut nearly \$800,000 from Workplace Safety & Health, meaning fewer resources focused on keeping workers safe on the job;
- Eliminated the Minister's Advisory Committee on Workplace Safety & Health, a volunteer, expert body;
- Shuttered the Brandon and District Worker Advisory Office, eliminating local assistance with WCB claims and appeals;
- Weakened enforcement by reducing the number of workplace safety and health inspections; and
- Created an arbitrary rule that requires government to eliminate two protections, for every new protection added.

And they're even talking about watering down standards for protecting workers from harmful chemicals by abandoning the practice of "automatic adoption", which immediately adjusts exposure limits based on the latest science.

More improvements to our workplace health and safety laws, regulations and policies are needed to keep all workers safe and healthy at work. The MFL is committed to continuing our campaign for:

- More extensive training for joint health and safety committee members, and worker representatives to perform their important roles;
- Ensuring full access to information for health and safety committee members, and more inclusive involvement of unions to support worker priorities;
- Major amendments to the Act to better recognize psychological hazards and prioritize workplace psychological health and safety, including formal recognition of the CSA National Standard on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace to assist in identifying hazards and implementing evidence-based approaches to prevent illness and injury;
- A comprehensive asbestos strategy to combat Canada's leading cause of occupational death, including establishment of a provincial asbestos buildings registry, a registry of people afflicted with asbestos-related diseases, and cooperative work with other provinces and territories to strengthen regulatory standards across the country for remediation and disposal;
- Mandatory, timely and prevention-oriented investigative processes for workplace fatalities and critical incidents, with family and union involvement and public reporting;
- Re-establishment of the Minister's Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health;
- Enshrinement of current 1:1 journey-person-apprentice ratios;
- Stronger administrative penalties;
- Automatic adoption of occupational exposure limits, as defined by the latest science;

- Further strengthening of efforts on prevention, including:
 - Ongoing broad public awareness and marketing campaigns;
 - Commitment to completing implementation of Manitoba’s current Five-Year Workplace Injury and Illness Prevention Plan, and presenting subsequent plans in the future;
 - Expansion of the new SAFE Work Certified standard² and prevention incentive initiatives, including to more female-dominated workforces;
 - Targeted prevention efforts for vulnerable workers – these should be advanced in partnership with existing labour / community organizations;
 - Expanding the ground-breaking SAFE Workers of Tomorrow program to reach ALL high school students in the province; and
 - Special efforts on violence prevention (including high risk workplaces such as buses, health care facilities and correctional institutions) and working alone policies to keep workers safe.
- Enforcing the ban against WCB claim suppression and overly aggressive return to work practices;
- Enforcing the Westray law to ensure criminal prosecutions of negligent employers, because when criminal negligence results in a worker’s death, it’s not an accident, it’s a crime;
- Amendments to reflect recognition of domestic violence as a workplace hazard, requiring employers to take precautions to protect workers against domestic violence;
- Ensuring workers have access to safety and emergency communication tools, such as radios or cell phone coverage;
- Addressing hazards associated with fatigue and extended shift work;
- Countering bully and harassment in the workplace; and
- Strengthening protections for road workers.

The need for strong enforcement activities is as important as having strong laws and regulations in place. A law can only be as strong as the government’s commitment to enforcing it. The MFL is greatly concerned by the reduction in the number of workplace health & safety inspections which has taken place under the Pallister Government, as well as creeping “vacancy management” in all areas of government, including Workplace Safety and Health Branch. We will continue to press for the Branch and its staff to be appropriately resourced and supported to carry out strong enforcement activities.

² It is imperative that the SAFE Work Certified standard continue to include worker interviews as an integral component, and contain no link whatsoever to claims experience – certification should be based only on the quality of a workplace’s health and safety program.

6.0 WORKERS COMPENSATION

Experience Rating and Claim Suppression

The Workers Compensation system was built on five foundational principles, known as the Meredith principles:

- 1) No fault compensation
- 2) Guaranteed benefits
- 3) Exclusive jurisdiction
- 4) Collective liability
- 5) Independent administration

These principles provide the foundational underpinning for the 'historic compromise' of workers compensation: workers relinquish their rights to sue an employer if they are hurt on the job, in exchange for no-fault, secure benefits for as long as they're needed, administered independently, and funded collectively by employers. In practice, however, there are major problems with the system's incomplete and inconsistent application of these principles.

The adoption of Experience Rating into Manitoba's WCB assessment model has pushed Manitoba's WCB system away from the Meredith principles, incenting claim suppression and aggressive return to work practices by employers. These practices hurt injured workers and deprive them of the supports that should be available to help them recover and return safely to meaningful work, thereby undermining the fairness, effectiveness and integrity of the system.

Experience Rating creates a direct financial relationship between a given employer's claims experience record and that same employer's individual WCB premium costs. This individual responsibility, rather than collective responsibility, incents some employers to minimize their costs by reducing the number and duration of claims, rather than incenting the adoption of effective health and safety programs to protect workers from injuries and illnesses in the first place. Employer interference prevents workers from accessing benefits that should be guaranteed, and the focus becomes 'who's at fault', and how claims can be 'managed' to prevent premium increases.

For as long as Experience Rating has been in place, the MFL has been raising concerns about claim suppression and aggressive return to work practices. We receive frequent reports from affiliate members about claim suppression being perpetrated by employers in different ways, including:

- Discouraging or flat-out preventing injured workers from reporting injuries and filing WCB claims;
- Aggressively fighting and appealing many or all WCB claims made by injured workers, increasingly with the aid of paid third-party "claims management" consultants;
- Filing appeals as a means of gaining access to a worker's medical information in a "fishing expedition" to try to find 'fault' or 'cause' to have the claim dismissed;

- Adopting and following policies that require management to appeal any claims over a prescribed value, irrespective of the circumstances;
- Establishing incentives (like financial bonuses, or workplace celebrations) for injured workers not to report injuries or file claims – these often involve group incentives, creating additional peer pressure not to report or file a claim;
- Punishing workers for reporting an injury and filing a claim (e.g. dismissal, re-assignment, shift changes, assignment to meaningless work);
- Pressuring workers to re-start their jobs before they're healthy enough to work, or failing to provide appropriate accommodations to make post-injury work safe as well as meaningful; and
- Pressuring workers to accept private insurance benefits, instead of filing a WCB claim, encroaching on what should be WCB's exclusive jurisdiction.

