
WHO WILL FIGHT FOR US? UNION DESIGNATED WOMEN'S ADVOCATES IN AUTO MANUFACTURING WORKPLACES

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ABSTRACT

Women's employment in traditionally male manufacturing jobs is hindered by both formal and informal structures (Levine 2009). In light of recent recession-based changes in the Ontario economy, it is becoming more important for women to maintain well-paying manufacturing employment. Women face different challenges in the home and workplace than men. This paper investigates the Canadian Auto Workers' (CAW) Union's unique women's advocacy program, as a promising mechanism to secure women's safety at home and at work, while protecting their employment status. Drawing on ethnographic research with women auto workers and union women, our findings suggest that the CAW's women's advocacy program is innovative and beneficial in maintaining women's employment as they attend to personal problems. This program can be extended throughout other locals and unions to assist women dealing with violence and other issues related to work-life experience.

For decades academic and community-based feminists have argued that perhaps the most significant step towards women's equality is their employment in well-paying, secure jobs (Arber and Ginn 1995, Armstrong and Armstrong 1978, Blau et al. 2002, Hartmann 1979). Yet research in the last several years also makes it increasingly clear that simply getting well-paid jobs is not enough to provide equality and security for women (Yates and Leach 2006). Other issues intervene in destabilizing women's work lives, some of these associated with the job itself, such as the "climate" for women at the workplace, and time demands placed on women; others are associated with issues women bring to work, such as experiences of violence at home, or the

demands their families place on them. It is increasingly clear that both these sets of issues create complications for women's work lives that men do not face, undermining women's ability to get – and keep – decent jobs (Browne et al. 1999, Joshi et al. 1996, Levine 2009, Lewis 2001). Furthermore, there are limited resources available to assist women navigate these issues, in both union and non-union workplaces.

Drawing on our research with workers in the automobile industry in Ontario, this paper considers first, some of the very gendered conditions that women face in the industry, where there have been – and despite the industry's transformation, will continue to be – well paid jobs. Then, through an examination of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union's women's advocate program, we consider the role that a dedicated workplace women's advocate can play in improving the lives and livelihoods of women manufacturing workers. Despite their presence in CAW workplaces since 1993, and despite the wealth of research on women in Canadian unions, we have found no scholarly analysis of the role of formal women's advocates in unionized workplaces. This paper, then, represents a preliminary analysis of a formal women's advocate program within a major union. We argue that a workplace women's advocate is a practical step that moves towards addressing issues that women face at work, especially, but not only, in male-dominated workplaces.

Our research was conducted in partnership with the Women's Committee of CAW Local 88 at an assembly plant in Ontario.¹ The research was carried out by a team of academic and community researchers as part of a Community-University Research Alliance. In this research we have employed an ethnographic approach to understanding the lives and needs of women in the auto manufacturing industry. This approach involves assembling data acquired through interviews, focus groups, and surveys with workers at a major Ontario assembly plant, through formal and informal discussions with our CAW research partners, and formal plant tours, to construct our understanding of women's work in an auto assembly plant. This paper takes as its starting place, material drawn from 7 interviews conducted by telephone in 2008, and one focus group of 5 women conducted in 2007, all of whom had left the assembly plant. These women told us of the conditions of work they encountered and of their reasons for leaving. In keeping with our research collaboration, we have also drawn on the knowledge and expertise of the CAW women members of our research team for their identification of the issues, as both auto workers and informal women's advocates. The broad picture that emerged, of the major gendered issues that women autoworkers face, led us to investigate further the program that was quite frequently referred to by those we interviewed as an invaluable resource for women – the CAW Women's Advocate Program.

WOMEN AND GENDERED SEGREGATION AT WORK

Issues around women's work in male-dominated workplaces have been, and continue to be, of the utmost importance to socialist feminist scholars. Women have participated in the industrial manufacturing sector since the late 18th century; however, from the earliest times participation was usually limited to lower paying jobs for unmarried girls and women (Blau et al. 2002). Women's involvement in the full range of manufacturing work grew during the Second World War, but on men's return to their jobs, women were forced back into the home or into lower paying retail, service, or clerical positions, in a return to gender segregated work lives (Armstrong and Armstrong 1978). The patriarchal image of the ideal family, historically fostered by the middle and upper classes, male workers and their trade unions, pushed women out of (or refused to allow them into) better-paying jobs in order to provide men with living wages to support their families (Blau et al. 2002).

