



Kevin Rebeck (MFL) and MGEU and MNU members rally to save the Victoria Hospital ER, slated for closure by the Pallister government.

We're coming together to stand up for all workers

Premier Pallister was elected on a promise to protect public services and the people who deliver those services. But it's clear now to all Manitobans that Brian Pallister was willing to say anything to get elected.

The Pallister government has already cut 900 jobs at Manitoba Hydro and they cancelled a billion dollars in health care projects that were already promised. But the PC's agenda of cuts and privatization is far reaching.

They've announced they'll privatize parts of Manitoba's homecare system and that they'll close the emergency departments at Seven Oaks, Concordia and Victoria hospitals. And they've recently fired two hundred workers at our health authorities.

One of those workers is a woman named Carolyne who was fired after 32 dedicated years of service at Seven Oaks Hospital. Carolyne's job was to ensure prescription orders are looked after, handle patient concerns and lead a team of 12 clerical staff and nursing assistants.

To Brian Pallister, workers like Carolyne are expendable.

But Manitobans and your MFL aren't taking it lying down. Manitobans are adding their names to petitions and sending letters to the government. Our brothers and sisters at Manitoba's health care



KEVIN REBECK

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Coming together, cont'd

unions have held protests and rallies. And the MFL has taken the fight right to government's doorstep at several legislative committee hearings.

As you know, Brian Pallister is no fan of collective bargaining. That's why his government used their majority in the legislature to quickly pass Bill 28, a heavy-handed new law that legislates wage freezes, instead of negotiating at the bargaining table.

To fight back, more than a dozen public sector unions and the MFL have come together to create the Partnership to Defend Public Services. The MFL will coordinate the work of the Partnership and together we will launch a court challenge of Brian Pallister's regressive and unfair new law.

We expect this legal challenge will be lengthy but we can't give up. Unionized workers are counting on us to stand up for their rights.

But increasingly, it's not just unionized workers who are under attack from this government. The Pallister government is cutting off supports for low-income Manitobans who are trying to lift themselves out of poverty. The recent cuts to Rent Assist will hurt some of the most vulnerable people.

This is added insult to injury from a government that refuses to raise the minimum wage to a living wage — choosing to effectively legislate minimum-wage earners to a life of poverty.

The only way we can push back is to come together, as a labour movement, and as a movement for fairness and equity. And together we can start the work of defeating Brian Pallister in the next election.

As our legal challenge progresses, I'll be sure to keep you in the loop.

In solidarity,



Kevin Rebeck

President, Manitoba Federation of Labour



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[1] Kevin Rebeck (MFL) joins MGEU and MNU leaders at rally to save the Victoria Hospital ER. **[2]** Anna Rothney (MFL) and Charlene Matheson (Unifor) are sworn in to the MFL executive by Cindy Murdoch (CLC). **[3]** Kevin Rebeck takes part in the annual May Day march. **[4]** Participants at the MFL Women's Conference pose for a group photo. **[5]** Kevin Rebeck speaks to delegates at the CUPE Manitoba convention.

PARTNERSHIP TO DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES

Bill 28: Public sector unions form partnership, will launch legal challenge

Early this year, the Pallister government signalled their intention to legislate freezes for public sector workers and cut services.

Soon after, it became clear that the government would rather use their majority in the legislature to get their way, than engage in meaningful dialogue and negotiate at the bargaining table. All this despite the fact that over the last decade, more than 90 percent of public-sector agreements across Canada were settled without a work stoppage, through collective bargaining.

On May 8, Brian Pallister sent his heavy-handed piece of legislation — Bill 28 — to committee for public input. Manitoba Federation of Labour President Kevin Rebeck and representatives from many other unions were there to voice their opposition.

That same night, down the hall, PC MLAs were busy trying to push through committee Bill 29, a bill that would reduce the number of health care bargaining units and force runoff votes.

But Manitoba's health care unions aren't taking the bait. They are standing together and working to find alternatives that preserve their members democratic choices about their union representation.

Despite strong opposition, the government passed Bill 28 on the final day of the legislative session. With layoffs, outright cuts to services, and a hostile approach to workers, inevitably the services families count on will deteriorate.

