



September 23, 2026

The Federal Government's Attack on Labour Rights is Unacceptable

The federal government has launched a major attack on labour's right to free and fair collective bargaining. Under the so-called "Building Canada Strong Act," the Carney government has brought forward a series of changes to the Canada Labour Code, trying to make it even harder for workers to exercise their Charter-protected right to strike.

Among them is a proposal to give the government more power under Section 107, clearing the way for intervention in bargaining disputes with "significant national impacts."

This attack on workers' basic rights is unacceptable, and the labour movement must mobilize to stop it.

Labour's Power and the Strike

The employers and government have their talking points lined up. They insist the changes will only impact a small number of disputes, and the right to strike is secure. They say the changes are needed to protect the public interest in cases when a dispute could have far-reaching economic impacts, like a strike in the rail transport or airline sectors.

But this misses the basic point: the purpose of a strike is to cause economic disruption. Economic disruption is what pushes both sides – employers and unions – to reach a settlement fast.

The problem is obvious. If employers in key industries know their businesses are too important to the economy to be shut down by a strike, they'll have no reason to negotiate seriously at the bargaining table. They can wait for the government to step in, end a strike, and send the dispute to binding arbitration.

Denying workers the right to strike in the name of economic stability is to deny workers the right to exercise their collective power. It's putting profits over people.

The strike, or the threat of a strike, is the most effective tool workers have to improve their working conditions, secure higher pay, and achieve dignity on the job.

Working with Our Allies

Defending the right to strike is fundamental to the labour movement. Workers have fought hard for this right, and we cannot allow governments to take it away.

CUPW will work with our allies to build a united response, but our membership must be at the heart of this fight. We need our members informed, engaged, and ready to mobilize. Together, we will defend our rights and the strength of collective bargaining.

In Solidarity,

Jan Simpson
National President

2023-2027 Bulletin #476
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