

Monday 8 February 2021

Workers to tell Senate Inquiry IR Bill will create insecurity, exploitation and wage cuts

Working people from a wide range of industries will give evidence to the IR Omnibus Bill Senate Inquiry beginning today in Townsville and continues in Adelaide on the 10th and Canberra on the 19th.

The hearing is an opportunity for parliamentarians from both sides of politics and the crossbench to hear from the people who will be directly affected by the changes proposed in the bill which currently includes;

- Allowing employers to bring in agreements that do not meet the Better Off Overall Test (BOOT) – meaning they can include cuts to pay and conditions.
- Rolling back penalties for wage theft in Victoria, Queensland and the ACT.
- Allowing workers to be classed as casuals even when they have ongoing, regular hours.
- Giving employers the ability to ask workers covered by awards including hospitality and retail to work at different locations or perform different duties, with no oversight from the FWC.
- Stripping overtime pay from part time workers in retail, hospitality and other awards.
- Doubling of the length of Greenfields agreements to eight years – leaving workers on large infrastructure projects with no ability to negotiate changes to workplace conditions like rosters or address OHS concerns.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“From the start of the consultation process we were very clear that we would never support legislation that left workers worse off; this Bill does not pass that test.

“At a time when we need certainty, security and wages in the pockets of working people, this bill would push us in the opposite direction – cutting pay and increasing insecurity.

“The RBA as made it very clear that wage growth is the key to the recovery – but instead the Morrison Government is listening to the employer lobby who want to cut wages to increase profits.

“Cutting wages for the workers who carried us through the pandemic will be bad for small business and prolong the recovery.

“This hearing gives all parties a chance to hear from the people who protected us during the crisis and would be most affected by this bill.

“We should be trying to build a stronger, more resilient workforce, rather than returning to failed policies which put profits for big business ahead of job security and wage growth for working people.”

ACTU President Michele O’Neil and workers attending the hearing will be addressing the media at a rally and press conference prior to the hearing in Townsville this morning.

Time: 8:20am

Location: Rydges Southbank, Palmer Street Townsville

Media contact: Isabella Tilley 0414 894 040