

For immediate release

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Pallister Conservatives to make it harder to join a union

Winnipeg – The Pallister Conservatives today introduced legislation, *The Labour Relations Amendment Act*, which curtails the right of workers to join a union.

“*The Labour Relations Amendment Act* is the most significant attack on the rights of Manitobans to join a union in the past twenty years”, says Kelly Moist, President of CUPE Manitoba. “While Brian Pallister is cloaking this issue as one of democracy, the truth is that this is simply about discouraging workers from joining a union”.

Under current legislation in cases where more than 40%, but less than 65%, of employees sign union cards, the Labour Board holds a secret ballot 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. The proposed legislation takes away this option, requiring workers to reconfirm their support of the union through a vote overseen by the Labour Board even when 100% of eligible employees have signed union cards.

“Forcing employees to reconfirm their support of a union through a labour board election creates the opportunity for employees to be coerced or intimidated into rejecting a union in their workplace,” says Kelly Moist. “We urge the government to abandon this anti-worker agenda, and drop these unnecessary and harmful changes.”

While the Pallister Conservatives are moving ahead with this anti-union agenda, the Trudeau Liberals are simultaneously reversing Stephen Harper’s changes to federal labour legislation by restoring a simple majority for union certification in federally regulated industries.

A study by the federal government – *Union Certification Regimes and Declining Union Density in the Canadian Business Sector* – reported that unionization rates are lower where majority card sign-up is not allowed.

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.

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