

MEDIA RELEASE

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OSSTF/FEESO STATEMENT: BILL 124 DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

TORONTO, ON — The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) has issued the following statement:

"OSSTF/FEESO joins with workers and labour unions across Ontario to applaud the court decision on Bill 124. The ruling by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice validates what we have known to be true from the beginning; Bill 124 is unconstitutional and a violation of workers' Charter rights.

The Bill imposed contract limitations on public sector workers, predominantly women, by restricting their wage increases to one per cent a year for three years. The result of this legislation has been staffing shortages in key public sectors, such as healthcare and education, creating chaos amidst a global pandemic.

Frontline workers deserve to be celebrated for keeping the province running throughout COVID-19, but instead they are facing numerous attacks on their most basic and fundamental rights while being denied the respect and fair wages they deserve.

The labour movement has been dealing with several heavy-handed attacks on workers' rights, including the most recent attack just a few weeks ago when Doug Ford and his government introduced and fast-tracked Bill 28. It stripped the Ontario School Board Council of Unions' (OSBCU) 55,000 Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) education workers of their Charter right to free and fair bargaining. However, the labour movement showed the strength of our collective power, from across the country, and we were successful in getting Bill 28 repealed after significant backlash and condemnation.

As with Bill 28, yesterday's court ruling shows that when the labour movement stands together in unity, we can overcome attempts by governments to undermine our power and our worth. This government's continued attempts to circumvent the bargaining process have so far been struck down and we call on them to commit to bargaining in good faith.

OSSTF/FEESO was proud to work with many public sector allies in the fight against Bill 124. We will continue to step up and defend the most essential rights of our Members and of workers everywhere."

In Solidarity,
Karen Littlewood, President, OSSTF/FEESO

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has over 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

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