

The Issue

Picketing of People's Homes

The Facts

During the summer of 2007 the support workers of seven Community Living agencies went on strike after a coordinated campaign by one union to align a large number of collective agreements to expire at the same time. The people who were supported by these agencies had to endure the strikes and many had their homes picketed. During the strikes, many people were confined to their homes or were forced to move from their homes.

Neighbourhoods were disrupted by picket lines, port-o-potties, shouting, megaphones and whistles. In some locations this occurred at all hours of the day and night.

During the summer of 2009 people's homes were once again picketed in the course of a strike in Lanark County. Pickets were eventually withdrawn as a result of advocacy by local People First organizations and negative public reaction to the picketing.

Did You Know?

- Picketing of homes causes people to experience fear, disorientation, shame, isolation and is a violation of personal privacy. Further, it causes significant damage to relationships that people have with their neighbours.
- Community Living supports the rights of workers to take appropriate labour actions as part of contract negotiations including the right to strike. We do not, however, support the picketing of people's homes and believe that it must never occur again.
- Community Living Ontario has met with government to seek a policy response that would address the legitimate rights of workers to strike while protecting people who have a disability from having their homes picketed. To date, the government has taken no action to establish such a policy.
- A private members Bill (Bill 83) aimed at ending picketing, was presented in the legislature in 2010 by an opposition member.

The Solution

The Ministries of Labour and Community and Social Services must undertake to introduce a policy prohibiting picketing at any home of a person receiving support through developmental services. Action must be taken immediately in order to have this policy in place before people are put at risk as a result of potential labour action in the coming year.