



**THE CONFEDERATION OF CANADIAN UNIONS  
LA CONFÉDÉRATION DES SYNDICATS CANADIENS**

January 22, 2018

Restaurant Brands International  
Owners of Tim Hortons  
226 Wyecroft Road  
Oakville, Ontario  
L6K 3X7

**Re: Minimum Wage Increase**

Greetings,

On behalf of the Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU), the largest affiliation of independent unions in the country, I want to tell you how disappointed I am in the responses of several Tim Hortons franchise owners to the recent increases in the minimum wage in the provinces of Ontario and Alberta.

As you are already aware, Tim Hortons owners in several Ontario locations moved to offset the increased wages by eliminating paid breaks, increasing workers' contributions for benefits, and reducing several other perks.

One of these outlets, located in Cobourg and partially owned by one of the children of Tim Horton himself, Jeri Horton-Joyce, even sent a letter to employees asking them to sign a document acknowledging the loss of certain benefits, paid breaks and other incentives in response to the province's minimum wage increase.

While owners of a location in Whitby, Ontario, Susan and Jason Holman, gave a written notice to employees in November 2017, more than a full month before the increase of the minimum wage became effective January 1, 2018.

In it, they suggest that workers contact Premier Kathleen Wynne if they have concerns about the cuts to benefits — and let her know she doesn't have their support. "I encourage you to let her know how your workplace will change as a result of her new [minimum wage] law and that you will not vote Liberal in the coming Ontario election in June 2018," says the notice.

The letter went fully public and viral on social media, but is now the cause of significant embarrassment for the owners as well as the Tim Hortons brand. Asking workers to sign a pledge agreeing to unpaid breaks or less pay than actual hours worked, and making them pawns in a political game, is remarkably exploitative, unfair and un-Canadian.

Not surprisingly, all of this has created an enormous response from Tim Hortons workers, labour unions, social justice activists and of course, ordinary Canadians. Protesters have rallied across the country, calling on Tim Hortons' franchisees and its parent company, Restaurant Brands International (RBI), to reverse these claw-backs to workers' benefits, paid breaks and other benefits.

Since the early 1970s, the CCU has advocated for increases in the minimum wage and the establishment of a living wage for all working Canadians. The recent increases in the minimum wage in Ontario and Alberta bring us one step closer to doing that.

The CCU represents more than 15,000 workers throughout Canada in a variety of industries. Like a vast number of them, I'm a frequent visitor to my local Tim Hortons, enjoying the coffee and donuts almost every morning before I start work.

I know that millions of other Canadians do as well, but are deeply disappointed and angered at the manner in which several Tim Hortons franchise managers have reacted to the increase in the minimum wage, an increase so important that it will give Tim Hortons workers the chance at a living wage, so they won't have to worry about affording the necessities of life for themselves and their children.

Unfortunately, the franchise owners have said they won't change their minds on the issue. This is unacceptable, not only to the workers of Tim Hortons, but millions of its customers throughout the country.

This is where RBI needs to get directly involved, and fast. I strongly urge you to intervene in this matter and demand these franchise owners restore the paid breaks, benefits and other perks that Tim Hortons workers have always enjoyed.

After all, it's their friendly service that keeps millions of people coming back to Tim Hortons every day. But this won't last long if their franchise owners continue to take advantage of them, while the corporation that owns the brand name looks the other way and does nothing.

The great sport of hockey, which the very founder of your business once played with power and grace, is one of Canada's greatest institutions. And Tim Hortons restaurants and its brand name aren't far behind. But this also won't continue if workers at these franchises are left behind.

Canada is one which prides itself on fairness and social justice, and RBI can play an important role in ensuring that these values still exist for the tens of thousands of Tim Hortons workers throughout the country. Again, I urge you to intervene in this increasingly troubling situation as soon as possible.

If you would like to speak further about this, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. Johnson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kelly Johnson  
President, Confederation of Canadian Unions  
250.365.5309  
[contact@ccu-csc.ca](mailto:contact@ccu-csc.ca)  
[www.ccu-csc.ca](http://www.ccu-csc.ca)