Feminist scholars have argued that the division of labour and job segregation by sex has resulted in a lack of status for women, creating dependence on men. This perpetuates the unhealthy interplay between patriarchy and capitalism, as corporations rely on women's unpaid work and status in the home to ensure that men are available for work (Fine 1992, Hartmann 1979). Gendered labour segregation is a problem when men are employed in traditional high-paying 'male jobs' within union supported, monopoly sector manufacturing firms, and women are left to compete for lower-paying employment (Armstrong and Armstrong 1978, Shalev 2008). Early feminist debates centered on these tendencies of labour market sex segregation, noting the exclusionary policies of male unions, and men's experience with organizations and control, as detrimental to women's liberation and equality. More recently, scholars have focused on the impacts of the increasingly precarious nature of work and the limitations to women's mobility in male dominated workplaces. Precarious work is characterized through many different dimensions – including low job security and increased risk of ill health. The debate on the gendered division of labour has thus taken on renewed importance, as women's prevalence in precarious, low paying, casual, and part-time employment rises (Vosko 2007).

The increase in precarious work for women warrants the exploration of those factors that affect women's ability to find, maintain and thrive in well-paying, stable, full-time employment. Women's employment in manufacturing, prior to the current economic crisis, had risen. Women still run the risk of being slotted into gender 'appropriate' job tasks usually at lower pay, due to the perception that women are more dexterous, nimble, and have a greater attention to detail. Women may also be subjected to hostile work environments in manufacturing (Yates and Leach 2007) and elsewhere. Levine (2009) addresses specific barriers to women in manufacturing workplaces, investigating limitations on women's

mobility into traditionally male job roles in manufacturing plants. Through her study of a small-scale American Midwestern food processing plant, she investigates workplace sex segregation, focusing on both formal and informal barriers, including physical requirements and harassment. Levine found that women were not able to enter the stable, high-paying jobs in the plant due to sex-segregation; moreover, competition amongst the women for these jobs negated the potential for solidarity.

Sex segregation in the workplace has had important consequences for women's experiences of unions. While women in unions share many of the concerns of their brothers, they have of course particular gendered concerns. For many decades women have sought support for gendered workplace struggles through their unions and these have been documented in a rich scholarly literature. Sugiman (1994), for example, has analyzed the history of the United Auto Workers Union in Canada from a gender perspective, noting the importance of union consciousness, the women's movement and gender identity, to women's ability to launch a campaign for gender equality in manufacturing workplaces. By employing the concept of a gendered strategy, this work illustrates the positive effects unionization has on women in auto manufacturing, including the emergence of union-based women's committees. Noting that women are often discriminated against within unions, Briskin (2006) argues that women employ different leadership strategies. She also found that women are able to organize in unions to gain access to "women-only" education, providing agency for women in unions. Yates (2006) found that although women have even greater need than men for the benefits of unionization, due to systemic forms of discrimination at the workplace, they must also work harder to find unions to represent them. She argues that union organizing strategies and practices are in themselves discriminatory.

In the current economic moment, at the same time that women are increasingly dependent on access to and success in the labour market for their survival, the structures of state policy that effectively, if often tacitly, recognized their particular needs as women for the requirements of social reproduction have been more and more eroded (Leach and Yates 2008). Traditionally men have been seen as the main victims of rough economic times but research suggests that women also face severe challenges during these periods (Armstrong 1984, Richardson, 2009), exacerbated by reduced state support. The increasing instability of the manufacturing sector in Canada, coupled with the nature of women's involvement and their sometimes unpleasant experiences there, suggests the need for a better understanding of the changes taking place in this work for women and as well, for urgent consideration of ways to improve their experience.

WOMEN IN THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

The auto industry is a good place from which to consider the position of women in manufacturing and the potential role of a workplace women's advocate for a number of reasons. First, the industry has historically offered some of the best-paid unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in Ontario, but few of these have been held by women. The 2006 census indicates that 50,990 men worked in motor vehicle assembly but only 11,245 women (about 22% of the total) were employed there (Statistics Canada 2006). Auto assembly jobs are well paying for both women and men. According to the CAW (2002), on average women and men autoworkers made \$27 per hour in 2002. These wages are much higher than traditional 'pink collar' service industry jobs, which often provide alienating, minimum wage employment (Woodhall 2009).

