

CLOSING THE ENFORCEMENT GAP

Improving Employment Standards Protections for People in Precarious Jobs

Leah F. Vosko and the Closing the Enforcement Gap Research Group

The nature of employment is changing: low-wage jobs are increasingly common, fewer workers belong to unions, and workplaces are being transformed through the growth of contracting-out, franchising, and extended supply chains. *Closing the Enforcement Gap* offers a comprehensive analysis of the enforcement of employment standards in Ontario.

Adopting mixed methods, this work includes qualitative research involving in-depth interviews with workers, community advocates, and enforcement officials; extensive archival research excavating decades of ministerial records; and analysis of a previously untapped source of administrative data collected by Ontario's Ministry of Labour. The authors reveal and trace the roots of a deepening "enforcement gap" that pervades nearly all aspects of the regime, demonstrating that the province's *Employment Standards Act (ESA)* fails too many workers who rely on the minimum conditions it was devised to provide. Arguably, there is nothing inevitable about the enforcement gap in Ontario, or for that matter elsewhere. Through contributions from leading employment standards enforcement scholars in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, as well as Quebec, *Closing the Enforcement Gap* surveys innovative enforcement models that are emerging in a variety of jurisdictions and sets out a bold vision for strengthening employment standards enforcement.

Studies in Comparative Political Economy and Public Policy

Editors: MICHAEL HOWLETT, DAVID LAYCOCK (Simon Fraser University), and STEPHEN MCBRIDE (McMaster University)

Studies in Comparative Political Economy and Public Policy is designed to showcase innovative approaches to political economy and public policy from a comparative perspective. While originating in Canada, the series will provide attractive offerings to a wide international audience, featuring studies with local, subnational, cross-national, and international empirical bases and theoretical frameworks.

Editorial Advisory Board

Jeffrey Ayres, St Michael's College, Vermont

Neil Bradford, Western University

Janine Brodie, University of Alberta

William Carroll, University of Victoria

William Coleman, University of Waterloo

Rodney Haddow, University of Toronto

Jane Jenson, Université de Montréal

Laura Macdonald, Carleton University

Rianne Mahon, Wilfrid Laurier University

Michael Mintrom, Monash University

Grace Skogstad, University of Toronto

Leah Vosko, York University

Kent Weaver, Georgetown University

Linda White, University of Toronto

For a list of books published in the series, see page 447.

Closing the Enforcement Gap

*Improving Employment Standards
Protections for People in Precarious Jobs*

Leah F. Vosko
Guliz Akkaymak
Rebecca Casey
Shelley Condratto
John Grundy
Alan Hall
Alice Hoe
Kiran Mirchandani
Andrea M. Noack
Urvashi Soni-Sinha
Mercedes Steedman
Mark P. Thomas
Eric M. Tucker

International Contributors
Nick Clark
Dalia Gesualdi-Fecteau
Tess Hardy
John Howe
Guylaine Vallée
David Weil

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS
Toronto Buffalo London

© University of Toronto Press 2020
Toronto Buffalo London
utorontopress.com
Printed in Canada

ISBN 978-1-4875-0639-1 (cloth) ISBN 978-1-4875-3405-9 (EPUB)
ISBN 978-1-4875-2431-9 (paper) ISBN 978-1-4875-3404-2 (PDF)

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: Closing the enforcement gap : improving employment standards
protections for people in precarious jobs / Leah F. Vosko and the
Closing the Enforcement Gap Research Group.

Names: Vosko, Leah F., author.

Series: Studies in comparative political economy and public policy ; 58.

Description: Series statement: Studies in comparative political economy and
public policy ; 58 |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: Canadiana 20190199393 | ISBN 9781487506391 (cloth) |
ISBN 9781487524319 (paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Labor laws and legislation – Ontario – Cases. |

LCSH: Precarious employment – Ontario – Case studies. |

LCSH: Labor laws and legislation – Cases. |

LCSH: Precarious employment – Case studies.

Classification: LCC KE0629 .V67 2020 | LCC KF3320.ZB3 V67 2020 kfmod |
DDC 344.71301—dc23

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Federation
for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Awards to Scholarly
Publications Program, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and
Humanities Research Council of Canada.

University of Toronto Press acknowledges the financial assistance to its
publishing program of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts
Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Financé par le
gouvernement
du Canada

Canada



MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C016245

This book is dedicated to all of the staff and members of the Workers' Action Centre of Toronto in recognition of their decades-long struggle to improve the conditions of work and employment for us all, particularly those in precarious jobs.

