

MEDIA RELEASE:

Ontario Business Leaders Speak Out in Favour of Higher Labour Standards

TORONTO, September 12, 2017 –Ontario business leaders gathered today at Ryerson University’s [“Smart Employers Talk” conference](#) to share their experiences with using a good jobs strategy to boost their bottom line.

"As a small business owner I know how important my staff is to the success of my company. When they are well-paid and satisfied, that reflects on the quality of our work and the kind of relationship customers build with us" said Anita Agrawal, CEO, Best Bargains Jewellery, Toronto.

Since the Ontario government announced Bill 148: *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act*, some business groups have expressed concerns about whether they will be able to afford these changes.

However, leaders of small and large-sized business who spoke at today’s conference, praised the government’s move to raise the minimum wage to \$15, introduce paid emergency days, fairer scheduling practices and equal pay for equal work provisions.

“Many people mistakenly assume that keeping wages and labour costs low will help businesses maximize profits. This outdated idea ignores the cost of turnover, absenteeism, and safety risks that can occur when employees find themselves working multiple jobs just to make ends meet. When you invest in your workforce, you’ll reap those benefits many times over. Bill 148 is a good first step to make such smarter workforce strategies more commonplace” said Damin Starr, the co-owner of Pre-Line Processing manufacturing company in Niagara.

Speaking at the conference co-hosted by the [Better Way to Build the Economy Alliance](#) and Ryerson University’s Centre for Labour Management Relations, employers also stressed the importance of higher labour standards for creating a stronger economy.

“When low-wage workers have money in their pockets, they spend it. The current minimum wage of \$11.40 puts Ontario workers who work full-time more than 17% below the poverty line. That short-changes both businesses and communities. This is also worrying at a macro level, since we know that household spending is a major force in growing a strong economy” said Daryl Barnett, the Canadian Director of Labour Relations at the American Income Life Insurance Company.

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