

The Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
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The Hon. Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
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The Hon. Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Training, and Skills Development
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October 26, 2021

Dear Premier Ford and Ministers Elliot and McNaughton,

As members of the Social Justice & Advocacy Committee and Poverty Reduction Subcommittee of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, we have watched with dismay the lack of appropriate government response to the issue of paid sick days for Ontario workers. The extension of the Worker Income Protection Benefit (WIPB) to December 31, 2021 is not an adequate measure to protect workers, many of whom have already used their three available paid sick days to access vaccination, or to self-isolate while sick or experiencing symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection. The programme has not been seamlessly accessible, and has fallen short of providing the kind of public health protection Ontario needs. It leaves low-income workers, many of whom are women and/or members of racialized populations, in a vulnerable economic position.

Throughout the pandemic, medical experts, health providers and worker advocates have been clear that workers need paid sick days to follow public health advice to stay at home when they or their children are ill. This advice is also applicable in the long term to protect our workplaces and communities from other readily transmissible illnesses, and to offer workers a greater measure of employment security. We urge you immediately to introduce legislation to mandate at least 10 permanent, employer-paid, sick days for all workers. This would benefit individual workers and their families, offer employers a more stable human-resources framework, help prevent future pandemics, and create greater economic and social security for all Ontarians.

We have learned, through the pandemic experience, the truth of what all religious faiths teach us, including our own – that the wellbeing of any one of us is tied up with the wellbeing of the whole. We ask you now to put that teaching into practice, by allowing workers to protect themselves and all those around them, and in doing so, to promote the wellbeing of all.

Yours faithfully,

Ms. Elin Goulden, Social Justice & Advocacy Consultant, Diocese of Toronto
The Rev. Maggie Helwig, Chair, Social Justice & Advocacy Committee, Diocese of Toronto
The Rev. Andrea Budgey, Chair, Poverty Reduction Subcommittee, Diocese of Toronto

cc. Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Official Opposition
France Gélinas, Opposition Critic, Health
Peggy Sattler, Opposition Critic, Labour
Wayne Gates, Opposition Critic, Workplace Health & Safety