



News Release

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Sask. Party government goes after the trades

Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour Rob Norris tabled amendments to the Construction Industry Labour Relations Act today. The changes will eliminate the requirement for sectoral bargaining in the construction industry.

“Assistant Deputy Minister Mike Carr confirmed in a stakeholder briefing that the construction and other unions in Saskatchewan did not ask for this and that none were consulted prior to its introduction. The government says it’s about so-called freedom of choice for employers and employees. We say it is about opening the door to certain employer-dominated unions to do wall-to-wall certifications of construction projects,” says SFL President Larry Hubich.

Trades unions have long argued that wall-to-wall certifications, rather than the current system of certifying on a craft basis, will lead to deskilling and lower wages.

The amendments also remove ‘maintenance’ from the definition of construction industry, which means a significant portion of unionized construction work will no longer be covered by the Act.

The government says they will seek public feedback on the amendments “during the upcoming months”.

“Once again, the government is gutting legislation that affects thousands of workers without consulting them in advance. We saw this with last year’s essential services legislation and the amendments to the Trade Union Act. Now they’re doing it with the construction trades. This government is obviously intent on breaking unions in every sector,” says Hubich.

“It makes no sense to change the way in which construction workers are certified: the government’s own numbers show that despite the giant boom in construction over the past five years, that the unionization rate has remained the same. The system works for the trades union members because they are assured of a collective agreement and it works for employers, who are provided with skilled labour out of the union hiring hall.

In a time when we need modern and innovative solutions to skill shortages, this is another example of the same tired old Conservative thinking,” adds Hubich.

The SFL represents approximately 95,000 unionized workers from
37 affiliated unions in Saskatchewan.

For more information, contact Larry Hubich at 537-7330 (cel).