The auto industry in Canada has both unionized and non-union workplaces. Japanese assembly plants (Honda and Toyota) are non-union, while the American carmakers are unionized. While few women are employed in assembly, vastly more are employed in the even more volatile parts industry, which is overwhelmingly non-union (Yates and Leach 2007). According to the most recent census data, 75,400 men (60% of all men in the industry) and 30,115 women (73% of all women in the industry) were employed in motor vehicle parts manufacturing (Statistics Canada 2006), where pay rates range between \$12 and \$30 an hour (CAW 2002). There is clearly a huge gender imbalance in terms of those employed in motor vehicle assembly. Given that unions have an important impact on worker wage rates, seniority rights, and grievance procedures (Fang and Verma 2002; Gunderson and Hyatt 2001), women working in non-union auto parts plants—the majority of women in the industry—are likely to have a worse experience of workplace conditions than the unionized workers whose experiences we draw on in this paper.

The numbers above are likely to have changed considerably due to the current economic crisis' impact on motor vehicle manufacturing. Manufacturing has been the hardest hit of all industries, with a total of 322,000 manufacturing jobs being lost between 2004 and 2008 (Bernard 2009). Auto assembly has lost 20,000 jobs in the last decade, and the parts sector had lost 25,000 jobs, or a quarter of the total, in the four years up to 2009 (Stanford 2009). Clearly the automotive industry in Ontario has been suffering through the most dramatic change. This is a result of the contemporary economic crisis, layered over an industry structure and organization that has failed to address a number of very serious issues, among them the overproduction of automobiles globally, the environmental impact of the industry and the absence of environmentally-centered technologies (Rosenfeld 2009).

The uncertain future of the industry puts the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of workers, former workers and their families in jeopardy. Among

these are a relatively small number of women assembly workers, and a far larger number of parts workers who have consistently faced different issues from the men they work alongside. Questions of layoffs and mandatory shutdowns, which have an impact on all workers in the auto industry, have been at the forefront of public debates over the auto industry crisis. Maintaining employment is a more serious problem for autoworker women whose seniority levels are much lower than those of men. The increasingly contingent and unstable nature of this work means workers face dramatic changes, including job loss, with more frequency, while the social safety net of government provision has diminished. These issues have different effects on women's lives than on men's. With less seniority than their male counterparts, women are among the first to lose their jobs. Women are also more likely to take leave to deal with family responsibilities. Discontinuous work history, often due to reproductive responsibilities, but also cycles of layoffs and rehiring, can severely hinder a woman's ability to obtain a living-wage pension (Boserup 2007).

Issues specific to women's employment—linked to family responsibilities, low levels of seniority, and, as we discuss later, gender-based harassment—have never been adequately addressed in the industry. These issues are at risk of disappearing altogether from agendas for change in a context where recently hired women autoworkers are in danger of losing jobs.

WOMEN AT WORK IN AUTO

The focus of the research project on which this paper is based is what makes 'good' jobs for women in rural communities. Since many would consider a job in auto assembly at \$27 an hour plus benefits and union protection to be unequivocally a 'good' job, we asked former and current auto assembly workers, as well as women leaders in their local union, about their jobs in the plant. Some scholars suggest that the difference between a 'good' job and a 'bad' job is directly associated with high versus low wages (Acemoglu 2001). Our research suggests that the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' jobs is contingent on the level of the wage, but that other factors, such as job security and the workplace environment must also be taken into consideration. Job security is especially an issue in these economic times. Between 2007 and 2009 the assembly plant had seen the layoff of all those who had been hired since 1999. Although the plant workforce was inching towards gender equity in recent years, those layoffs impacted women most seriously because of their lower seniority. By mid-2009 all of the workers remaining at the plant had at least ten years seniority, and the ratio of women to men had returned to the pre-2005 level of about 16%. Most of those laid off have now (in early 2010) been recalled back to work. While this is good for the workers involved, it is also indicative of the volatility of the sector and the instability of jobs within it.

Our research has identified three areas in which women in manufacturing jobs face specific challenges that are different from those faced by men. For women, major issues concern time demands, health and safety, and gender-based rights.

