

Press Release

November 7, 2013

The Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador (RSACNL) issued its response today to the Government's recent announcement on minimum wages in the Province. RSACNL is disappointed in both the amount and timing of the announced increases in minimum wage. RSACNL had asked the Government in its open letter to the Premier for an increase in the minimum wage by 70 cents effective January 2014. It had also requested that minimum wage be adjusted each year in line with the increases in all-commodities price index for the province. Instead, Government announced a modest increase of 25 cents effective October 2014 and another 25 cents in October 2015.

The Rev'd David Burrows, coordinator of the RSACNL, stated that while the Government's announced increases are a step in the right direction, these are too little and too late. In October 2014, it will be more than four years since the establishment of the current minimum wage rate. Combined increases announced by Government for 2014 and 2015 will amount to about half the required increases in order to catch up with inflation during this period.

Father Paul Lundrigan, a director of the RSACNL, emphasized that low wages are the single most contributing factor to poverty levels in the province and the country. He further said that while RSACNL would like a Living Wage in the province in the long term, it wants to urge the Government to at least keep the minimum wage rates in pace with inflation.

RSACNL would like the Government to reconsider its decision and restore the loss of purchasing power in minimum wage since 2010. At the least, it would like the announced increase for 2014 to be made effective January 1 2014, with further annual adjustments.

RSACNL is a coalition of people from various religious concerned with Poverty Elimination in Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada.

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