

For immediate release

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## **Pallister Conservatives pass Bill 7, make it harder to join a union**

*CUPE: Unions benefits workers and improve equality*

**Winnipeg** – Today, the Pallister Conservatives passed Bill 7 at third reading. The legislation entails amendments to *The Labour Relations Act* that will make it more difficult for workers to join a union.

“*Bill 7, The Labour Relations Amendment Act*, is a significant legislative attack on the right of Manitobans to join a union”, says Kelly Moist, President of CUPE Manitoba. “The Pallister government heard from dozens of presenters opposed to the bill that intimidation of workers seeking to unionize is routine and often devastating.”

Under current legislation, in cases where more than 40%, but less than 65%, of employees sign union cards, the Labour Board holds a vote in the workplace. In cases where the Labour Board verifies that more than 65% of employees have freely declared they wish to join a union, the Board fast-tracks union certification – workers show their support for the union by signing a union card. The changes passed in Bill 7 take away the fast-track option, requiring workers to reconfirm their support of the union through a vote overseen by the Labour Board in all cases.

“Forcing employees to reconfirm their support of a union through a labour board vote creates the opportunity for employees to be coerced or intimidated into rejecting a union in their workplace,” says Kelly Moist. “We presented evidence to the government that this change is detrimental to all workers, unionized or not.”

A recent study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shows that increasing income inequality in Canada and other countries is linked to lower rates of unionization, and that unions help raise wages for all workers. Numerous studies show that union density is lower in jurisdictions with mandatory votes.

Concluded Moist: “Eliminating card check union certification hurts workers and the economy. The government heard no evidence that unions intimidate workers. There is ample evidence that mandatory balloting results in increased intimidation of workers. If Pallister proceeds with this change, it should be seen as an attack on all our rights.”

In Manitoba, CUPE represents approximately 25,000 members working in health care facilities, personal care homes, school divisions, municipal services, social services, child care centres, public utilities, libraries and family emergency services.

- 30 -

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