In the end, workers are left questioning the independence of a system (another core Meredith principle), which feels so tilted against them.

Problems with Experience Rating and the seriousness of claim suppression have been well documented in Manitoba. The MFL prepared a comprehensive report into incidences of claim suppression and aggressive return to work practices in 2010. Following from this, the provincial government commissioned an independent external review of WCB's rate model in 2012/13 (Paul Petrie report), and from there, the WCB conducted an extensive consultation and commissioned a series of additional reports on the existing rate model (Morneau Shepell, Prism). Together, these investigations have produced a widespread formal recognition of the serious and systemic problem of claim suppression and aggressive return to work practices resulting from the financial incentives associated with Experience Rating.

In response to these findings, the WCB has elected to respond with a three-pronged approach, based largely on the Petrie report:

1. Making adjustments to the current rate model to "smooth" experience-based financial incentives and penalties, and thereby reduce (although not eliminate) financial incentives to suppress claims (i.e. making an employer's premiums less sensitive to their individual claims record);
2. Establishing a new 'safety certification' standard (*SAFE Work Certified*) to guide and support employers in adopting effective occupational health and safety programs that reduce injuries and illnesses (and claims); and
3. Creating a new 'prevention incentive' to financially reward the adoption of *SAFE Work Certified* health and safety programs (providing some counter-balance to the rate model incentive to suppress claims).

It bears repeating that it remains the MFL's strong preference that Experience Rating be eliminated altogether, as the most direct way to address claims suppression. We favour a true collective liability, no fault and secure benefit system. However, we are cautiously hopeful that announced changes to the rate model, combined with a new safety certification standard and a prevention incentive will - taken together - have some positive effects.

We are continuing to lobby for:

- WCB/SAFE Work Manitoba to step-up employer and worker education and public awareness around existing prohibitions against claim suppression and aggressive return to work practices;
- Strengthened enforcement and penalties against claim suppression and aggressive return to work and more rigorous enforcement of prohibitions;
- Public reporting on employers guilty of claim suppression and aggressive return to work activities; and
- Mandatory safe return to work plans, developed jointly by workers, doctors and employers, to guide the safe re-start of work after an injury/illness.

Recent System Improvements and Ongoing Challenges:

In addition to our active campaign against claims suppression and experience rating, the MFL has successfully pushed for a number of WCB reforms that were implemented by the previous NDP government:

- Removing the cap on insurable earnings;
- Maintaining the calculation of wage replacement benefits at 90% for the duration of a claim (eliminating the drop-down to 80% after two years);
- Eliminating age-based reductions to impairment awards;
- Expanding coverage to organizations using volunteers and work experience programs;
- Allowing benefit levels to be topped-up above 90% (up to 100%) from other sources, including provisions negotiated as part of collective agreements;
- Strengthening prohibitions against claim suppression;
- Ensuring a minimum level of wage loss replacement benefits for low-income workers at no less than 100% of the Manitoba minimum wage;
- Strengthening the onus on workplaces to support injured workers to get back to work;
- Establishment of a consolidated arms-length prevention entity (SAFE Work Manitoba) and a prevention committee of the WCB Board of Directors;
- Introduction of reverse onus for discriminatory/retaliatory action; and
- Presumptive coverage for PTSD for all workers.

Despite these many improvements, the MFL still hears regularly from members about difficulties they face navigating the WCB system and accessing compensation services – challenges like:

- Confusion regarding detailed filing requirements and cumbersome steps in the claims adjudication process;
- Employers who block injury reporting, or pressure injured workers to re-start their jobs without safe return to work plans;
- WCB decisions that are inconsistent with medical advice and inadequate processes to resolve differences in medical opinions;
- Invasive interference and unjustified appeals by third party 'claims management' firms seeking to minimize employer costs;

- Proving the workplace causes of occupational disease (made harder by the WCB's 'dominant cause' test of causation); and
- Lack of understanding and double standards respecting compensability of psychological injuries.

Workplace injuries and illnesses are not things that any worker wants to endure, and the WCB system can be confusing and additionally frustrating for injured workers, despite the best efforts of many WCB staff to support positive interactions, working within the current system.

The MFL is continuing to press for needed improvements to the system, such as:

- Mandatory coverage, so that all workers have the benefit of WCB coverage;
- Strengthened prevention efforts;
- Eliminating 'dominant cause' as the burden of proof for compensability of occupational disease, in favour of a 'balance of probabilities' test;
- Creation of an Occupational Disease Panel to research and set out a schedule of occupational diseases for presumptive coverage;
- Equal treatment for physical and psychological injuries and illnesses, including:
 - Removing current exemptions preventing coverage of stress-based psychological injury or illness; and
 - Add a clause that defines "workplace stressors" and expands compensation to cover diagnosed mental health disorders found to be caused by exposure to single or cumulative workplace stressors (*e.g. bullying/harassment*).
 - Enshrining the National Standard for Workplace Psychological Health and Safety as a means to assess the presence of workplace stressors known to cause psychological illness/injury.
- Maintaining a strong funding model in the order of 130% (in the context of government considering a lower ratio that could put the long term sustainability of the system at risk); and
- Ending the unfair practice of deducting CPP contributions in determining wage loss benefits.

Discounting / Suppression of Medical Opinions

Over the last number of years, the MFL has been receiving more frequent reports and complaints from injured workers and from health care providers about how medical opinions are being discounted or ignored in determinations regarding their WCB claims. We're hearing about more and more cases where the WCB is making claims decisions that are at odds with the medical opinions of workers' own doctors or other health care providers. This is a very concerning trend.

While workers have the right under the current system to seek medical advice from health care providers of their choosing, it is also commonplace for the WCB to involve additional health care providers on contract with the Board to review and re-assess an injured worker's injury or illness claim. Quite often, this is done without an in-person medical examination, and strictly on the basis of a paper file review – also a concerning practice.

It is unclear why and under what circumstances the WCB elects to obtain advice from a second medical source of its own. If there is information missing from a worker's own doctor, the WCB should reach out to that doctor to fill-in any holes, rather than calling in a second opinion, especially without an in-person examination. Injured workers are left feeling that the WCB is looking for medical opinions that minimize claim costs, rather than opinions focused on lasting recovery and safe return to work. It is also unclear how the WCB makes claims decisions when faced with conflicting medical opinions from different sources. On what basis does the WCB concur with a doctor it contracts with directly, over a worker's own doctor?

Sometimes the point of contention centres on diagnosis – it is common for the WCB to insist that a worker's injury or illness stems from a pre-existing condition, when the worker's doctor diagnoses an occupational cause. Sometimes the disagreement relates to treatment/rehabilitation plans – e.g. the WCB refuses to approve ongoing prescribed therapy, citing lower "averages" for the type of injury in question. Other times, medical opinions on safe return to work plans are ignored – for example, a worker's doctor prescribes a series of work restrictions, easing over time as a worker recovers, but these are not respected by the employer or enforced by the WCB.

There are supposed to be processes in place to ensure that when a difference of medical opinion does occur, the physicians involved are notified and connected with one another with the aim of resolving any issues. However, these processes do not appear to be working, and consensus is not being reached in many cases, leaving workers confused and anxious about the best path forward to recovery and return to work.

Family doctors, specialists and other community health care providers are growing discouraged with the WCB system, when no explanation is provided as to why their advice is not accepted or followed. We are concerned that when medical opinions are being discounted by the WCB, workers are being sent back to work prematurely and/or with insufficient attention being paid to safe restrictions or accommodations. There is no question that early, safe return to work is in the best interest of workers, employers and the WCB system as a whole, but 'safe' cannot be sacrificed in the interest of 'early'.

The MFL believes that:

- WCB should adopt procedures to ensure that any needed information about a sick or injured worker's claim is obtained from his or her own health care provider;
- WCB contracted health care providers should only be used at an injured worker's request or when community health care providers are not available (in which case, the worker should be notified immediately);
- WCB should develop clear guidelines for resolving any differences of medical opinions that might arise, so workers can be sure of the best path forward for recovery and safe return to work; and
- WCB should adopt the practice of having a sick or injured worker's safe return to work plan be developed jointly by the worker, his or her employer, and the worker's doctor. And where there is disagreement, there should be a quick and easy way to engage the WCB to intervene and build consensus before a worker resumes his or her activities.

7.0 THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND PRIVATIZATION

The Manitoba and Canada that we know today is very much the product of a "mixed economy," the co-existence of strong and vibrant public and private sectors. Public enterprise has been the tool that many governments have wisely used to achieve nation-building and quality service objectives. The public sector has, in many ways, been a tangible expression of our national character and commitment to caring.

In many cases, public enterprise has been the tool that delivered necessary development that private enterprise refused to undertake because of cost and magnitude. Canada's share of the canals and lock systems that make up the St. Lawrence Seaway; a national railway system; airports; telephone, electrical, water and natural gas utility systems; and the national broadcasting system are all in existence today because of the public's willingness to underwrite their development. In some of these examples, the public sector took over failed private ventures that did not have the skills or determination to do the job.

The public sector is also used to deliver vital services that families count on every day, in a way where profit motive does not hamper quality, challenge universality, erode accessibility or undermine affordability, such as Medicare, public education, the Canada Pension Plan, regional economic development programs, public insurance, social security, corrections, and agencies that protect the public safety.

A fair, progressive tax system is essential to support the public sector in building a better, fairer and more equitable society. Paying our fair share of taxes ensures that government can make the needed investments in the public services we all count on: health care, education, infrastructure, income-support, economic development, poverty-reduction, community development, child care, safety, affordable housing, social services, etc.

Also key to maintaining a high level of quality in public services and infrastructure is the recruitment and retention of skilled and fairly-compensated workers in appropriate numbers to deal with workload. What governments are calling 'vacancy management' is starving the public sector of needed workers to deliver high quality and accessible public services, creating major workload, stress and burnout issues for other employees. It is a misnomer to claim that service quality can be maintained when the workforce is short changed. Whether performing front-line services or back-end support functions, all public sector workers play important roles in ensuring the public services that families count on every day. The MFL urges government to maintain staffing levels so as to ensure high quality public services, and fair and reasonable workloads and working conditions for public sector workers.

The MFL calls on government to introduce and implement proactive staff recruitment, and retention programs, including compensation fairness through pay equity legislation.

We also urge public sector compliance with all laws requiring action by employers. It is embarrassing and unacceptable for public sector employers to be laggards in implementing Health & Safety practices, for example. The public sector has been especially slow in implementing injury / illness prevention programming, which will keep public sector workers safe on the job. Of particular note, rates of injury and illness remain extremely high among Manitoba's female-dominated health care workforce.

Balanced Budget legislation has had a negative effect on the quality and accessibility of public services in Manitoba, and the level of respect shown by government for public sector workers. The MFL has consistently opposed Balanced Budget Legislation since it was first introduced by the Filmon PC government in the 1990s as an economically-unsound and dangerous fiscal straight jacket, designed to minimize the role of the public sector in our economy and remove government's ability to provide needed cyclical economic stimulus and respond to urgent needs.

The Pallister government has broken its promise to protect public services and respect the hardworking public sector workers who deliver them. Government has done so through layoffs, privatization, creating and maintaining staff vacancies, and interference with collective bargaining. Recent moves to privatize important components of our home care system and air ambulance services are extremely concerning. The MFL opposes this approach, and calls on government to live up to its word.

It's no surprise that right wing governments favour privatization. Historically, the relatively successful labour relations climate in the public sector has resulted in fairer wages, working conditions and benefits than generally exist in the private sector. Private sector employers and their advocates view this as increasing pressure from their own workers for similar conditions. They also view the vibrant areas of public sector activity as lost opportunities for private sector profit-making.

The MFL opposes the Pallister government's strategy to expand the use of P3s – including investigating their applicability to public schools – which have tended to be cloaked in secrecy, designed to give private investors high returns, without public input or accountability, while routinely failing to achieve purported objectives related to cost, risk transfer and timelines, at the long-term expense of taxpayers and the public. We condemn Pallister's repeal of *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act* legislated by the NDP.

The MFL similarly opposes Pallister's efforts to extend the dangerous P3 model into the vital area of social services through the introduction of Social Impact Bonds (SIBs), prioritizing private financing, private control and private profits over the provision of high quality public and community services for families and vulnerable individuals. Human needs, not private profits, should drive the provision of social services.

