

BUILDING A MOVEMENT AGAINST EI CUTS

The Good Jobs for All Coalition launched its campaign against the EI cuts at a packed forum on June 20th. For everyone who came out to the event, it became obvious that people in greater Toronto need to start fighting to defend what is left of this vital social safety net. Only 1 in 5 unemployed Torontonians received Employment Insurance (EI) benefits at any given time last year and the recent changes by the Conservative government will only make matters worse.

The new EI rules require 75% of EI claimants to accept work at a 20-30% pay cut, in a job outside their current profession, after just six weeks of job search. “Those changes will further erode our confidence in the safety net long considered one of the keystones of Canadian democracy” explained Tam Goossen, co-chair of the Good Jobs for All coalition and moderator of the forum.

The evening began with a panel of speakers from Toronto, Quebec and New Brunswick, including Kenny Hoosein, Steelworkers Job Action Centre, Armine Yalnizyan, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Patrick Rondeau, Conseiller regional Federation des travailleurs et des travailleuses and Daniel Legere, New Brunswick Scrap the Changes Resource Committee. Kenny spoke passionately of the experience of unemployed workers, while Armine provided a broad analysis and historical perspective of EI. Patrick and Daniel shared their experiences in organizing huge rallies in their communities, and called on Torontonians to build mass support to restore EI for all jobless workers.

Following the panel the audience of community and union members spoke of their experiences with EI and the need to Stop the Changes and Fix EI, so all unemployed workers have access to an insurance that they pay into – an insurance to take them through the challenging times between jobs.

Stay tuned on how you can become a part of this important campaign to build a movement against the EI cuts. For more information please take a look at “The Cost of Falling EI Coverage” and “Fix Employment Insurance.”