

Thursday, 16 April 2020

## **Business demanding 1 day “consultation” on agreement changes**

The ACTU understands the big business lobby is pressuring the Industrial Relations Minister, Christian Porter, to alter Fair Work Act regulations that would cut the consultation period on agreement changes from a week to single day.

The changes would mean that employers can hold a ballot on changes to agreements only 24 hours after announcing them, giving workers no time to understand the impact of the changes or discuss them with their colleagues or union.

### **Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:**

“Some employers have not stopped demanding rights be taken off working people. We saw some openly try to force changes to the Fair Work Act that would undermine people’s job security and rights at work in the lead up to Jobkeeper becoming law, those attempts were opposed by the union movement and were rightly refused by all political parties.

“Having been denied a legislative pathway for their power grab those employers, who have not suffered serious downturn, have spent the last week lobbying the government to take away workers’ rights via regulation, they should be condemned, and the Government should stop listening to them.

“By agreeing to these changes Christian Porter would be using his power to abolish rules that protect workers, their job security and their rights at work.

“These changes will allow employers to ram through reductions in pay and undermine job security.

“The current rules ensure workers have adequate time to consider any proposal to change an enterprise agreement, to discuss this with their employer, other workers and to seek advice. This change effectively takes away all these rights leaving workers exposed to employers seeking to exploit the fear caused by the pandemic and to pressure workers into rushed agreements, locking out their access to advice.

“We are already seeing widespread abuse of the JobKeeper system, prior to the pandemic Australian business had an enormous problem with wage theft. We know that, sadly, too many employers will exploit the system if there are no safeguards for working people. The Government needs to stand up to big business and rule out undermining the job security and rights of millions of Australian workers.

“Workers need more protections and safeguards at this time, not less.”

**ENDS**

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