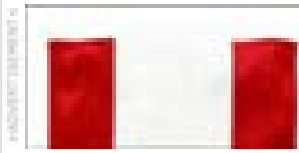


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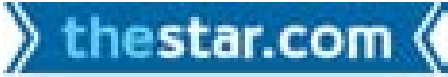
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EDITORIAL

Ontario double standard

Aug 05, 2009 04:30 AM

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The province has a law – the Employment Standards Act – requiring employers to follow certain minimum procedures, such as paying their workers for statutory holidays and vacations. But the provincial government has long exempted itself from parts of its own law.

Usually, this hasn't made any difference, as union contracts and past government practices exceed the basic minimums in the law. But 3,400 students working for the government this summer at provincial parks have found themselves on the wrong end of the exemption.

The students were recently informed by their employer that, contrary to past practice, they would *not* be getting an 8.16 per cent top-up in their pay in lieu of a paid vacation and statutory holidays off. The government said the past practice was a mistake.

This is all perfectly legal. But the savings involved – \$1.7 million, or barely one-thousandth of 1 per cent of the provincial budget – hardly seem worth the cost of overturning an important principle: that the government, as employer, should adhere to the same standards it applies to the private sector.

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