Responsibilities that require women to prioritize family over work are not well accommodated in the auto manufacturing industry where time issues—including shift scheduling, hours of work and overtime—all favour the employer (Leach and Yates 2006). Women experience issues with work and family time differently from men (Lewis 2001). As elsewhere, women in the auto sector often assume responsibility for familial and community obligations, including child and eldercare, volunteer commitments, and household tasks that put pressure on time at work as well as time away from work. These pressures are not always felt by men, suggesting that women may have different needs in terms of scheduling work. This becomes problematic as employers implement the idea of ‘flexible workplaces’ that allow companies flexibility in scheduling a worker’s hours, but very little flexibility for workers to adjust their hours. The manufacturing sector lags behind some other sectors in providing solutions for women dealing with problems associated with finding work-life balance. In fact, increasingly harsh attendance policies have made it difficult for women to cope with maintaining work in the auto industry in the current competitive economy.

Women we talked to who had left auto assembly voluntarily often reported that time pressures had been a significant factor in their decision to leave. Finding childcare for rotating shifts and frequent overtime, or simply fitting the small tasks of caring for a family around these, often become more than a woman was willing to cope with. We heard that attendance issues are a common reason for new hires on probation being ‘let go’. Women active in the union advise new women employees to put in place absolutely foolproof childcare backup plans, and to ensure that they are never late during their probationary period. Once they have passed probation, the union contract provides some flexibility for the worker around these issues.

Women’s different health and safety issues also affect their experience of the job. Auto workers may become badly injured or develop chronic medical conditions on the job despite years of advocacy around workplace safety and ergonomics. Furthermore, women experience the workplace physically in a different way from men, and manufacturing plants and job tasks are often designed to accommodate men’s bodies and physical needs (Levine 2009). A study investigating upper extremity disorders in automotive manufacturing workers found that these were nearly twice as common in women plant workers (Punnett et. al 2004). Job tasks, machinery, and equipment are often designed to be performed by and used in conjunction with men’s bodies, presenting physical difficulties for women in auto manufacturing. We heard from women’s committee activists that new hire women sustained more injuries than men,

sometimes resulting in permanent restrictions on their workplace task involvement. These injuries can prevent women from re-entering non-salary based manufacturing work permanently and impact workers' ability to retain and obtain manufacturing employment. One woman we interviewed, who had left assembly after an occupational injury, did so only after a long period fighting the employer to provide light duty accommodation for her.

Women's reproductive health needs also present demands for accommodation at work that are not well addressed in auto plants. CAW local 88 has had to take complaints concerning accommodations for pregnant workers through the grievance procedure.

Women also experience violations of their gender-based rights. Women have a higher risk of sexual and other forms of harassment when they work in male-dominated workplaces like automotive plants. Those who complain may be seen as 'overly sensitive' and passed over for promotions or other opportunities. The experience of harassment creates a hostile work environment (Levine 2009; Morgan 2000). One woman who had left an assembly plant described the place as a "boy zone". Furthermore, women's needs for childcare and parental leave, among other family friendly policies, have not been widely recognized outside the women's committees, such that women who request such provisions may be ridiculed or ostracized, further contributing to a poisonous work environment.

This last point raises a further important issue: on many of these issues women and their union advocates find themselves not simply struggling with management, they must sometimes also contend with unsupportive brothers in the union—both in the leadership and among the rank and file. The gendered issues that women in auto manufacturing face, then, are longstanding and often intransigent. Despite recent improvements at the assembly plant that employed the women we spoke to and other workplaces resulting from workplace training, there is still a need for new approaches that can be extended to smaller and non-union manufacturing workplaces. In the next section we consider the dedicated workplace women's advocate as a promising start to addressing these issues.

THE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

The term "women's advocate" has been used for a long time to refer to those who promote women's issues and equality. More recently, it is a shorthand term for positions in anti-violence organizations whose major responsibility is to provide information, support, accompaniment, practical assistance and safety planning to women seeking to leave violent partners (Campbell 2007). Since 1993 the CAW has promoted the idea of an institutionalized and negotiated dedicated workplace women's advocate in all the workplaces where it represents workers, in the automobile industry and elsewhere. Yet analysis of the role of formal women's advocacy in unionized workplace settings is largely absent.