The MFL is also concerned about the Pallister government's attempts to weaken and undermine the credibility of our important and valued Crown Corporations. For example, we support full public delivery of cannabis by Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries, and oppose the breaking-off of energy efficiency programming into a new entity, separate from Manitoba Hydro. Our Crown Corporations should be protected and developed, and any moves to privatize them should be opposed.

8.0 WAGES AND INCOME POLICY

8.1 Minimum Wage

No one should work full-time and live in poverty. But that is exactly what is happening to thousands of workers right now in Manitoba, because our minimum wage is set at a poverty level.

Contrary to the myths, most minimum wage workers are adults, and the majority are women, many of whom have children to support. Every day, thousands of families are forced to make impossible choices between paying the rent and buying groceries, because our minimum wage isn't enough to allow people to make ends meet, even with a full-time job.

We urge the provincial and federal governments to make the minimum wage to a living wage at a rate of \$15-an-hour. The living wage will need to be indexed to increase along with inflation on an annual basis. Fighting for a living wage for all workers is part of the MFL's commitment to standing up for unorganized workers. Making the minimum wage a living wage will help lift thousands of low-income workers above the poverty line, helping them to better meet their basic needs.

8.2 Construction Industry Wages Act

The MFL supports the principles of *The Construction Industry Wages Act*, which establishes equity in tendering processes that involve direct competition between unionized contractors and contractors without a unionized workforce. It does so by eliminating variable wages and working conditions in determining the value of a tendered bid.

This means that contractors without a unionized workforce cannot pay sub-standard wages and encourage unsafe working conditions and practices in order to submit the lowest-priced bid. Contractors who pay workers a decent wage and meet workplace health and safety obligations should not be penalized by being under-cut by contractors not willing to meet these crucial obligations.

The minimum wage schedule contained in the Act is pegged at a fixed relationship to the wages contained in the master collective agreement negotiated by the Building Trades Council and the Construction Labour Relations Association.

8.3 Project Labour Agreements

Project Labour Agreements (PLAs) are based on the simple principle that Manitoba construction projects should benefit Manitobans; they should create jobs, prioritize safety and be built properly by trained workers so we can all rely on infrastructure that lasts. PLAs have been used by governments of various ideological stripes in Manitoba, dating back to Premier Duff Roblin.

PLAs play a key role in increasing the participation of Manitoba workers on Manitoba projects, by establishing common wage, safety and training standards, changing the

tendering equation from cost only, to “cost plus quality”, and preventing “race to the bottom” bidding.

PLAs have been used on hydro-electric dams, the Floodway expansion project and the east side road, consistently delivering high value projects with high quality work, on time and on budget. They have also been used effectively to increase training and employment opportunities for under-represented workers, including women and Indigenous Manitobans. PLAs also ensure labour peace, providing financial and timing certainty and stability.

The MFL stands with our Brothers and Sisters in the Manitoba Building Trades in strongly opposing the Pallister government’s purely ideological decision to ban PLAs on public infrastructure projects through *The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Act*.

9.0 PENSIONS

Pension Framework

The MFL is committed to the following principles that we consider to be the foundation of a fair, effective and dependable pension framework:

- All Canadians should have access to adequate pension income in retirement, including the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and mandatory workplace pension plans, which are vested, locked-in, portable and subject to full disclosure requirements to plan members;
- The Defined Benefit Model is the most effective, efficient and equitable currently available; and
- Pension funds, including surpluses, are deferred income and are the property of the workers who earned them; they are not the property of the employer and should not be used for any purpose other than retirement income for those entitled to a share in the fund without their knowledge and agreement.

The MFL will continue to campaign:

- To protect existing workplace plans in both the public and private sectors;
- To safeguard defined benefit pension plans and to educate workers, employers and the public about the risks and inadequacies associated with Defined Contribution and newer target-benefit-based models;
- To expand employee representation on pension boards;
- To enhance retirement security by extending strong pension plans to more Manitoba workers; and
- For a stronger Canada Pension Plan to strengthen retirement security for all workers.

Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Improvements

In Canada today, nearly two-thirds of working people don't have a workplace pension plan (some 11 million workers). In just the private sector, 75% of employees are without a workplace pension plan. RRSPs and other private voluntary schemes have proven to be severely inadequate to properly support the vast majority of working families in retirement, being dependent on the stock markets, eroded by high management fees, and used disproportionately by the highest income earners.

That's why the MFL has strongly supported the CLC's cross-country campaign for an expansion of the Canada Pension Plan. The CPP is not just the main way most workers save for retirement out of their employment earnings, it is the only way that millions of Canadian workers put aside a portion of their wages for retirement. And while the labour movement is glad that the provinces and federal government were finally able to reach an agreement on a modest but important enhancement, very real inequities exist in the enhanced CPP agreement that will disadvantage parents who take time off to raise children – primarily women – and workers who become severely and chronically disabled.

Prior to its expansion, these two categories of workers could exclude, or “drop out” periods of low and zero earnings from the calculation of their retirement benefit. Inexplicably, these provisions were not rolled over into the recent CPP expansion. Manitoba’s labour movement urges both the provincial and federal governments to take leadership roles within the country to resolve these inequities that will primarily hurt women and disabled workers.

We also continue to call on both levels of government to push for cross-country support to further strengthen the retirement security of all Canadians by doubling CPP benefits, including increasing the CPP income replacement rate further, raising the ceiling on pensionable earnings and further enhancing the portion of employee contributions that are tax-deductible.

10.0 ECONOMIC POLICY

10.1 Economic Priorities

Economic policy should be focused on the needs and welfare of all Manitobans and Canadians, rather than private profits. Governments have the ability and responsibility to help create and sustain good jobs and economic growth. The MFL supports an economic vision based on:

- Full employment;
- Improvement and expansion of public services;
- More equitable distribution of wealth;
- Expansion of the manufacturing sector and greater value-added processing of natural resources in Canada; and
- Planned, diversified and fair trade.

We call on government to focus its economic efforts on:

- Growing the number of good, family-supporting jobs, with safe and healthy working conditions;
- Putting workers at the centre of economic development and giving them a voice in the work they do;
- Focusing on creating good jobs for unemployed, underemployed, and precariously-employed workers;
- Promoting and upholding the right to collective bargaining;
- Making the minimum wage a living wage at \$15-per-hour, indexing it to inflation, and setting full employment as a primary policy target;
- Committing to long-term funding for high-quality, public, universal and affordable child care;
- Adopting strong, proactive pay equity legislation in order to work to end gender wage discrimination;
- Tightening regulations on hours of work and scheduling;
- Increasing staffing, training and resources for enforcement of provincial labour laws, employment standards and workplace health and safety.

