**Bill Title:** Amendment to the Financial Information Act to Include Public Sector Unions

**Preamble:** Whereas public sector employees are required to pay union dues to organizations that collectively represent their interests, and whereas these dues are derived from salaries funded by taxpayers, it is in the public interest to ensure that such funds are managed transparently and responsibly.

**Definitions:**

1. "Public Sector Union" means any labor organization that represents employees of public bodies, including but not limited to health authorities, educational institutions, municipal governments, and Crown corporations.
2. "Financial Disclosure Report" means an annual statement that includes all revenues, expenditures, salaries, and benefits paid to officers and employees earning above $75,000, as well as any major expenses exceeding $50,000.

**Amendments to the Financial Information Act (FIA):**

1. **Inclusion of Public Sector Unions:** a. Section X of the Financial Information Act is amended to include "Public Sector Unions" as defined in this Act under the scope of organizations required to disclose financial information. b. Public Sector Unions shall prepare and file a Financial Disclosure Report annually, detailing: i. Total revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year. ii. Itemized salaries, benefits, and expenses for all union officers and employees earning more than $75,000 annually. iii. Itemized descriptions of any expenses exceeding $50,000. iv. Details of any transfers of funds exceeding $50,000 to other entities.
2. **Auditing and Compliance:** a. The Auditor General shall have the authority to audit any union subject to this Act to ensure compliance. b. Any union found to be non-compliant with the provisions of this Act may face administrative penalties, including fines of up to $250,000 per violation.
3. **Public Access to Records:** a. All Financial Disclosure Reports filed under the amended Act must be made accessible to the public through an online database maintained by the Ministry of Finance.

**Rationale for the Amendment:**

1. **Transparency:**
* Taxpayers indirectly fund unions through public sector salaries. It is only fair that these organizations are held to the same transparency standards as other publicly funded bodies.

Oversight is crucial because public sector unions negotiate directly with the government, and their financial accountability has a direct impact on taxpayers. The outcome of bargaining directly influences the dues unions receive, further emphasizing the reliance of union finances on members’ salaries funded by public dollars. Claims that unions are private organizations are therefore misleading, as their bottom line is intrinsically tied to public funding.

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1. **Public Accountability:**
* Unions play a critical role in shaping public sector operations. Their financial practices should be open to scrutiny to ensure members' dues are being used effectively and ethically.
1. **Empowering Members:**
* This amendment empowers union members by providing them with clear information on how their dues are spent, fostering trust and accountability within unions.
1. **Fairness:**
* Public sector unions benefit from legislated dues collection. In return, they should meet reasonable public expectations for transparency.

**Implementation Timeline:**

1. This amendment shall come into force on January 1 of the year following its passage.
2. Public Sector Unions will have one year from the effective date to comply with the reporting requirements.

**Conclusion:** Amending the Financial Information Act to include public sector unions ensures financial transparency and accountability while respecting the autonomy of unions to represent their members.