The CAW takes pride in its dedication to human rights issues, and the women's advocate program clearly emerges from the union's commitment to women's equality as one of a range of social justice issues it is concerned with. In 1993 the union negotiated with Ford, GM, and Chrysler to fund full-time union sponsored women's advocates (CAW 2000) in the assembly plants. By the summer of 2009 the union had negotiated women's advocates at about 137 workplaces, ranging from auto to health care to retail to transportation. The goal of the women's advocate program is to create safer workplaces and communities for women by recognizing and providing support and resources for women experiencing violence and/or harassment.

The program was initiated after the union considered what role it could play in combating violence against women, in the aftermath of the murders of fourteen women in Montreal on December 6, 1989. It recognizes the awful turns that violence against women often takes, not only in intimate partner relationships but in workplace situations where women are frequently unable to address the harassment of co-workers, sometimes their direct supervisors.² The program builds on feminist approaches to dealing with violence against women. The "workplace advocate wheel" in the Women's Advocate Toolkit lists the following principles for women's advocates: respect confidentiality; listen, assist, support, believe and validate; acknowledge injustice; work with leadership; respect her autonomy; help her plan for future safety; and promote access to community services (CAW toolkit n.d.). Part of the stated rationale for the advocate position is that women workers will feel most comfortable expressing gender related concerns to a woman co-worker.

CAW locals are encouraged to introduce the women's advocate position into their bargaining demands and are provided with model collective agreement language. They are also provided with model language for other related topics, such the right to refuse work on the basis of harassment, temporary accommodation for pregnant women, and safe and secure workplaces. Each advocate receives 40 hours of training paid for by the employer to recognize and deal with violence. Locals have also negotiated time off for yearly updates of their skills and knowledge. The advocates are paid by the employer to perform their roles during work time. Sometimes union locals without advocates request that a women's advocate from another local provide them with assistance. This is paid for by the union seeking assistance. Women's advocates also provide support to non-union members in the community as volunteer work. Employers are asked to designate a management support person, although apparently few actually do. These people are also encouraged to engage in the training, but they do not meet with the women who approach the advocate. The main role of the advocate is to act as a referral agent for a woman "in crisis" who is dealing with issues of violence, abuse or harassment at home or at the workplace. It is not the advocate's job to engage in counselling. She acts as a buffer at the workplace,

intervening on behalf of the woman to management to arrange time off without the fear of being disciplined.

The cost to the employer is presented by the union as easily offset by the benefit of keeping people on the job. Recognizing that employers' ultimate concern is money, successful union negotiators have been able to show that keeping a woman at work, rather than having her seek benefits or disability leave, and maintaining people in healthy relationships makes for better workers and workplaces. The CAW (2009) argues that women's advocates in auto manufacturing workplaces can save employers money, decreasing law suits, employee injury, and turnover. They claim that on average a women's advocate can save the employer \$3000 in missed time, turnover, and benefits for every woman who accesses the program with issues related to violence. Moreover, the union suggests that introducing a women's advocate program may enhance the reputation of the company.

Designated women's advocates work independently to promote equity in smaller workplaces and in conjunction with women's networks in larger ones. Thus in practice women's advocates become involved in related gender issues beyond violence and harassment. At the Ontario assembly plant, for example, the union human rights committee provides human rights education for workers that originally included explaining to them that exhibiting sexist materials at the workplace is not allowed under human rights law. In 1995, the union negotiated a human rights representative who could provide assistance to women filing grievances against their harassers, as this situation can present further problems for women in manufacturing environments (Levine 2009). Now that they have a women's advocate position, the women's committee at the plant has found it helpful to have a dedicated position to help protect women's rights more broadly and to spend time to ensure that women's health, safety, and time concerns are being addressed. The women's advocate serves a variety of purposes including lobbying for well-being and wellness training, reviewing safety initiatives, providing confidential assistance and referrals, and working to increase workplace diversity.

Women have reported positively, but largely informally, on their experiences with the women's advocate. Activists note especially that women said that knowing they would be able to deal with a woman relieved the stress they were feeling about their situation. Both in CAW Local 88 women's committee and in the broader union we heard that CAW men increasingly recognize the value of the women's advocate program. Not only do men hear women's powerful stories at union conventions, "I was in trouble and there was nowhere to turn, but there was my women's advocate. I am living in safety and my children are safe", but men themselves speak positively and tell stories about the program's value and success. CAW men have accessed the resources of the women's advocate at their workplace for their daughters or friends who otherwise would not have support.

