

Friday, 22 November 2019

## **‘Award simplification’ would slash rights and pay**

Christian Porter has confirmed that the Morrison Government will attempt to drive wage growth even lower by ‘simplifying’ the minimum pay protections known as the award system.

By buying the line from some in the business community that wage theft is not their fault as awards are “too complex” for employers to understand, the Government is entertaining the idea of addressing this by reducing the legal minimums.

The Morrison government is already using regulation, the courts and corporate structures to reduce the “administrative clutter” of worker’s wages and conditions through:

- a Federal court case where they are siding with a multinational corporation to allow all employers to convert permanent jobs into casual jobs
- a High court case where they are intervening on the side of a multinational corporation against two chocolate factory workers where the outcome could reduce sick leave for all shift workers
- a public service wage cap that is suppressing wages for public sector workers with significant flow-on affects in the private sector
- waving through cuts to penalty rates for retail, hospitality, fast food and pharmacy workers with more cuts proposed for hair stylists
- allowing multi-national corporations to set up their own 100% owned labour hire firms to cut pay
- overseeing a bargaining system where employers can unilaterally apply to have wages cut by cancelling existing enterprise agreements

On Monday the Morrison Government will try to force a vote in the Senate on a bill that will allow unions to be shut down over late paperwork or for exercising their right to strike.

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

“Morrison announced it. Porter has confirmed it. The Ensuring Integrity Bill is about making it much harder for unions to stand up for workers rights so the Morrison Government can begin their attack on workers rights.

“The most complicated and complex laws are our tax laws and big business manages to navigate them perfectly to minimise their tax. They are prepared to pay whatever it takes to ensure they comply with these laws.

“The ACTU is prepared to offer a free service to all employers to help them pay their workers correctly if they are having difficulty working this out themselves. The thing is, plenty of good employers have no trouble working this out. Some employers choose to engage in wage theft simply because they think they can get away with it.

“Next week is a pivotal week for the future of working people in Australia and our democracy. We ask the cross bench to stand up and defend unions and our role in our democracy. Working

people are going to need unions more than ever. We are the only force that will be standing in the way of the Morrison Governments attempts to take away their rights and reduce their pay.

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