

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **OSSTF/FEESO HOLDS QUEEN'S PARK LOBBY DAY WITH NEW FOCUS ON UPHOLDING WORKERS' RIGHT TO FREE AND FAIR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

TORONTO, ON — Over 100 OSSTF/FEESO Members will walk the halls of Queen's Park today for the first in-person OSSTF/FEESO Lobby Day since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

OSSTF/FEESO Members will call on MPPs to uphold workers' rights to free and fair bargaining in the face of draconian and heavy-handed legislation introduced on Monday by Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce.

"Our Members had planned to discuss critical issues of safety in schools and ending systemic inequities, however, given the unconstitutional legislation introduced on Monday by the Ford government, we must now focus on the assault on workers' rights," said OSSTF/FEESO President, Karen Littlewood.

"The Ford government has effectively stripped CUPE's 55,000 education workers of their right to engage in a fair bargaining process, imposing a punitive contract on hardworking, predominantly female, frontline education workers who, on average, earn less than \$40,000 a year," added President Littlewood.

OSSTF/FEESO Members will meet with MPPs from all four major parties, including Ontario New Democrat Party Interim Leader, Peter Tabuns, Ontario Liberal Party Interim Leader, John Fraser, and Green Party of Ontario Leader, Mike Schreiner. The meetings will focus on the negative impact this legislation will have on workers and students as well as its unconstitutionality. The MPP appointments come at a critical time, prior to an anticipated final vote on the pending legislation.

"This legislation won't only impact education workers, but also the students and communities they serve. The bargaining process is an opportunity for teachers and education workers to protect learning conditions for students, such as class sizes and funding supports. Taking that process away will have a negative impact on student learning," concluded President Littlewood.

MPPs will be asked to commit to upholding the process of free and fair bargaining. OSSTF/FEESO Members will be following up to ensure MPPs are held accountable and follow through on their commitments.

*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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