



HOLIDAY SHOPPING

When statutory holidays were created, it was an expression of our democracy to ensure the public was afforded the opportunity to celebrate various occasions while not losing out on income. What it also meant to workers was a day when they did not have to offer their labour and could put their lives and families first.

These holidays were the result of struggle by workers and their unions. Many corporations, including big malls, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retailers have been itching at the chance to reduce the closures on statutory holidays. Boards of Trades and Chambers of Commerce have lined up white papers, done deputations, and pushed an agenda that would do away with hard fought battles we as the labour movement have won.

Imagine Labour Day, if tens of thousands of retail workers were forced to work?

Earlier in November, after years of deliberations, Toronto City Council voted against opening up grocery stores for statutory holidays – they did so because they agreed that workers do need days of rest, and the ability to plan family gatherings on those days. The fight led by UNIFOR and UFCW with the Labour Council and progressive Toronto councillor landed a tremendous victory for workers and the expectation of dignity at work.

Two weeks later, the York Regional Council, without any consultation of the public, passed a Bylaw that allowed all retail businesses to open up every day of the year except Christmas. Once again, the Labour Council has teamed up with UNIFOR and UFCW to fight back, pushing against this overly draconian imposition on the rights of working people.

We need to fight for the rights of our workers in every Region, because if York Region opens up retail, it would inevitably leave business on the south side of Steeles Avenue with a competitive disadvantage which will surely lead to greater loosening of laws that protect our members.

Toronto and York Region Labour Council is calling on our affiliates and members to:

- Let your York Councillor and Mayor know of the impact on workers, by either signing the petition or going online to yorkregionspeaksout.ca.
- Attend the Regional Council meeting at December 14, 2017 at 9:00 am located at 17250 Yonge St., Newmarket to protest these changes.
- Share this information with your members who live in York Region and can assist in pushing back these laws.

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