The MFL calls for international trade agreements to promote economic equality, encourage the creation of good jobs, support the interests of working people, and ensure ecological sustainability.

We join with the rest of the Canadian labour movement in advocating for a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement that puts the interests of working people and the environment first. Free trade agreements like NAFTA have failed working Canadians, undermining secure well-paid employment and hollowing out manufacturing and processing industries and hurting the communities that depend on them.

We join the CLC in calling for a renegotiated NAFTA that proposes substantive reforms to protect good paying local jobs and communities, including strengthened labour and environmental agreements, abolishing the Chapter 11 investor state dispute mechanism

(which grants special rights to foreign investors and corporations), protecting public services, and more strategic and effective use of government procurement to help Canadian workers.

The Government of Manitoba has a responsibility to work with other governments in Canada to promote international trade agreements that protect workers and strengthen labour rights. Unfortunately, more recent free trade agreements reached by Canada with other countries follow many of the same patterns as NAFTA: prioritizing the needs of corporations and the profit motive over the well-being of Canadian workers and communities. Agreements such as the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and others hollow out workers' rights, weaken targets for air and water quality, and, through concessions to pharmaceutical companies, increase drug costs on working families. We will continue to oppose free trade agreements that do not support working families or the industries their livelihoods rely on. At the same time, as part of the broader labour movement, the MFL will continue to propose reasonable solutions that will provide balance and fairness to international trade agreements that put the needs of working families first.

10.2 Arts and Culture

Strong artistic and cultural communities provide a more fulsome life for all. Creative industries also provide employment for thousands of Manitobans. The MFL believes that an important measure of social development is embodied in the state of the arts, and how society treats artists. We support calls for the creation of Status of the Artist legislation in Manitoba. Similar legislation is already in place at the federal level and in several provinces, and would acknowledge the important contribution made by artists to the cultural and economic well-being of our society. As workers, many artists lack the rights and benefits that other workers have, including statutory holidays, overtime pay, minimum wage, vacation pay, work breaks and termination pay. In jurisdictions where this legislation exists, it has helped artists secure the benefits of fair collective bargaining and contracts.

10.3 Agricultural

Rural communities face a wide range of issues, including the erosion of the family farm base, the impact of large increases in input costs, the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board, social services for farm families, and the impact of unfair trade practices on farm commodities. As a central labour body, the MFL is particularly concerned about the treatment of migrant workers and temporary foreign workers, and we support the work unions are doing to ensure that these workers have their labour and human rights protected, including fair compensation, proper health care and paths to full citizenship.

11.0 HEALTH CARE

11.1 The Canada Health Act

The Manitoba Federation of Labour is committed to the preservation and enhancement of our universal health care system. We support and defend the five principles of health care contained in the *Canada Health Act*:

Universality: the health care insurance plan of a province must entitle all of the insured persons of the province to the health services provided by the plan.

Accessibility: the health care insurance plan of a province must provide for insured health services on uniform terms and conditions and on a basis that does not impede or preclude, either directly or indirectly, whether by charges made to insured persons or otherwise, reasonable access to those services by insured persons. Equally important, those providing the services must receive "reasonable compensation".

Public Administration: the health care insurance plan of a province must be administered and operated on a non-profit basis by a public authority appointed or designated by the government of the province.

Comprehensiveness: the health care insurance plan of a province must insure all medically necessary health services provided by hospitals, medical practitioners or dentists, and, where the law of the province so permits, similar or additional services rendered by other health care practitioners.

Portability: the health care insurance plan of a province must not impose any minimum period of residence in the province, or waiting period, in excess of three months before residents of the province are eligible for and entitled to insured health services. And it must provide for the payment of the cost of insured health services provided to insured persons while temporarily absent from the province.

These principles are the building blocks of a Medicare system that is a cornerstone of a just society and which delivers high quality care to Canadians.

We honour the leadership of Tommy Douglas and the CCF / NDP in establishing Canada's Medicare system, one of the best health care systems in the world.

11.2 Strengthening Health Care

While we will always fight to protect a comprehensive, universal public health care system, we also believe that improvements can be made to the system to ensure greater access and promotion of healthier outcomes for Manitobans and Canadians, such as:

- A renegotiated Canada Health Accord with stable federal funding of at least 6% per annum;
- Stricter enforcement of the Canada Health Act and closing gaps in monitoring and reporting;

- Greater investment to increase and support health care professionals in the vitally important and demanding work they do to care for patients and families – this includes proper remuneration, education and retention strategies and investing in wellness and in injury and illness prevention for health care workers;
- A national seniors and continuing care program, covering long-term care facilities as well as home and community care;
- A national, universal Pharmacare program (more below);
- More diagnostic equipment, such as MRIs, to help reduce wait times and counter growth in for-profit MRI clinics and queue jumping for those who can pay; and
- Bans on user fees, extra billing, special health care premiums and medical savings accounts.

The MFL is deeply concerned that the Pallister government is weakening Manitoba's health care system by closing emergency rooms, urgent care centres, EMS stations and Quick Care Clinics. These attacks on front-line health care services are having seriously detrimental impacts on patients, families and health care workers alike, and yet the Pallister government has announced its intention of making even more dramatic cuts moving forward. The MFL stands in solidarity with Manitoba's health care unions and activists in opposing Pallister's health care cuts and disruptions.

11.3 Long Term Care

Among the many areas of our health care system requiring greater focus and resources, not less, is long-term care. Many working families are struggling to find quality long-term care for family members and demand for beds is projected to increasingly outstrip supply in the future. That's why the MFL is calling for an increase in the number of long-term care beds, better staffing ratios to ensure quality care, and increases in the Homecare hours afforded to patients to get the hands-on care they need to live at home.

Our health care system needs increased investments to better meet the demands of an aging population and ensure equitable health care access across all regions of the province. As Manitoba's population ages, the provincial government needs to invest in more public personal care home spaces to ensure that our loved ones are able to live out their years in high quality, affordable living situations staffed by well-trained and dedicated staff. At the same time, many low-income seniors rely on subsidized housing programs, allowing them to live in dignity in retirement. We believe that the provincial and federal governments need to ensure stable funding for these essential programs.

