



Lobbying Guide:
Workers Facing Domestic Violence

Economic Supports Including Paid Domestic Violence Leave





In this package you will find materials to lobby your Member of Parliament, Member of Provincial Parliament, Member of the Legislative Assembly or Member of the National Legislative Assembly on the issue of Paid Domestic Leave. Included in this package are the following:

- *Notes to assist you;*
- *Unifor's resolution on Paid Domestic Violence Leave; and*
- *Tips for Lobbying*

You should also have a one page summary of the requests for your representative that you will leave behind with her or him.

Notes

Context to Domestic Violence

- In 2011, the five most common violent offences committed against women were common assault (49%), uttering threats (13%), serious assault (10%), sexual assault (7%) and criminal harassment (7%). Women were 11 times more likely than men to be a victim of sexual offences and three times as likely to be the victim of criminal harassment (stalking). (Statistics Canada 2013)
- Overall, men were responsible for 83% of police-reported violence committed against women. Most commonly, the accused was the woman's intimate partner. (Statistics Canada 2013)
- Statistics show that Aboriginal women, women with disabilities and young women are at highest risk of intimate partner violence (Statistics Canada 2013)
- Although men can be victims of intimate partner violence, women are more likely to be physically injured, fear for their life and be murdered (Statistics Canada 2013).
- Approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. Out of the 83 police-reported intimate partner homicides in 2014, 67 of the victims—over 80%—were women (Homicide in Canada, 2014, Statistics Canada)
- We know that these statistics underrepresent the experience of domestic violence given that most women don't report. There is still profound stigma surrounding this issue.
- Domestic Violence is a workplace issue. It impacts the workplace and supports can be put in place at work.
- The single greatest cause of death for women in the workplace is domestic violence, according to a US study. We don't gather centralized data in Canada in the same way but there is every reason to believe it is the same here. The most dangerous time for a woman is in the 1st year after separating from an abusive partner. He may not know where she is most of the time but he will know where she is when she goes to work.
- A 2014 Pan-Canadian study of domestic violence and the workplace found that 1/3 of respondents reported experiencing domestic violence from an intimate partner. Over 53% said that the domestic violence continued at work, 38% reported it affected their ability to get to work, 82% said it negatively affected their work performance, and 8.5% had lost a job due to domestic violence.
- The study also showed that domestic violence affects co-workers, causing them to be stressed or concerned about the abusive situation.
- In the worst case scenario, co-workers are murdered in instances of domestic violence, such as happened to manager Tony McNaughton in BC when he tried to protect his employee from her estranged husband.
- In all provinces, employers have a duty to keep the workplace safe and free of violence. In some provinces, like Ontario, domestic violence is specifically listed as a hazard the employer must plan for.

Principles of Action

- We know that women are more able to leave violent and abuse relationships when they have economic security, including:
 - A full-time job
 - A non-precarious job
 - Rights over scheduling
 - Benefit coverage for part time work
 - Access to unionization

- It is very important that we have supports in place to ensure women keep their jobs. Income security has been named as a key 'determinant of safety.' A 2013 Report from the Women Abuse Council of Toronto says:

Income security: Income security is a key determinant of health and wellbeing for individuals, families and communities. In the context of violence against women, income security may include access to savings, employment, social assistance and child support. Economic security is often the primary factor that influences a woman's decision to leave an abuser and/or to not return to an abusive situation. Women leaving violent relationships struggle to re-establish themselves and their children and face dramatic financial barriers in doing so.

- One of the key supports for women in the workplace is publicly-funded affordable, accessible, quality child care
 - There have now been task-force reports in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick that support investment in child care as an equity measure which grows the economy
 - In Ontario, the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee heard about the lack of child care in every community they visited. The Committee prioritized child care as their first two recommendations to close the Gender Wage Gap
 - The effect of affordable child care in Quebec was profound: Quebec went from the lowest workforce participation by women to the highest after they introduced subsidized child care.
 - Child care provides women with better economic security which leads to better options for self-determination. This includes leaving an abusive relationship.
- Paid Domestic Violence Leave
 - Where an employee finds themselves in an abusive relationship, they need the essential economic security of accessing a paid leave to assist them in seeking safety and dealing with a period of upheaval
 - Manitoba has enacted Domestic Violence Leave in its Employment Standards Act in 2016. There are two private members bills, one in Ontario and one in British Columbia, that call for DV leave to be included in employment standards legislation.

Unifor's Actions

- Unifor has been a trailblazer in putting practical supports in place for women in abusive relationships. We bargained our first set of workplace Women's Advocates in 1993. We now have over 350 Women's Advocates across the country in all sectors of the economy. These specially-trained Advocates assist women in finding community resources as well as assist in safety planning and risk assessment in the workplace.
- Unifor has also negotiated paid domestic violence leave in many of our collective agreements, allowing employees to access paid time off to deal with essential issues.
- Unifor has passed a number of resolutions supporting putting Domestic Violence Leave into employment standards protection for all workers. Most recently, this resolution was passed unanimously at our 2016 Unifor Convention.

