

STATEMENT TO THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE

BY

**THE HONOURABLE STEVE PETERS
MINISTER OF LABOUR**

**REGARDING
DAY OF MOURNING**

**QUEEN'S PARK
APRIL 27, 2006
(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)**

Speaker:

April 28 is observed across Canada as the Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job.

This date was chosen because on April 28, 1914, the Workmen's Compensation Act was given third reading in the Ontario legislature.

The Government of Ontario has been recognizing the Day of Mourning since the 1980s.

The Day of Mourning was officially recognized by the federal government in 1991, eight years after the day of remembrance was launched by the Canadian Labour Congress.

The Day of Mourning has since spread to about 80 countries around the world.

Tomorrow marks the 22nd anniversary of this important day.

On this day we remember and honour those who have died, been injured or become ill as a result of their job.

It is a day to remember, reflect, and commit.

To remember lives lost or forever changed by the simple act of going to work.

To reflect upon the past and know that great strides have been made in health and safety over the years thanks to the commitment and dedication of those who fight for workplace health and safety.

To commit to making workplace health and safety a personal priority and to take action to prevent workplace tragedies.

It is a community effort . . .

Health and safety advocates in our businesses, schools and our communities work hard every day to ensure healthy and safe workplaces for the people of Ontario.

This has resulted in Ontario having one of the lowest workplace injury rates in Canada. Despite this, however, too many men, women and young workers continue to lose their lives, suffer an injury or illness as a result of their job.

In 2004 alone, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board reported 296 work-related deaths and 277,422 workplace injuries.

These statistics are overwhelming. No job is worth a life. No job is worth an injury.

When I became Minister of Labour, I was shocked to discover how many of our young workers are injured and killed on the job every year.

In 2004 alone, seven young workers lost their lives at work and more than 49,000 were injured.

I find these statistics devastating.

These statistics represent young people who were our sons, daughters, grandchildren and friends.

...our future.

What's most devastating is that all of these tragedies could have been prevented.

Speaker, today I rise as Minister of Labour, but I know I echo the sentiments of all members of this House, and past Ministers of Labour, *across* party lines, when I say that workplace deaths and injuries are tragic and unacceptable.

I also speak to all of you today as employers, as parents and as members of our community.

We must each dedicate ourselves to doing what we can so that people who go to work every day, return home every day safe and sound.

I urge each and every one of you to make workplace health and safety a personal priority.

Not only for the people of Ontario which you represent, but also for your friends, families and communities.

We must work together to make sure our sons and daughters, our loved ones and members of our communities return home safely from work each day.

We have the knowledge and resources to prevent workplace injuries.

It's our job to make sure that every workplace has access to the information and tools they need to improve workplace health and safety.

We must hold those in positions of responsibility to account.

As elected representatives, we have a duty and a responsibility to lead by example and make safety a priority in our every day lives.

Let's dedicate ourselves to prevention.

Let's honour those we remember today, by using the knowledge we have to someday eliminate all workplace deaths and injuries.

We have to change how society views workplace health and safety.

Speaker, I am proud to represent a government that is actively promoting a culture of prevention. One that understands the importance of investing in workplace health and safety.

However, I know much more remains to be done.

We must continue to raise the bar for workplace health and safety.

Speaker, very shortly we will observe a moment of silence to remember those who have died, been injured or become ill as a result of their job.

Let us honour the memory of our fallen workers by pledging that we will do what we can to prevent future workplace tragedies.

Thank you, Speaker.