Manitoba's public-sector unions have come together to officially form a Partnership to Defend Public Services and will launch a legal challenge against this unfair and unconstitutional legislation.

Regardless of the vote in the legislature, this law is already having an effect, sending a chill through the public sector and at the bargaining table.

Supporting our community

The Manitoba Federation of Labour and affiliates are coming together again to support important cultural and community events.

The MFL is again supporting Aboriginal Day Live, Folk Fest, Thompson's King Miner competitions and Pride events in several communities — including Pride Winnipeg's 30th anniversary.





Wab Kinew, the only declared candidate for leadership of the Manitoba NDP speaks to members of the MFL Executive Council in Gimli.

NDP leadership candidate forum at the Union Center

In May, the Manitoba Federation of Labour and the Winnipeg Labour Council partnered to host an NDP leadership candidate forum.

Wab Kinew, the MLA for Fort Rouge and the only declared candidate for leader shared his ideas for rebuilding the Manitoba NDP — including strengthening the relationship between labour and the NDP.

For decades, the NDP and labour have had a winning partnership in Manitoba, one that has put the rights and well-being of workers and their families, front and center.

Kinew committed that if elected Premier he will bring back card-check certification and use a simple 50% plus one formula for certification.

At the forum, Kinew, MFL President Kevin Rebeck and Labour Council President Basia Sokal each stressed the importance of a strong, united NDP that includes labour.

Instead of working with labour, the Pallister government has taken a heavy-handed approach to union certification and collective bargaining, and they have cut from the services families count on.

It's more important now than ever, for union members to have a strong part in the NDP — that starts with unions affiliating with the NDP. Ensure your union is affiliated and help choose the next leader of Manitoba's NDP.

Three easy steps to **NDP** affiliation

- 1 Pass a motion to affiliate at your convention, executive or membership meeting.
- 2 Talk to your members about becoming NDP members themselves.
- 3 Complete and submit the application for affiliation at: todaysndp.ca/affiliate-application

The Manitoba NDP convention will be held September 15-16 in Winnipeg.



Pallister's minimum wage law will keep families trapped in poverty

Most Manitobans agree that working full time shouldn't mean a life of poverty, yet for too many people, that's the reality. And the Pallister government's new minimum wage law will only make things worse.

In September, the Manitoba Federation of Labour and more than 70 community organizations and unions sent the Premier an open letter asking that he raise the minimum wage. The Premier refused.

While governments in Alberta and Ontario have committed to raising the minimum wage to \$15, Manitoba's new government is content to see some of Manitoba's most vulnerable people getting left further and further behind.

The Pallister government's new minimum wage law will tie future minimum wage increases to the consumer price index, more commonly known as CPI.

A recent analysis by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Make Poverty History-Manitoba (see bar graph) found that if the government's new law was enacted in 1998 — when the minimum wage was \$5.80 — the minimum wage today would be just \$7.40.

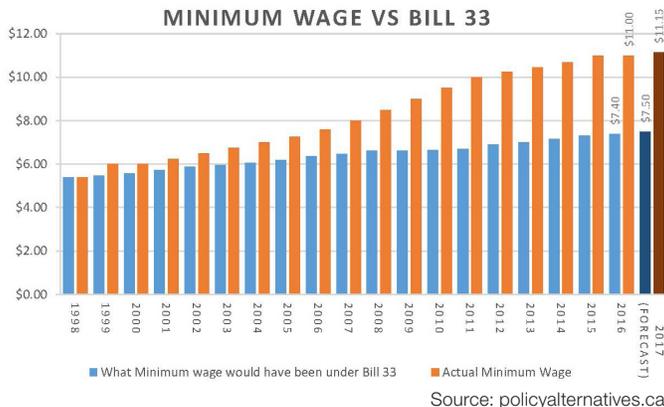
Under the government's new law, the minimum wage will rise just 15 cents, this coming October 1.

Some try to portray minimum wage workers as teens who live at home with their parents. But the reality is that 55% of Manitoba's minimum wage earners are over the age of 20 and the majority are women — many of them with children.

