



IAMAW QUESTIONS FOR MP JINNY SIMS

PAC REPORT - JUNE 2015

Jinny Sims (NDP) is the Member of Parliament for Newton-North Delta. Elected in 2011, Jinny is currently the Official Opposition Critic for Employment and Social Development. As past President of the BCTF, Jinny knows the importance of solidarity and fighting for working families. She has been a strong advocate for young people and social justice issues.

Q: Good jobs and fair wages are important to our Members. As Critic for Employment what do you feel the government should be doing to ensure Canadians have access to good jobs?

A: To create new jobs, the government must find ways to process our own resources instead of shipping them out. In BC, we have our resources shipped to other countries. Canada is a resource rich country but we are losing a lot of pace because of bilateral agreements. The aim should be to invest in clean energy because there is sound evidence that investing in clean energy leads to more jobs. The government needs to invest in infrastructure and jobs that pay Canadians well. It is important that we also invest in our youth. Unless we are careful, our children and grandchildren will not have decent jobs, in part due to this Conservative government's immense expansion of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

Q: Many IAM Members work in manufacturing and industry. It seems harder to find employers willing to support training and apprenticeship completion rates have fallen. What should the government be doing to support new and young workers?

A: Lack of government investment and employer commitment has left apprenticeship programs in shambles. Of course employers must play a critical role in training and apprenticeship programs, but it is up to the government to provide incentives and show leadership on the matter. The high cost of schooling is another hindrance to youth advancement, and the government should be providing more opportunities to curb that burden: e.g., through scholarships, grants and loans.

Q: You voted against Bill C-33 in 2012, the Air Canada back to work legislation sponsored by Conservative MP Lisa Raitt that took away our Members' right to strike. How important do you think free Collective Bargaining is to our democracy?

A: Free Collective Bargaining is fundamental to a democratic society. The UN has conventions to ensure free Collective Bargaining. Employees have to have a right to withhold their labour. In 2005, when I was President of the BC Teachers' Federation, I led an illegal strike and was prepared to go jail, that's how deep my commitment is to free bargaining rights. The Conservative government has no respect for democratic rights and Collective Bargaining.

Q: Our Members hear a lot about Temporary Foreign Workers and how the program, started by the Liberal government, has greatly expanded under the Conservatives. We wonder if we are in danger of being replaced and we are concerned about abuse of foreign workers. What are your thoughts on the program as it is, and should there be changes?

A: The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is broken. Successive Conservative and Liberal governments have made it easier for employers to bring in workers from abroad, driving down wages, displacing qualified Canadian workers and in many cases putting vulnerable workers in abusive situations. I and my NDP colleagues have called for an independent review of the whole program. This government is all about cuts, and it has gutted resources for data gathering and mining. Now, we have no accurate, current labour market data, and we are seeing the repercussions of that over the past few years, as more and more stories of incorrect usage and abuses of and within the Program are brought to light. The Program was initially created to fill temporary labour shortages, but it is being used to fill ongoing positions. I always say, as Jack Layton did before me, that if the work is not temporary, we should be providing paths to citizenship along with the jobs.

Q: Many of our Members live in Surrey and Delta and know you to be an outspoken supporter of public safety in their neighbourhoods. Violence had to reach crisis point before the government acknowledged the need for more RCMP, what do you think needs to be done to make Surrey safer?

A: Four years ago, when I was first elected, I began calling out this government on its failure to deliver the added police it promised Surrey in 2006. Since January of 2015, I've brought it up 16 times in the House of Commons. Now, after 30 shootings since March, they've agreed to 100 more police, but they won't commit to a timeline for delivery.

I have a motion on the order paper calling on the Conservatives to increase funding to the Surrey School Board, specifically for Drug Prevention programming; I am co-sponsoring a motion with my colleague, Jasbir Sandhu, asking the government to allocate more resources from the Youth Gang Prevention Fund to Surrey. Obviously, I believe the answer to the violent crime problem in Surrey is multi-pronged, but it starts with prevention programs, spans more policing in the area, and also encompasses rehabilitative measures. The Conservative government, for all its "tough on crime" bravado, has failed Surrey miserably on this front.

Q: Is there anything else you would like our Members know?

A: Yes. I would like to make Members aware that the NDP voted against C-51, while Liberals and Conservatives voted for this dangerous legislation. The NDP has announced that it will introduce a \$15/hour federal minimum wage, and a childcare plan that would see no parent paying more than \$15/day per spot. The NDP has announced it would restore the age of eligibility for Old Age Security

(Conservatives boosted it to 67; the NDP would move it back down to 65). An NDP government would also force private sector executives to pay taxes on all of their stock option benefits, and use the subsequent cash influx to try and put an end to child poverty.

Thank you MP Jinny Sims for the great, informative answers to our IAM 764 PAC questions!

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Andrews