

Date: _____

Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier:

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition has been monitoring the issue of employment standards for children in British Columbia since the passage of Bill 37 in 2003. Bill 37 amended the Employment Standards Act to effectively lower the work-start age in BC from 15 to 12 by eliminating the requirement that the Employment Standards Branch issue a permit to an employer prior to hiring a 12- to 14-year old.

Now, in place of having an Employment Standards officer determine the suitability of a workplace for a 12- to 14-year old, a letter from a parent is all that is required. The shift of responsibility for determining workplace safety for children this age to parents is both unrealistic and an abdication of government's responsibility to protect children from injury and exploitation.

I am asking you to immediately act on the recommendations in the First Call research report, *Child Labour Is No Accident: The Experience of BC's Working Children*. These recommendations call on your government to:

- Establish a minimum work-start age of 16 in compliance with the recommendation to Canada from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Impose restrictions on the occupations, tasks and times of day that children can work.
- Increase Employment Standards Branch inspections of worksites where children are most likely to be working, including random inspections.
- Establish a child labour advisory group that includes a broad representation of child and youth advocates, including young people with recent work experience in the higher injury occupations.
- Improve government tracking of the employment of children in BC. Ongoing data collection about how many children are working and at what occupations and tasks is needed in order to monitor their safety.
- Require WorkSafeBC to publish the same detailed injury claims reports on 12- to 14-year-olds as are currently produced for young workers (ages 15–24).

It's time to place children's safety and healthy development at the top of the priority list and raise BC's child labour standards.

I urge you to take immediate action. I look forward to hearing from you.

Name: _____

Address: _____

cc: my MLA _____