

**News Release**

**For immediate release**

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**Young Workers Need Protection**

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, representing over 95,000 workers and their families, have concerns with the new minimum age regulations announced by the provincial government this week.

“The regulations which establish an absolute minimum age of 14 years will have to be monitored closely,” said SFL President Larry Hubich. “Our current laws are often disregarded by employers, causing injury or death or lost wages. Young workers are more vulnerable about their rights and must be protected.”

The fact that 14 and 15-year old students will be limited to working 16 hours a week is an improvement over early musings about a 30 hour limit,” added Hubich, and while we endorse having to have an Occupational Health and Safety certificate, we have to wait to see what that training involves.

The move to lower the minimum working age runs counter to the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) guidelines of a minimum of 16 years of age in developed countries. The actions of the Saskatchewan government totally disregard this United Nations agency which represents business, government, and labour.

The SFL President said he is “concerned that young people not be exploited or injured and that they have an opportunity to enjoy extra curricular activities as they progress through school. School work suffers if young people are overly tired in class or if they are forced to rush assignments and don’t have adequate study time.”

Hubich noted that a recent study, commissioned by the Department of Education in Manitoba and reported on in the July 20 *Globe and Mail* indicated that some students “are working to support their family – something that can lead to them dropping out of school entirely. Although students may work outside of school hours, they are often more tired and likely to ‘need a break’ from classes if they are holding down a job.”

The education and safety of our young must be our first priority.

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