

November 6, 2017

Hon. Don Morgan, QC  
Deputy Premier  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety  
Room 355, Legislative Building, 2405 Legislative Drive  
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

Dear Minister Morgan:

There are many things this province can and should be proud of and that are worthy of celebration. However, to have the worst record in Canada for police-reported domestic violence cases is certainly not one of them. In fact, it is clearly a detraction from everything we value in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Chamber has met with various stakeholders who have expertise in this issue specifically in the areas of recovery and wellness processes, education and training, and support services. We have also spoken with business leaders who have some experience on this matter. From these interactions, we have developed a position we believe will represent supportive and positive action from business to ensure that we play a valuable role in ending domestic violence by keeping our workers, workplaces, and communities safer.

There are several elements within our position but I wish to emphasize that the Saskatchewan Chamber fully endorses the education of our business leaders and their employees in how to identify, assist, and prevent domestic violence. We have and will continue to promote to the entire Saskatchewan Chamber network, workshops organized by the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services Saskatchewan (PATHS) and other credible organizations.

Furthermore, we do not support the concept that has been put forward that employers should be obligated to offer employees impacted by domestic violence, paid leave that is beyond of their current compensation. The issue is a community one, therefore the solution, and the cost for time away, should be a community responsibility.

The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce (SCC) has adopted the following Policy Statement:

- Education and training workshops for both employers and employees in recognizing domestic violence in the workplace should be used as a much-needed first step in fostering greater awareness of the issue. Employers should make these workshops available to their employees to ensure all actions taken by those employees are clear, consistent, and helpful to all concerned.
- With proper education and training, employers will better understand their role in making their workplaces safe and should then create clearly defined policies to appropriately deal with suspected, reported, or witnessed incidents of domestic violence involving their employees or in the workplace.
- Employers should allow for reasonable time off for impacted workers, but should not be required to pay wages or offer leave beyond that which is part of their current compensation.
- Victims of domestic violence should be granted access to Employment Insurance (EI) benefits to cover lost wages for days off taken in relation to finding new housing accommodations, making childcare arrangements, meeting with medical and legal professionals, healing from emotional and physical injuries, etc. The Saskatchewan Chamber encourages the Government of Saskatchewan to lobby the Government of Canada to amend EI to allow for this provision.
- In addition, any person requiring services and support should be informed of those services provided by the offices of the Ministry of Social Services, as they have current programs and financial supports that could well serve the individual's needs. The SCC will encourage strategic actions from all levels of government to ensure there is appropriate resources and services for victims of abuse across the province.

Minister Morgan, we see domestic violence as a serious issue but one that with shared commitment we can see an end to. We as government, business, employers and employees need to work together to improve the situation overall.

We respectfully ask that you review our position and ensure no formal legislation or regulations are enacted that conflict with this position. As always, we welcome discussion on this or any other issue.

Yours truly,



Steve McLellan, CEO

Cc:

- Hon. Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan
- Government of Saskatchewan Cabinet
- Hon. Nicole Sarauer, Interim Leader of the Opposition
- Mike Carr, Deputy Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
- J. Glen Gardner Q.C., Deputy Minister of Justice
- Dale McFee, Deputy Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing
- Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors