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Voters don't trust Tony Abbott on work rights

Polling released today shows voters believe a Tony Abbott-led Coalition Government would swing power back to employers in the workplace and cut conditions like penalty rates.

Despite the Opposition's reluctance to talk about its intentions for workplace laws, voters believe an Abbott government will take action to change work laws and they're worried about it, said ACTU President Ged Kearney.

The Essential Research polling commissioned by the ACTU looks at a series of changes flagged in the Liberal Party's industrial relations policy.

Nearly half of all voters believe an Abbott government is likely to cut penalty rates and award conditions, including 25 percent who believe it very likely.

Over half would be very or somewhat concerned if penalty rates and award conditions were cut, compared with just 16 percent who wouldn't be concerned.

More than half of voters say they believe an Abbott Government would swing power back in favour of employers in the workplace.

The highest level of concern, with 57% very or somewhat concerned, was for the introduction of individual contracts that cut take-home pay.

"The expanded use of 'individual flexibility agreements' – WorkChoices-style individual contracts by another name – are at the heart of the Coalition's workplace policy," said Ms Kearney.

"The Opposition has given no detail on what safeguards will be in place around these agreements to provide a safety net for workers.

"We also have real concerns about workers' penalty rates, with business campaigning hard to abolish penalty rates and the Coalition promising them a hearing with their post-election review of work laws."

Unions are calling on the Coalition to provide details around the terms of reference of its promised post-election Productivity Commission review of the Fair Work Act.

"We are asking for a firm commitment from the Opposition that they won't go after penalty rates in the future; and to tell Australian voters the scope of their review, so we really know what's at risk this election."

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