Employer Response

- Employers were surveyed by the Conference Board of Canada. They found that DV impacts the workplace through losses in output, absences, and productivity. Issues of DV can also increase risk for physical and psychological violence in the workplace. (Boyer, Charles, and Chenier, Louise. Domestic Violence and the Role of the Employer. The Conference Board of Canada, 2015)
- 71% of employers reported experiencing a situation where it was necessary to protect an employee facing domestic abuse.
- The survey found that employers were already faced with DV at work, they just didn't have the tools to deal with it.
- A recent Australian study was done of workplaces where paid DV leave was in the collective agreement. The study found on average, workers took 2-4 days of paid leave.

Requests

- We are here to ask for your support to:
 - put Paid Domestic Violence Leave in our employment standards legislation,
 - put a publicly funded, accessible, affordable child care program in place, and take other steps to support women's economic security such as eliminating precarious work, requiring benefits for part-time workers, reduce scheduling insecurity and making it easier for workers to join unions



*Passed unanimously at
2nd Unifor Convention
August 22-26, 2016
Shaw Centre, Ottawa, ON*

Resolution R-15

Paid Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence

WHEREAS Domestic violence is becoming increasingly more of a workplace issue. Due to a recent unprecedented survey, employers in Canada are losing \$77.9 million a year as a result of domestic violence, either directly or indirectly, on employees in the workplace; and

WHEREAS People in crisis cannot leave their issues at home when they leave for work each day; and

WHEREAS The financial cost to employers is nothing compared to the cost being paid by individuals and their families who are all victims of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS There is comfort in knowing that there is a job and stability waiting for them while they seek the help they need for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS Having a job and financial security are essential for individuals to have the support they need in order to leave abusive situations and be able to take care of themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS The realities of the individual and the financial cost to the employer supports the need for policies to help individuals escape abusive situations; and

WHEREAS The Province of Manitoba is well on their way in getting legislation to allow for paid and unpaid portions of leave to aid individuals to escape domestic violence; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Unifor members lobby their provincial governments to follow the example set out by the Province of Manitoba. That Unifor leadership negotiate paid leave at the bargaining table for all victims of domestic violence and ensure safety and job security for all Canadians.

Tips for Lobbying your Member of Parliament (MP), Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP)

Tip 1 - Know What You Want

This guide sets out the specific request you are making to your representative along with the reasons why. Other Unifor members are lobbying on these issues across Canada. The Resolution from the Unifor Convention gives them the mandate for this lobby.

Tip 2 - Call or Write to Set Up a Meeting

If you are writing, your letter or email should have: your MPs, MLAs or MPPs correct name and address, a request for a meeting and the subject you are writing to them about. You should tell them what you are asking them to do and how the issue affects the riding they represent. Include the names of the people who are likely to be part of your group

Tip 3 - Join Forces with Others & Encourage Your Supporters

The more ways your MP, MLA or MPP hears about your campaign, the better. You should ask members of your local union, their family members and members of other allied groups to support your lobbying efforts. Distribute area MPs, MLAs or MPPs phone numbers and email addresses in messages to members of your local union. Say you want your representatives to hear directly from voters in their riding.

Tip 4 - Prepare

Arrange a pre-lobby meeting to organize your group. Be clear on what your objectives are. Go over the points or briefing notes with everyone and check that everyone knows what is in the lobby kit. Be clear on who your chief spokesperson is. This is the person who will keep the meeting on track, introduce everyone and call on others to speak as agreed to in advance. Assign roles. Each member of the delegation should speak to the area they know best. Assign someone the task of taking notes.

Tip 5 - Set Out an Agenda for Your Meeting

Introduce yourselves and restate the reasons why you asked for the meeting. Present the issues and give the MP, MLA or MPP time to respond to your arguments, ask you questions, and state what they are prepared to do. Listen carefully and take notes.

Ask them what they expect of you and be prepared to take on tasks that will help them help you. If they ask for more information, take note of the request and follow through.

Conclude the meeting by going over what they have agreed to do and what you have agreed to do. Thank them and make sure they know how to contact you.

Tip 6 - Evaluate & Follow-up

Hold a meeting as soon as possible after the lobby to evaluate how you all thought it went. Make sure everyone knows what tasks they've agreed to. Please send a note to the Unifor Women's Department at: women@unifor.org and let them know the meeting happened.

After some time has passed, make a follow-up call to your representative on the actions they agreed to take.

For a Unifor's complete Guide to Lobbying, please visit: www.uniforvotes.ca/lobbyguide

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