

Ontario Assembly on Workplace Democracy: A New CIRHR-Supported Initiative to Empower Employee Voices in the Workplace

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The pandemic has shone a light on longstanding and well-researched issues in the workplace, primarily workers' lack of participation in the decision-making process, and how the inability to "have a say" at work affects workplace productivity and mental health.

On July 14th, the [Ontario Assembly on Workplace Democracy](#), an exciting, new initiative developed at the University of Toronto's Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources (CIRHR), will convene the first of five meetings to discuss barriers to vocalizing and addressing concerns in the workplace.

After a civic lottery that included 1 in 440 households across the province, 36 randomly selected participants have been chosen from a pool of 12,500 Ontarians to take part in the Assembly. As a representative sample of the population, their lived experiences will be vital to the success of the Assembly, and they needn't be experts, currently employed or members of a union to participate.

They are tasked with identifying issues that stifle workers' voices and their ability to influence change at work; consulting with industry experts and weighing available policy options to amplify workers' voices; and compiling a set of primary recommendations to help employers and government bodies improve workers' capacity to participate in workplace decision-making and advocate for change.

Their work will be guided by facilitators, as well as union, business, and community representatives, and the Assembly will be overseen by an Advisory Board comprised of academics including CIRHR Director, Rafael Gomez, law professionals, non-profit representatives, and former civil servants across the ideological spectrum.

Do you live in Ontario and have a story to tell about "speaking up" at work? Were you able to influence change? Tweet us at [@CIRHR_UofT](#) or email your story to hello@democracyatwork.ca. Don't forget to [follow us on Twitter](#) for future updates and to participate in this timely conversation.