
Abstract:

Workers in Ontario, Canada are on the edge of a crisis in the enforcement of their minimum employment standards (ES). This crisis is shaped not only by well-documented deficiencies in the scope of labour protection but by the fact that the administration of the ES system has not kept pace with the increasing number of workers and workplaces requiring protection under the province’s employment standards act. Coupled with an outmoded complaint-based system, the dearth of support for ES enforcement is cultivating a situation in which an unprecedented number of workers are bearers of rights without genuine opportunities for redress. Responding to this situation, this article explores how measures augmenting the voices of workers and their advocates could contribute to improving ES enforcement in Ontario. It does so through a review of innovative practices in other common law contexts characterized by similar enforcement regimes where labour market conditions have likewise deteriorated.