

OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Executive Statement on Bill C-39

The right to strike is not negotiable.

The Provincial Executive of OSSTF/FEESO strongly condemns the federal government's proposed expansion of its powers to intervene in lawful labour disputes through Bill C-39.

Prime Minister Mark Carney and his government need to hear this clearly: workers' fundamental rights are not an inconvenience to be managed when collective bargaining becomes difficult.

The right to strike is fundamental to free and meaningful collective bargaining. It is the power workers have when an employer refuses to move at the bargaining table. A government cannot credibly claim to respect collective bargaining while giving itself greater power to end a lawful work stoppage and impose a binding resolution.

Prime Minister Carney, this crosses a line.

Governments should be encouraging employers and unions to negotiate agreements, not determining when workers have exercised their right to strike for long enough.

And the consequences of this legislation extend well beyond federally regulated workplaces.

Every provincial government in this country is watching what Ottawa does. When the federal government normalizes political intervention in lawful strikes, it risks creating a dangerous precedent that other governments may attempt to follow.

That is why our message to Premier Doug Ford and Minister Calandra is equally unequivocal:

Do not follow this path.

Ontario workers have already experienced extraordinary government interference in collective bargaining. We remember Bill 124. We remember Bill 28. We remember a government invoking the notwithstanding clause in an attempt to impose a contract and override CUPE-OSBCU education workers' rights.

Ontario's labour movement stood together then, and we will stand together again.

The labour movement did not spend generations fighting for the right to organize, bargain collectively and withdraw our labour only to have governments decide those rights exist until they become inconvenient.

Prime Minister Carney: withdraw Bill C-39.

To the Ontario government: consider yourself on notice.

OSSTF/FEESO will stand with workers across this country in defending free collective bargaining and the right to strike.

The right to strike belongs to workers not employers, not premiers and not prime ministers.

In Solidarity,

Martha Hradowy, President
Malini Leahy, Vice President
Colin Matthew, Vice President
Jeff Dennys, Treasurer
Roxanne Beauchamp, Executive Officer
Sherry-Ann Bowen-Gordon, Executive Officer
Chris Chandler, Executive Officer