11.4 EMS

The MFL believes that robust EMS services should be available to Manitobans no matter where they live in the province, and that Manitobans need the provincial government to ensure adequate staffing levels, proper equipment for safety and comfort (such as power stretchers) and funding for quality, equitable access to EMS services throughout the province. The implementation of a community paramedicine program to serve rural Manitoba would help to increase health care access for rural Manitobans.

11.5 Prevention / Mental Health / Addictions

We also know that keeping Manitobans healthy is one of the most important ways to ensure a sustainable health care system for all. Greater emphasis on preventative investments aimed at ensuring Manitobans do not end up in urgent care centres and emergency rooms is becoming increasingly important, given the cuts being made at both the federal and provincial levels.

Coupled with this is a need to focus more on mental health and addictions, two major underlying factors in the overall health of our population. Too many working families in Manitoba are suffering the pain of having loved ones in the grips of addictions. We recognize that a variety of care options serve our province best, and sincerely hope that the Government of Manitoba will take seriously the need for greater investments and support in these and other areas to ensure greater quality of care to these vulnerable populations.

Mounting evidence shows that harm reduction approaches, rather than abstinence-based ones, work for a variety of people facing serious addictions and trauma. Recognizing that addictions are a result of physical, spiritual, emotional, and socially inflicted pain and trauma, harm reduction approaches seek to provide avenues for healing and recovery to those for whom abstinence-based approaches do not work. The continuum of harm reduction strategies should include safe use sites and managed alcohol programs, and better province-wide access to opiate replacement therapy programs.

Enabling Manitobans to get the supports they need to help them with their addictions is an important part of creating a healthier Manitoba. Part of this support has to include more investments in supportive second stage housing, as many people facing addictions face uncertain and transient housing situations. Stable, secure housing is a fundamental element in supporting people facing addictions and mental health challenges in getting better.

11.6 Pharmacare

The MFL is actively working to support the CLC-led cross-Canada campaign to establish a national, universal Pharmacare program, which we believe to be foundational for a healthy, engaged and economically vibrant society.

The labour movement has won prescription drug coverage and other healthcare benefits for millions of Canadian workers and their families. We've seen the difference this makes in the lives of our members and believe everyone in Canada deserves the same.

Presently, over 3 million Canadians don't take their medications as prescribed because they can't afford them, and over 8 million working Canadians do not have prescription drug coverage. This results in escalating inequities and poor health outcomes. Women are less likely to have prescription drug coverage, in part because more women work part-time, and young workers are less likely, especially because they're more likely to be stuck in low-wage, precarious jobs.

A national, universal pharmacare program would change this.

Canada is the only developed country in the world with a universal health care program that doesn't include a universal pharmacare program. A national, universal pharmacare program would improve access and affordability through bulk purchase and negotiating pricing with drug manufacturers, and it would eliminate duplication and cost shifting amongst existing payers, while promoting integration amongst the current patchwork of provincial-territorial programs. Recent studies show that a national, universal drug program could be financed with potentially no increase to government costs and save Canadians billions of dollars annually. Even the federal Parliamentary Budget Office estimates minimum savings of at least \$4 billion annually, based on the most comprehensive drug coverage.

11.7 Privatization

The MFL opposes the privatization, in whole or in part, of any health care services. For-profit services create a two-tiered health care system where an individual's personal wealth determines their access to care. Recent examples of initiatives by the Pallister government to privatize health services include moves to privatize home care and air ambulance services. We will continue to work with health care unions and public health advocates to oppose these dangerous moves that strip away public services and turn them into for-profit ventures that weaken access and equity in the delivery of health care that everyone counts on.

11.8 Forced Inter-mingling Votes

Shortly after coming to office, Premier Brian Pallister unilaterally declared his intention to reduce the number of collective agreements in the health care sector. Health care unions were taken aback that government wanted to focus on this, rather than improving patient care, especially since all major collective agreement items are already bargained at a central table. We were immediately suspicious that the government's true intention was to create confusion and infighting between unions by forcing representation votes, in an effort to distract from government health care cuts.

Health care unions worked constructively together to develop and propose to government a centralized Union Bargaining Council model that would achieve the objective of reducing the number of collective agreements, but government chose instead to trigger forced inter-mingling votes.

The MFL and health care unions believe that the democratic decisions made by health care workers regarding their union representation should be respected, and that moves by the Pallister government to undermine these decisions are undemocratic and needlessly disrupting. Government should instead be focused on improving patient care and supporting health care professionals in the demanding and challenging work they do.

12.0 EDUCATION

The MFL is committed to promoting strong public investment in our public schools and post-secondary education system, including universities, colleges, apprenticeships, adult learning and union training centres.

Quality public education and post-secondary opportunities support Manitobans in getting good jobs and providing for a stable and secure future. Education supports greater equality, empowerment, participation in our society and overall economic prosperity.

Unions play important roles representing public sector workers in our schools, universities and colleges, directly delivering programming through union education and training centres and lobbying governments and employers to make education and training a top priority.

12.1 Public Schools

Nothing is more important for children's development than a good education, and the MFL advocates for strong and predictable public funding for our schools, to support teachers, educational assistants, resource and support workers and school administrators in their work to give children opportunities to reach their full potential.

Education can also be a great equalizer, so it's imperative that we ensure that all children, including those living in poverty, children learning new languages, refugee children and children coming from difficult family/living situations have the proper supports to succeed in school.

School curriculum should address not only core subjects, like math and reading, but also broader topics critical for personal and social development, like truth and reconciliation, human rights, consent culture, the role and history of the labour movement and political action.

We are strongly critical of the Pallister government for reducing funding to public schools to its lowest level in more than 15 years. Short-changing education undermines our collective social and economic future.

The MFL also condemns the long-standing federal practice of funding education on First Nation reserves at levels far less than provincial schools. Education is a treaty right and a human right that must be respected.

12.2 Post-Secondary Education, Training and Apprenticeship

The MFL believes that post-secondary education (PSE) should be publicly funded and accessible to all. Current and future workers desire education and training opportunities to continuously expand their knowledge, to be more informed and engaged citizens, to develop their education to the fullest potential, to prepare for new employment opportunities and to keep up with changing needs in the workplace related to factors, such as technological change, globalization, economic restructuring, resource and environmental constraints and shifting demographics.