Julie White, the CAW's Women's Department Director, attributes the success and acceptance of the program to three major factors. The union's highest leadership has vocally declared its determination to work on women's issues broadly, and against gendered violence specifically. CAW staff—men and women—are passionately promoting the program to employers and locals. Union-wide educational activities reinforce its importance and update both the approach and the content.

Although the women's advocacy program has assisted both women and men at CAW plants, women autoworkers identify room for improvement. Some felt there was still a lack of education surrounding the program and its goals that can be detrimental to both men and women, as men often assume that women are receiving 'special' treatment from the union. Time management issues for the women's advocate can also affect the program, since sometimes a woman's issues need to be dealt with immediately. Furthermore, it was pointed out to us that employers who are new to the program must place trust in women's advocates as they deal with confidential issues and this can be an issue when the women's advocate is new to the position. The mechanism for constant improvement, according to Julie White, is close communication between the program's administrators and the women's advocates themselves. Through this open line of communication, the advocates and management are able to express concerns and provide feedback to assist in further development of the program.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our research suggests that auto manufacturing workplaces present particular kinds of challenges to the women who work there, beyond the not-so-simple feat of getting hired. In that context, and likely in others, from the information we have been able to acquire there appear to be benefits in designating and utilizing a dedicated women's advocate.

Somewhat surprisingly, there has been no formal evaluation by the CAW of the women's advocacy program, even after 17 years of operating, apparently because of time constraints. In the absence of this it is difficult to draw confident conclusions about the efficacy of the program. Evaluation data would help in the future development of the program. Formal evaluation would provide policy makers, union representatives and academic researchers with a more complete picture of the effectiveness and possibly the shortcomings of the women's advocacy program. But we do feel that there is a good framework to build on.

CAW women pointed out to us again and again that the program is not sufficiently widespread, and this leaves us too with some astonishment. As far as we can tell, the CAW is the only union to employ such a program—not just in Canada but elsewhere. This is despite the apparent popularity of and support for the program in CAW locals, especially more recently. Over half of the 128

women's advocates have been appointed in the last two years. To realize the full potential of this program, however, CAW women argue that it must continue to spread within the CAW and expand to other workplaces. The failure to take up the program elsewhere may be because in the contemporary context, in which the hegemonic view is that women have achieved equality and thus need no special provision, a dedicated women's advocate is a particularly difficult 'sell'.

Based on our research and discussion with the CAW's Director of Women's Programs, Julie White, we can imagine that women in the auto manufacturing sector can benefit from a broadening of the position's scope. We could foresee the role of women's advocate expanding to address a wider range of issues beyond violence, working in conjunction with and respectful of the roles of union bargaining committees, health and safety and human rights representatives. A women's advocate could help to promote innovative scheduling practices to accommodate workers who need a solution to coping with work-life balance that include real flexibility for workers, and could include revising attendance policies to permit family care and community responsibilities.

Although emerging in the context of the heightened public debate about violence against women of the early 1990s, the idea of a women's advocate also addresses the broader problem of unequal power relations between men and women that exist in the home, in a union local, and within labour-management relations. These unequal relations become manifest and potentially affect women in negative ways when women workers must address the consequences of their limited power in the home to male union staff representatives or to managers. Having a woman in the role of advocate to accompany them enhances a woman's individual power in the relationship, and at the same time bolsters women's collective power within their union and their workplace.

Women's participation in the labour force has long been recognized as essential to the promotion of equality. Our research suggests that dedicated union women's advocates promote workplace equity at the same time that they assist individual women. While women need jobs to meet their economic needs, especially at a time when the state is increasingly withdrawing its support, it is vital also that management and unions consider the needs of women in the workplace. Attention to these issues can transform what may be simply well-paid jobs into 'good jobs'. Women's advocates can assist in stabilizing and improving the lives of women workers and their families, as a result slowing the attrition of women from well paying jobs. This would seem to be a situation that can be win-win for employers and for labour.

NOTES

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- ² At least two recent murders of women in Ontario were perpetrated by male co-workers. Laurie Dupont was killed at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Windsor in 2005 by her ex-boyfriend, a hospital doctor. Teresa Vince had been persistently sexually harassed for years by her supervisor at the Sears department store in Chatham where she worked, and she was routinely teased about it by other coworkers. In 1996 she took early retirement to get away from him and he killed her (and then himself) on her last day of work.

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