

January 13, 2022

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Labour
seamus.oregan@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister O'Regan,

Re: Paid Sick Leave Implementation

On behalf of Unifor members, I want to congratulate your government for legislating ten paid sick days for workers in the federally regulated sector. As you know, Unifor represents tens of thousands of federally regulated workers and the opportunity to take ten days of paid sick leave will have an immensely positive impact on their well-being. These measures are long overdue and will serve as a critical example for other jurisdictions to follow.

However, while Bill C-3 has successfully passed Parliament, the sick leave provisions still require an Order in Council to come into force. Your government has indicated that it needs time to engage with federally regulated employers and to allow for employers to implement the necessary payroll changes before the sick leave provisions can be implemented.

Minister, I urge you to speed up the process and implement these measures without delay. The unprecedented surge in COVID-19 driven by the Omicron variant has underscored just how important it is for workers to have access to paid sick days, so that they do not feel torn between their livelihoods and taking responsible measures to stay home and self-isolate when they feel sick. With the end of the pandemic nowhere in sight, federally regulated workers will need their full allotment of ten sick days sooner than later, which means bring these measures into force as soon as possible.

Given labour's experiences with the federal hours of work regulations and other enhancements to federal labour standards – which have yet to be entirely finalized despite legislation passing in 2018 – federally regulated workers are justifiably concerned that lengthy engagements with employers will both drag out the timeline for implementation and water down the final provisions through regulatory modifications.

The federal government must therefore issue a clear timetable for the implementation of paid sick days, with the provisions being brought into force by the end of the first quarter of 2022 at the latest. Moreover, access to ten paid sick days a year must be universal, applied to all federally regulated workers in equal measure, which includes part-time

workers and those in non-standard work settings. Regulatory modifications must not diminish their benefit to workers based on status, role, industry or employment relationship.

I applaud you, Minister, for doing the right thing for workers and making the federally regulated sector a beacon for all other jurisdictions in Canada. Our members are also heartened to see that the federal government plans on engaging with the provinces and territories to ensure that ten paid sick days becomes the new floor for sick leave provisions across Canada. Let's finish the job now and make sure workers in the federally regulated sector can access those paid sick days as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Dias". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jerry" and last name "Dias" clearly distinguishable.

Jerry Dias
Unifor National President

JD/klcope343