On the Friday of the May long-weekend, the government announced that just four days later, their new law would come to committee for public input. MFL President Kevin Rebeck and representatives from many affiliates were there to present, but the government used its majority in the legislature to get its way.

Premier Pallister's minimum wage law will leave many families to deal with impossible choices between paying rent and buying groceries.

To learn more about the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' and Make Poverty History-MB's recent analysis, please visit: www.policyalternatives.ca/offices/manitoba





Pallister undermining health and safety under guise of cutting red tape

The Pallister government recently ordered a review of Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health Act including Occupational Exposure Limits (OEL) — guidelines that help protect workers from harmful chemicals and other environmental hazards on the job.

Today, the law requires changes to OELs be automatically adopted based on the recommendations of the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists to ensure that workers are protected based on the findings of experts.

Instead, the Pallister government wants to see the process for adopting exposure limits changed to allow flexibility for employers. The minister responsible, Cliff Cullen, is pressing for these changes despite repeated safety and health objections from the government's Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health.

Surprisingly, this isn't the only attack on workplace health and safety. The Pallister government has ordered a review of the Workplace Safety and Health Act with a specific mandate to reduce red tape and harmonize Manitoba's laws with other jurisdictions. Manitobans know that reducing red tape and harmonization often means a race to the bottom.

Instead of making Manitoba a leader on workplace health and safety, the Pallister government is set on taking us back.

In May, Manitoba Federation of Labour President Kevin Rebeck met with Minister Cullen to aggressively push back on the government's plans. As the government undertakes its review, the MFL will call on all affiliates to speak out in defence of strong health and safety protections.

Changes at the Manitoba Federation of Labour office

In April, Fran Oswald retired after more than two decades of service with the MFL. Replacing Fran as bookkeeper is a face that will be familiar to anyone who has visited the MFL office, Lui Deluz. Replacing Lui as the receptionist is Darlene Dwyer.

Greg McFarlane has accepted a key new role in the MFL office as the Campaigns and Projects Coordinator. And Anna Rothney has become the new Executive Director, overseeing the Federations operations and strategic priorities.

Finally, our lead on communications and research, Nammi Poorooshasb will be moving out of province with his family and applications are now being accepted for a replacement.

We are sad to see Nammi go, but we are excited about the changes in our office. As always, our focus is on supporting our affiliates and standing up for working Manitobans across the province.

Manitoba 
Federation
of Labour

Westray mine explosion: 25-years later, action still needed

May 9th marked the twenty-five year anniversary of the Westray mine explosion that killed 26 miners in Nova Scotia.

For years, the families of these miners and the United Steel Workers pushed for changes that would make it possible to take legal action against employers whose negligence leads to death or injury at the workplace.

In 2004, the government made changes to the criminal code to allow for these types of prosecutions but for years, there have been many reported issues with enforcement.

The federal government recently announced that it will work with employers, labour and other stakeholders to finally ensure the Westray law is effectively enforced. That includes:

- doing more to ensure that labour inspectors and law enforcement officials are properly trained in the provisions of the law, and are coordinating effectively to ensure the possibility of a charge for criminal negligence resulting in serious injury or death is not overlooked; and
- sharing of best practices in investigating workplace fatalities across federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions.

The CLC has an online petition at RememberWestray.ca calling on the provinces and territories to work closely with the federal government on an urgent action plan that includes:



- training and directing Crown prosecutors to apply the Westray provisions of the Criminal Code;
- appointing dedicated prosecutors for workplace health and safety fatalities, and training and directing police to apply the Westray provisions of the Criminal Code; and
- ensuring regulators, police and Crown attorneys are coordinating. Health and safety regulators must be reaching out to police when Westray charges might be warranted.

You can add your name to the thousands of Canadians who are calling on provincial and territorial governments to work closely with Ottawa to enforce the Westray law.

Visit RememberWestray.ca now, and have your say.

— AL —
CERILLI
MFL SCHOLARSHIP

YOUNG MEMBERS, APPLY NOW

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUNE 30



HEALTH & SAFETY CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 14-15, 2017
Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg

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