

*Following is a press release issued by Local 793, regarding the Ontario Government's Bill 28 to end the potential strike of education workers in the province.*

**STRIPPING WORKERS OF THEIR RIGHT TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN AND REACH A FAIR AGREEMENT UNDERMINES THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL OF RIGHTS FOR UNIONIZED WORKERS –**

Bill 28, introduced by the Ontario Government to avoid a labour stoppage for education workers across the Province of Ontario, is a huge overreach that will have lasting impacts on unionized workers across the province.

Bill 28 ends the prospect of a strike and imposes a four-year agreement on workers. The government is also pre-emptively overriding the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by enacting the “notwithstanding clause” which will strip these workers and their unions the ability to challenge the legislation in court.

“The International Union of Operating Engineers (“IUOE”) and its Local 793 are categorically opposed to Bill 28 and any attempt by the Government of Ontario to undermine the collective bargaining rights of workers, including the right to strike which is a necessary and fundamental right of workers in Canada,” says Mike Gallagher, Business Manager of Local 793. “A government can be judged in terms of its respect for the freedoms afforded under its Constitution and those that are guaranteed to working people which fundamentally includes the right to collectively bargain. The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld this. This separates us from autocratic governments around the world. The threat or resorting to using the notwithstanding clause when it becomes politically expedient is not a road the Premier needs to go down, since I would hope the government understands the importance of upholding fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Canadian Constitution balanced against any short inconvenience a work stoppage could bring about,” stated Gallagher.

IUOE Canadian Regional Director Patrick Campbell stated - “To be clear, the International Union of Operating Engineers is opposed to “back to work” legislation and any legislation that undermines the rights of working people to the collective bargaining process and the right to strike, if required. The Ford Government’s Bill-28 represents a clear and present danger, not only to the lowest paid education workers in Ontario, but to all Canadian workers moving forward if this legislation stands.”

Local 793 represents over 18,000 members in Ontario and Nunavut working primarily in the construction, mining and industrial sectors. Just this past spring, approximately 4,000 members of the IUOE Local 793 were on strike for three weeks in both the ICI and residential sectors of the construction industry. The IUOE has locals across every province and territory and Canada representing workers in many occupational categories.

Local 793 urges the Ford Government to repeal Bill 28 immediately.

Local 793 has a head office, banquet hall and training campus in Oakville, and another training campus in Morrisburg. For further information contact: Local 793 Business Manager, Mike Gallagher, 905-469-9299, ext. 2202.