In the long-term, the MFL favours a model of free tuition (full public funding), but until tuition can be phased-out altogether, we advocate for policies that lessen the financial burden on individual students and families, such as caps on tuition and fees, and no-interest student loans. Along with our student union allies, we are deeply critical of the Pallister government's recent amendment to *The Advanced Education Administration Act*, which erases long standing protections for students against spiralling tuition costs.

We believe that tuition rebate programs can be effective tools for retaining graduates, but they are not an effective model for making post-secondary education more affordable and accessible.

The MFL supports the principle of academic freedom and we oppose any moves to privatize portions of our PSE system and increase dependence on a "casual" workers over full-time, secure and tenured positions.

We are committed to working with our student union allies to support one another and advance areas of mutual interest.

We support greater cross-recognition of credits between post-secondary institutions so that learners can more easily move between programs without losing credit for past learning.

The MFL supports strong multi-year public funding commitments for universities and colleges. The Pallister government's decision to scrap multi-year funding for universities, and limit public investment in universities and colleges is putting serious strain on our post-secondary system, making education and training less affordable and accessible for students, and limiting course and program options. This is extremely short-sighted policy.

The MFL supports strong public investment to make post-secondary education and training more accessible to students, including many workers looking to upgrade or change jobs, and especially students from currently under-represented groups, such as Indigenous learners. ACCESS programs, essential skills upgrading, language learning supports are key for accessibility, as are affordable student housing, child care, and transit. So too is active outreach to high school and junior high students about the full range of PSE options, including the multitude of apprenticeship opportunities.

The MFL supports further strengthening of Manitoba's apprenticeship system, which is critical for addressing current and emerging skill shortages. Of particular priority is the recruitment of women apprentices, Indigenous apprentices and apprentices of colour, who continue to be seriously under-represented in the trades. We applaud the efforts of many trade unions that are actively advancing diversity hiring strategies.

We urge the government to maintain the current 1:1 journeyman – apprentice ratio, which is essential for training integrity as well as workplace health and safety.

We also encourage the provincial government to establish new apprenticeship opportunities within the civil service to help recruit and retain skilled trades people.

The labour movement believes that off-site labour market training should be delivered primarily through unionized public education and training institutions. However, union

training centres also play an important role in the field, and we urge government to look to public and union institutions over private training delivery. We also call for employers to prioritize life-long learning for their employees and to involve workers and their unions in setting training plans and goals.

13. DEMOCRACY

13.1 Political Action and the NDP

As specified in our Constitution, one of the primary reasons that the MFL exists is to “provide leadership in political action and encourage greater worker participation in the political process.” Labour can’t leave politics alone, because politics won’t leave labour alone.

The MFL is a proud affiliate and supporter of the Manitoba New Democratic Party.

As a party formed by a formal agreement between the Canadian Labour Congress and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the NDP is labour’s party and stands as the only political party in Manitoba that truly works cooperatively with labour and puts the needs of working families first. The Party’s Constitution provides for specific involvement and participation of labour in all party processes and activities.

Organized labour has a tradition of supporting the NDP, both in Manitoba and across Canada. This has resulted in some of the most important aspects of our national social safety net, including our universal health care system, the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security. Here in Manitoba, NDP governments have created our affordable public motor vehicle insurance system and our universal public home care system. They’ve also made historic investments in our public hydro utility and public infrastructure, created one of the strongest drug programs in the country and legislated some of the strongest workplace safety and health laws in the country, among many other accomplishments.

Political action by workers and their unions is a democratic right. It is also a democratic responsibility - one that keeps democracy healthy. All affiliated unions are encouraged to affiliate to the Party and encourage their members to participate actively in its activities at the constituency level by taking out personal memberships.

13.2 Elections Financing

The MFL supported the ban on corporate and union contributions to political parties (introduced in 2000) premised on a robust public financing model for political parties, wherein an Independent Allowance Commissioner is responsible for determining the public financing process. We condemn the Pallister government’s elimination of public financing, a move that makes elections financing less fair and equitable. We also oppose Pallister’s raising of the individual donation limit by 66% to \$5,000, tilting the scales further to the benefit of the wealthiest Manitobans to have greater influence over the political process.

Rather than using public dollars - through generous tax credits - to benefit wealthy donors, Manitoba should level the playing field for all political parties by re-establishing an open and fair system of public financing. Elections should be about choosing the best candidates and best path forward for Manitobans, and every vote should have the same weight. Our democracy should not be about who has the backing of the wealthiest donors.

We are also very concerned that the government has made it harder for some of the most vulnerable Manitobans to vote. Manitobans who do not appear on the voters list and who already face a number of barriers to obtaining government issued identification (ID) have been disempowered through recent provincial election ID rules. Access to ID is a substantial problem for many Manitobans, and it overwhelmingly impacts people who live in poverty, the working poor, the elderly, those living with disabilities and those without a fixed address, including young people, students and those experiencing homelessness. All Manitobans have the right to vote. Making it harder for some people to exercise that right is undemocratic, plain and simple.

14.0 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The labour movement's vision of a healthy environment is founded on sustainability — a sustainable economy, sustainable employment, sustainable production and sustainable public services. The MFL believes our economy must move toward a model of *sustainable development*. There must be active participation by trade unionists in discussions at the international, national and local levels on environmental issues and measures to address them.

The MFL believes the labour movement is well positioned to promote greater rights in the workplace for unions and workers to protect the environment and ensure that unions work with employers to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions at the workplace through collective bargaining and joint committees. However, too often the needs of workers are left behind in discussions surrounding climate change mitigation and adaptation.

To have sustainable development, workers need long-lasting quality jobs. This vision requires workers' participation and control over their own futures. Canada's labour movement is calling for a "just transition" in our economy; one which moves away from environmentally harmful industries in ways that help to maintain good jobs for workers and training opportunities to aid people in finding meaningful work in renewable energy sectors and a low-carbon economy.

The CLC has been a leader in proposing the need for a just transition in our economy, one which moves away from a reliance on environmentally harmful practices but also maintains good jobs for workers. These can include priorities such as strategies to grow mass public transit systems, employ skilled labour to retrofit buildings and create apprenticeships in new green energy technologies. Any just transition must also include strategies to help workers in natural resource extraction sectors, such as mining, to maintain stable, fairly paid employment. Just transition programs must apply to public and service sector work, as well as resource and manufacturing industries affected by changes in industrial structures and environmental standards.

