



# NEWS RELEASE

## **25 per cent of Canadian workforce could be working from home after COVID, but labour laws are outdated for remote work and telecommuting**

July 22, 2021

For immediate release

**VANCOUVER**—As more and more Canadians embrace working from home—a trend that is forecasted to continue even after COVID—labour laws and regulations across Canada no longer fit the needs of modern work models such as telecommuting, according to a new analysis by the Fraser Institute, an independent non-partisan Canadian think tank.

“Just as technological change has made many production procedures and skills obsolete, it is not surprising that many of the labour policies are, too,” said Jason Clemens, executive vice president of the Fraser Institute.

The study, *Are Our Labour Laws Still Relevant for Teleworkers?* authored by Professor Morley Gunderson of the University of Toronto, finds that about 40 per cent of the Canadian workforce has the potential to work entirely from home, which corresponds to the proportion of Canadians that were working from home during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the study also finds that an additional 10 per cent of the Canadian workforce could partially work from home, and while rates of remote working are forecasted to reduce after the pandemic, up to 25 per cent of the Canadian workforce is expected to continue working remotely.

Working from home has many benefits for employees, including reduced commute times, lower housing prices if they can move to more affordable areas, productivity gains, more control over their working environment, and improved worker satisfaction, among other benefits.

But employment standards legislation, as well as Workers’ Compensation and health and safety regulations are ill-fitted for telecommuting and were designed when Canada’s workforce was characterized by large, fixed worksites.

“Laws designed for large, structured businesses just don’t make sense when people are working from home. Employment standards regarding work hours and breaks, for example, are impossible to enforce when employees work remotely,” said Clemens.

Crucially, the study recommends policymakers should avoid extending the outdated regulations to apply to remote work, but rather should focus on removing barriers that prevent even greater telecommuting for Canada’s workforce.

For example, adopting flexible municipal zoning regimes would allow for greater telecommuting and in turn benefit Canadian workers.

“If the remote working conditions forced by the COVID-19 pandemic taught us anything, it’s that some Canadians are able to thrive when working from home,” Clemens said.

“To encourage even greater telecommuting, policymakers should update outdated labour laws and regulations to reflect the changing needs of Canadian workers.”

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Jason Clemens, Executive Vice-President  
Fraser Institute

*To arrange media interviews or for more information, please contact:*

Drue MacPherson, Fraser Institute  
(604) 688-0221 ext. 721

[drue.macpherson@fraserinstitute.org](mailto:drue.macpherson@fraserinstitute.org)

[Follow the Fraser Institute on Twitter](#) | [Become a fan on Facebook](#)

The Fraser Institute is an independent Canadian public policy research and educational organization with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal and ties to a global network of think-tanks in 87 countries. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for Canadians, their families and future generations by studying, measuring and broadly communicating the effects of government policies, entrepreneurship and choice on their well-being. To protect the Institute's independence, it does not accept grants from governments or contracts for research. Visit [www.fraserinstitute.org](http://www.fraserinstitute.org)