

Responses to motion to fund plan homelessness

I am presenting in support of the motion to end chronic homelessness in the City of Regina.

The Regina and District Labour Council is made up of 19 affiliated unions representing over 31,000 members across the city. We organize annual events to raise the profile of the labour movement in Regina as well as advocate for a city that works for workers. The RDLC has always been active in the fight to end homelessness but that was particularly impactful this winter as Camp Hope raised the visibility of homelessness in our city. The RDLC proudly seconded a donation request at the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour convention asking for donation from individuals and unions attending. This “passing of the hat” raised over \$27,000 from the floor of the convention. An unprecedented amount and a clear demonstration of the commitment of union members to taking action on homelessness.

Homelessness is not separate from the labour movement. There is a stereotype that all union workers are paid well. This is not true, many workers have part-time or seasonal employment or are below the recently announced living wage of \$16.23/hour.

This stereotype was further blown apart when many of our affiliated locals had their workplaces shut down due to COVID in March of 2020. Many locals reached out to members to discuss their well-being during this time only to find out that members were precariously housed or had lost their housing – this is consistent with the point in time homelessness count that took place in 2021 which identified that 22% of those surveyed lost housing due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We know that current and former union members make up some of the 488 folks identified as experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness is present within our movement and we support the City of Regina taking action to address it.

While the labour movement will continue to advocate at a provincial level for action taken to end homelessness we believe that it is up to all governments to step up to the plate and take action. There is an opportunity for the City of Regina to be a leader on this issue.

We support the City of Regina taking this step and commit to communicating our support to the 31,000 affiliated union members across the city.