

Thursday 25 February 2016

Government must support laws that crack down on exploitation

The Australian Council of Trade Unions calls on the Turnbull Government to support a Private Member's Bill to be introduced in the Senate today by Labor which would increase penalties and make it harder for dodgy employers to get away with exploiting workers.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said there are too many examples of underhanded conduct by unscrupulous employers willing to do whatever it takes to rip off workers, including cases at 7-Eleven, Myer and Pizza Hut.

Current Laws are not strong enough to deter such behaviour and penalties need to be increased.

Unions congratulate Labor on the proposed Bill which makes significant moves to address this issue.

Instead of looking to rip money out of Australian workers' pay packets through cuts to penalty rates proposed by employer groups through the Productivity Commission, the Turnbull Government should adopt the policy released by Bill Shorten.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver:

"We've seen and heard too many examples of exploitative conduct by employers who feel they can get away with treating their workers in a despicable manner but these high profile cases are only the tip of the iceberg.

Every day unions are out there representing workers against unscrupulous employers who have underpaid staff or tried to avoid honouring workers' entitlements.

This Bill is an important step towards tightening laws that would increase penalties for employers, ramping up worker protections from sham contracting, increasing the powers of the Fair Work Ombudsman and better protecting vulnerable overseas workers.

It's time company directors are held personally liable for lost wages and entitlements in cases where companies fold only to open the next day under a different name, in the same way they already are for unpaid Superannuation.

There needs to be bipartisan support for these significant and long-called for worker protections which lift the corporate veil."

ENDS

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