We believe that continued strong investments in Manitoba Hydro projects are a key way to provide good paying jobs, ensure stable economic growth, and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We believe that our society and economy must do a far better job of safeguarding our natural resources, one of the most critical being water. Canada's water belongs to all citizens and must be protected now and for future generations. We believe that access to clean water is a right of all Canadians. The MFL is opposed to the privatization of water or sale of Canadian water to any foreign country. The Federal government must prioritize the provision of clean drinking water on all First Nations reserves in Manitoba. Too many Manitobans live under boil water advisories simply because they live in Indigenous communities.

Also of particular concern is the state of Lake Winnipeg, which continues to suffer from nutrient loading and the onset of invasive species like zebra mussels. Analysis shows that phosphorous levels in the lake are now worse than they were in Lake Erie when people were describing that lake as dead. Effective action needs to be taken, including greater

investments in water quality testing and more City of Winnipeg staff to monitor water quality. We urge the provincial government to take strong measures to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg by encouraging the reduction of phosphate levels. Increased phosphorous levels are entering the lake from livestock farming, pollution from cities and through wetland loss, and all these sources need to be addressed.

15. FEDERAL / NATIONAL ISSUES

The MFL works in partnership with the CLC, the national voice of Canada's labour movement, to effect positive changes for working people at the federal level on issues like the following:

15.1 Employment Insurance (EI)

The MFL is committed to restoring fairness, equity and effectiveness to the Employment Insurance (EI) program, which has been badly gutted since the early 1990's. Unemployed workers are being let down by a federal EI system that doesn't meet their needs when they experience periods of unemployment, and doesn't adequately invest in supporting workers to remain employed or find work again after job loss. The completely unfair redirection of EI fund surpluses into general revenues, and major changes to program administration have resulted in a system characterized by inadequate benefit levels, unacceptably short cut-off periods and shockingly low eligibility rates.

The EI system should reflect the realities of working lives and people who pay into the plan should be able to access it. Changes should include:

- Reducing the number of qualifying hours (for regular benefits) to 360 hours, no matter who workers are or where they live and work in Canada;
- Measuring a "week" as 30 hours instead of 35 when calculating benefit levels and duration, to reflect the average Canadian work week;
- Increasing the benefits period to 50 weeks;
- Increasing benefits to at least 60% of earnings being replaced, calculated on a worker's best 12 weeks; and
- Restoring the more than \$58 billion that has been withdrawn by government from the EI fund and ending the use of EI funds for non-EI purposes.

These reforms are vitally important for women workers, as women are especially disadvantaged by unfair exclusions from EI benefits:

- EI assumes an average work week of 35 hours when the reality for women is more like 30;
- 40% of women hold precarious or part-time "non-standard" jobs, or are self-employed;
- Just 1 in 3 unemployed women qualify for EI benefits;
- Not qualifying for EI means no access to paid maternity, parental, compassionate or sick leave; and
- And even when women do qualify for EI, lower wages and unstable work patterns result in lower benefits. Only one third of the total amount of regular EI benefits goes to women, even though women now make up half the workforce.

Currently, only 3.7% of regular EI recipients receive training support, even while unemployment is high and sectors of the Canadian economy are short of skilled workers. Canada needs targeted programs to help women and workers from other equity-seeking

groups to overcome barriers to employment, gain valuable on-the-job experience and/or acquire training in high-demand occupations and sectors.

Because work-life balance continues to present a significant challenge for women, we must also improve compassionate caregiving benefits and parental leave for the other parent, as well as sickness benefits for workers with disabilities or illnesses lasting longer than 15 weeks.

The MFL also supports and endorses Unemployed Help Centres, such as Manitoba's Community Unemployed Help Centre (CUHC), as providing valuable service to unemployed workers, and significant economic benefit to the province. Governments should provide funding to Unemployed Help Centres where they exist, and should foster their development where they are needed to ensure that the needs of unemployed workers are met.

15.2 Canada Post

The MFL sees protecting the future of our public postal service as being critical for maintaining our way of life, for preserving good jobs in our communities, and for a prosperous and growing economy. We oppose the elimination of door-to-door service and call for the federal government to reinstate service for workers and other families who lost it under the Harper Conservative government – for fairness, for reliability, for convenience and for safety – it's the right thing to do. We further urge the federal government to work with CUPW on innovative proposals to sustain and expand our valued national postal service, including reinstating postal banking and greening our post offices.

15.3 National Transit Strategy

The MFL urges all governments to establish a long-term National Transit Strategy which would include dedicated planning, and funding for Public Transit Infrastructure Systems. Access to basic Public Transportation should be an essential right of Canadians. Public transportation breaks down social-economic barriers. The Federal Government should make every effort to reduce the cost of public transit for low income earners. It should not be the responsibility of only provincial and municipal governments to invest in public transit. Nor should low income subsidy costs be passed onto the fares paid by the general ridership. Instead, the federal government should have a continued interest to offer financial support where it's needed throughout the country.

15.4 Bill C-51 (2015)

The MFL opposes federal Bill C-51 and so-called "security measures" that undermine our civil liberties and human rights, and condemns their use as a tool in promoting Islamophobia and other forms of hate intended to divide workers and families. Bill C-51 (the so-called *Anti-Terrorism Act*) gives sweeping powers to CSIS to override constitutionally protected rights and freedoms. These measures may define legitimate acts of protest such as strikes, sit-ins and blockades as "threats to national security".

The MFL urges the federal government to provide legislative protections for workers guaranteeing that CSIS and police powers conferred by Bill C-51 will not be used to harass or interfere with the work of unions, and won't be used to:

- Secretly infiltrate, monitor or sabotage the lawful activities of unions;
- Place union leaders or union members on a “no fly” list because of their lawful participation in union activities;
- Deem a lawful strike or labour action to be a threat to the economic security of Canada; and
- Compel Canadian telecommunication workers to assist in spying on other Canadians without due process and a search warrant.

Canadian workers have a constitutional right to organize and to strike without police interference.

15.5 Peace-Keeping, Not War

The MFL will continue to work with our political and social justice allies to support the peace movement and encourage Canada to commit its international and military focus to peace-building, development and humanitarian efforts, recognizing the devastating impacts that western military involvement has had on so many parts of the world throughout history.