

# Big Business Trumps the Needs of Retail Workers

## Square One Mall may be Open Statutory Holidays

By Phil Lees, 19 Feb. 2009

Last fall, the owners of Square One Mall successfully lobbied Peel Region to pass a by-law to allow the mall to be open on statutory holidays – New Year's Day, Family Day, Victoria Day, Labour Day, and Thanksgiving Monday.

Under the Retail Business Holidays Act, retail establishments within a tourist region, and achieving twenty-five per cent of their business on a statutory holiday from tourists, may apply for an exemption from the restrictions of the holiday act. Hence a mall such as Vaughan Mills Mall is exempted from the statutory closing dates because they are next door to Wonderland.

Square One convinced Peel Region that they qualified for an exemption because they are within two kilometres of the Palladium. The problem with Peel granting the by-law exemption, is that now all of the malls in Mississauga and Toronto are watching Square One and will apply for exemptions and receive them. After Toronto, all malls in Ontario will want equal opportunity.



This will become a problem for the largest employment sector in Ontario – our retail workers and their families. Many retail workers find it difficult to plan ahead for family events because they often do not have consistent work schedules. Often the only days that a retail worker can be assured they will have off to plan family events is on the statutory holidays.

Les, a citizen of Mississauga, concerned about the need for a day of pause to spend with family and friends, filed an appeal in an effort to express his concern. In January 2010, he found the Family Coalition Party of Ontario, contacted the leader and informed FCP of the situation and asked for help. Les shared that he had attempted to talk with workers at the Mall to get their impression of possibly having to work on statutory holidays, but retail workers were afraid to respond for fear of upsetting their employers.

The Leader and Les attended a mediation session in an effort to express concern over this issue. Due to mediation regulations, we are not at liberty to share the content of the discussions.

This is why we need active  
Constituency Associations!  
  
To advocate for life and family  
principles in the community.