

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Friday, November 4, 2022

OSSTF/FEESO STATEMENT ON PASSING OF BILL 28 AND REMOVAL OF WORKERS' CHARTER RIGHTS

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

"Yesterday was a chilling day for workers across Ontario and all of Canada. Doug Ford and his government voted to strip 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. While the Bill says 'CUPE', it can be easily rewritten and used against any and all workers that choose to stand up to this government.

Bill 28 is particularly concerning due to its use of the notwithstanding clause. Premier Ford has claimed it was necessary in order to keep students in school, but this is completely false. Back-to-work legislation would have achieved this goal on its own. The use of the notwithstanding clause was to force a restrictive contract onto the lowest paid workers in our publicly-funded education system, most of whom are women. These are the workers who keep our schools safe and offer support for the most vulnerable and youngest students in Ontario.

All workers in Canada have a constitutional right to a fair bargaining process. The Ford government has effectively stripped away this right for 55,000 workers and has signaled to other governments across the country that they can now do the same.

In enacting this heavy-handed, draconian, and outright shameful legislation, the Ford government has succeeded in denying essential rights and freedoms but failed in its promise to avoid disruptions in the classroom. This government stopped negotiating with OSBCU and rushed the passing of a highly controversial, destructive bill, which has led to chaos and confusion for Ontario's students and their families.

OSSTF/FEESO stands in solidarity with CUPE's 55,000 education workers and we will be supporting them today at the picket lines outside of MPP offices across the province. Premier Ford chose not to be present when the vote was cast for Bill 28, but the entire labour movement will be present and out in force until this bill is repealed."

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.

Contact: Caitlin Reid
Media and Communications Advisor
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
Caitlin.Reid@osstf.ca
416-576-8346