

## Ottawa

Room 930, Confederation Building  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
Tel/Tél: 613-992-6030  
Fax/Télec: 613-995-7412



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Jenny Kwan*

Member of Parliament for Vancouver East  
Députée de Vancouver-Est

## Constituency

2572 East Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC V5K 1Z3  
Tel/Tél: 604-775-5800  
Fax/Télec: 604-775-5811

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IAMAW Local Lodge 16  
PO Box 32392 YVR Domestic Terminal RPO  
Suite 4212  
Richmond, BC, V7B 1W2

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to with important news about the progress we are making on the NDP plan to make life more affordable, and to update you on some of our work to advance our shared values and goals to ensure dignity, respect, and fairness for all workers.

### **Report on the Confidence and Supply Agreement**

New Democrats have been able to push the Liberal federal government hard to deliver real results on these measures that I believe are important priorities for not just Vancouver East constituents and for your members, but for all Canadians, through the Confidence and Supply Agreement that NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh has negotiated with the minority Liberal government.

#### **Anti-Scab Legislation**

It should be illegal for employers to undermine the collective power of workers by hiring replacement workers during legal strikes or employer lockouts. New Democrats have been advocating for this for years and tabled anti-scab legislation in 2016 and again in 2020 to amend the Canada Labour Code. The Confidence and Supply Agreement includes a commitment to introduce anti-scab legislation to prohibit the use of replacement workers when a union employer in a federally regulated industry, by the end of next year. The only exception would be in very rare cases and only to maintain integral and critical safety.

Jagmeet was active during the summer months, campaigning in solidarity alongside union members for the prompt introduction of this new law, and our NDP Labour Critic, Alexandre Boulerice, has proactively tabled a piece of legislation, Bill C-302, that if passed would accomplish this long sought-after goal. You can be assured that we will keep pushing on the government to uphold their end of this agreement.

#### **10 Days Paid Sick Leave for Federally Regulated Workers**

The COVID-19 pandemic made it crystal clear that 10 days' paid sick leave provisions need to be extended to all working people, so that workers don't have to make impossible choices between isolating to prevent the spread of illness, and putting food on the table or pay rent.

I am glad to report that starting on December 1, 2022, federally regulated private sector workers will be eligible to earn up to 10 days of medical leave with pay per year. This was an important priority we identified in the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

The first 3 days are earned after completing 30 days of continuous employment. After that, 1 day is earned at the start of each calendar month, after completing 1 calendar month of continuous employment, to a maximum of 10 days per year. Unused days will be carried over to the next year, but no more than 10 days of paid medical leave may be taken each year.

The regulations establishing this provision, published on November 24, 2022, are available at this link: <https://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2022/2022-11-23/html/sor-dors228-eng.html>.

Jenny.Kwan@parl.gc.ca  
JennyKwanNDP.ca

## **GST Tax Credit Top-Up**

On November 4, 2022, around 12 million Canadians received twice as much from their GST rebate. New Democrats fought for and won a doubling of the GST rebate for the next six months. This will mean up to another \$467 in the pockets of over 12 million Canadians. For full information about the doubling of the GST tax credit, please visit this link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/gst-credit-one-time-payment-2022.html>

## **New Democrats Fighting for Workers' Rights**

The Confidence and Supply Agreement is focused on key policy areas areas where we can find some agreement with the Liberal government.

However there remains areas where our priorities and values do not always align. New Democrats have been vocal in holding the Liberal government - and other Opposition parties - to account on the many concerns and criticisms we have.

### **Important victory for workers marred by Winnipeg North MP**

The money in pension funds is not there through the charity of employers. Pensions are deferred wages. Workers accept to make a little less money now, so that they have financial security in their retirement.

That is why it is wrong for workers to have their pension funds paid out to banks and investors when their company goes bankrupt. After a lifetime of work, they deserve to have those funds protected. They cannot work another 20 or 30 years to build a new pension and the dignity in retirement that comes with it. We saw this in the case of SEARS workers, for example, when that company went bankrupt several years ago. Workers and retirees had a reduced pension forced upon them so that bigtime investors could get their payday.

I am pleased to report that the House of Commons has finally passed Bill C-228, a law to ensure pension funds are protected. While it still must pass through the Senate, I am optimistic that this law will be finalized some time next year.

To get the job done, New Democrats worked with Conservative and Bloc Quebecois MPs to push the bill through the House of Commons. Getting results for people should come before partisanship. But while the Liberals finally voted for the bill, their behaviour was disappointing at many points in the process.

Working with other parties, New Democrats negotiated a key amendment to also protect the termination and severance pay of workers when a company goes bankrupt; another point of conflict in the SEARS bankruptcy. Liberals opposed that measure at committee and then had it struck from the bill on a specious point of order. When New Democrat Finance Critic, Daniel Blaikie, tried to get the measure put back in the bill with the agreement of all MPs in the House of Commons, Winnipeg North MP Kevin Lamoureux said 'no', which meant those protections did not make it into the bill. His actions were condemned by the President of the Canadian Labour Congress and the President of the Manitoba Federation of Labour. The next time a Canadian company goes bankrupt and workers lose their termination and severance pay to the banks, they will have Kevin Lamoureux to thank.

This disappointment aside, the pension protection afforded by Bill C-228 is an important victory for workers.

### **Working People Are Owed A Working Employment Insurance System**

The Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report warning that up to 177,000 Canadians could lose their jobs if Justin Trudeau's Liberals don't change their approach on inflation. Yet, the Fall Economic Statement had nothing to help families deal with inflation and higher interest rates – or to help them if a recession hits.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with pressure from the NDP, the Liberal government made some changes to the EI rules in the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure more workers, including self-employed and "gig" workers could get direct assistance. But the Liberals chose to do away with those things and have yet to present their plan for a new EI system. Canadian workers are exposed to the risk of job loss, but we do not have an adequate employment insurance system to ensure they can pay their bills while they look for work.