

Business lobby seeks to axe workers' rights

The ACTU has slammed as unfair and seriously harmful a pre-election agenda being pushed by the business lobby to axe significant workplace rights for up to one million Australian workers.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has begun publicly lobbying to change the definition of a small business from the current 15 employees to 25 employees in a workplace.

If the Coalition agrees to the business lobby's demands, workers will have their unfair dismissal rights significantly reduced. This would be a huge blow to up to one million workers and their families.

In addition to this, life will be more difficult for workers who are trying to convert from casual to permanent jobs or who need flexible work or extended parental leave.

The recovery of unpaid wages from wage theft will be harder based on the existing exemptions for small businesses in the Fair Work Act.

Union delegates would lose the right to training.

Employers would also be allowed to cut wages using labour hire.

This change will affect up to an estimated one million Australian workers who are employed by employers with between 15-25 workers. Workers in Australia should not have less rights simply because of the size of their employer.

It is unfair, will seriously harm the working lives of large numbers of working people and we call on the Coalition to immediately rule it out.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary, Sally McManus:

“Up to one million workers will have unfair dismissal rights, protections from wage theft and job security protections taken from them if the business lobby gets their way.

“It is unfair to expect workers taking on a new job to be on a compulsory statutory probation period for an entire year – knowing they can be sacked or terminated at any time on a bosses’ whim and without having access to unfair dismissals protections.

“If the business lobby got their way, this would act as a green light for bad bosses to return to the days when they could hire and fire when they feel like it, without having to give workers a reason for why they are working one day and gone the next.

“Already the Coalition has promised to abolish the right to disconnect, multi-employer bargaining, rights for casual workers and higher wages for labour hire employees.

“The last thing any working person needs is less rights at work, less pay and less job security. This will make cost of living pressures much worse. We demand all political parties rule out any reduction to workers' rights this Federal election.”

ENDS

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