

June 15, 2020

VIA EMAIL AND FAX: Sylvia.jones@ontario.ca; Sylvia.jones@pc.ola.org 416-326-0498

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Solicitor General
Office of the Solicitor General
George Drew Bldg., 18th Flr.
25 Grosvenor St.
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6

Dear Solicitor General Jones,

I am writing to you to urge you to take action and ensure fairness for a group of workers who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 fight in Ontario: security guards.

The United Steelworkers union represents thousands of security guards across Ontario. These workers are on the front lines, protecting and interacting with the public and working alongside other frontline heroes. Security guards have been essential workers on the front lines from the beginning of the pandemic.

Our members have been key participants in keeping our essential services safe. Security guards work at hospitals, grocery stores, long-term care facilities and pharmacies, among other places – where there is increased risk of contracting the deadly virus through close contact with the public, contact with other at-risk frontline workers and at times hazardous, physical interactions.

Yet, as you are aware, security guards have been ignored and overlooked when it comes to receiving the \$4 per hour pandemic pay premium. These relatively low-paid workers are currently not eligible to receive pandemic pay, even though they are on the front lines.

I respectfully encourage you and your government to expand the eligibility criteria to rectify this unfair situation and to authorize payment to security guards, retroactive to the start of the State of Emergency, of the \$4 per hour wage top-up, as well as the monthly lump-sum payments.

The pandemic premium was announced on April 25, 2020. Many frontline workers are still waiting for their premium pay, almost two months later.

Our security guard members are waiting too. Waiting to be included. Waiting to be recognized as frontline heroes. Waiting for a \$4 pay premium that they, too, deserve.

I wrote to Premier Ford on this issue back in May. Sudbury MPP Jamie West has written to you on the issue of pandemic pay premiums for security guards.

Another issue I would like to mention is the need for online testing and certification of security guards. MPP Kevin Yarde has spoken in the legislature about this. Online certification is a solution to address the shortage of licensed security guards in Ontario, a shortage that will be compounded as our province reopens.

As I wrote to the Premier, I trust that the lack of recognition for security guards is an oversight and that you will agree it is unjust to exclude these frontline workers from the province's pandemic pay initiative.

On behalf of the members of my union and their families across our great province, I thank you in advance for your consideration. Please take action to support security workers who provide such a vital service to all Ontarians.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty Warren" followed by a horizontal flourish.

Marty Warren
Ontario Director
United Steelworkers

c.c. Jamie West, MPP Sudbury
Kevin Yarde, MPP Brampton North