



**INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS
FRATERNITÉ INTERNATIONALE DES OUVRIERS EN ÉLECTRICITÉ**



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December 12, 2014

TO ALL IBEW FIRST DISTRICT LOCAL UNIONS

RE: Bill C-525 An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Public Service Labour Relations Act (certification and revocation — bargaining agent)

Greetings:

Private Members Bill C-525 appeared at Committee earlier this week with various witnesses that testified both in favour and against this legislation.

Conservative Senator Bellemare brought forward two amendments. The first amendment was to enshrine in the legislation that all votes had to happen within 5 days unless otherwise determined by the Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB). This was soundly defeated by the Conservative majority with very poor rationale. It was clear that the Conservatives did not want any amendments as this would delay the passage of this legislation, choosing instead to ram it through.

However, while drafting that amendment, Senator Bellemare (with assistance from a legal clerk) noticed a technical error with the legislation. As written, Bill C-525 unintentionally takes away various powers from the CIRB. Senator Bellemare drafted an amendment to reinstate those powers, as she felt those powers were important for the CIRB to maintain.

Several Conservative Senators appeared ready to brush this amendment aside saying that it would not have an impact on the CIRB. However, enough of an argument was made yesterday by the Liberals and Senator Bellemare and enough concern expressed by departmental officials in attendance that it was agreed that clause by clause was to be suspended until today so that this matter could be clarified.

It was agreed by the Committee that they would reconvene today, Friday December 12th, at 9:00 am to review this matter in an attempt to have more legal experts in to address this amendment and concerns around the technical impacts that Bill C-525 may cause on the CIRB.

If determined that Bill C-525, unintentionally, takes away some powers from the CIRB, Bill C-525 must then be amended to rectify that issue. Unfortunately the Conservative Senators argued that it does not take away “significant” powers from the CIRB and therefore needs not be amended.

Therefore the Bill was not amended at Committee stage and will now go back to the Senate for a 3rd reading where it is anticipated to be passed before the Christmas break.



This is our final chance to persuade Conservative Senators to defeat this Bill. Please take a few moments to phone or email the Conservative Senators from your province and ask them to defeat this legislation. Enclosed you will find talking points and Senator contact information.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "BD" followed by a stylized flourish.

Bill Daniels
International Vice President

BD/mw

Encl.

cc: First District Representatives
System Council #11
IBEW CCO
NPAC

Bill C-525 Key Talking Points (Updated)

No one has called for these changes

- These changes were made via a private-member's bill, on the basis of zero consultation with either labour or employers, overturning the nearly 50-year history of the Canada Labour Code and the tradition of consultation, careful consideration and consensus in federal labour relations.
- Neither employers nor unions sought these changes; neither employers nor unions identified a single problem in current industrial relations that required these legislative amendments. Virtually all industrial relations authorities in Canada have warned against Bill C-525 and the process through which the government is upsetting the balance in federal labour relations.
- Calkins justified the amendments by claiming a "mountain of complaints" about union coercion and intimidation made to federal labour boards. Yet out of 4,000 decisions made in the last 10 years, the Canada Industrial Relations Board has heard 6 substantiated complaints of intimidation.

Bill C-525 will destabilize labour relations

- Federal labour relations are harmonious, with the vast majority of contract renewals occurring without work stoppages. Both employers and unions agree the system is working well; C-525 will upset the delicate balance of federal industrial relations, politicizing the labour relations framework and starting a dangerous pendulum that employers fear will swing back in the future, to their detriment.
- Amended Bill C-525 eliminates card-check certification and adds an unnecessary second step for certification (a mandatory secret ballot vote), without any requirement that the vote be held on a timely basis, or in a neutral location. This is an invitation to employers to interfere with workers' democratic right to choose representation, and it will destabilize federal labour relations.

Bill C-525 is an attack on unions

- The government's amendments in committee make the Bill even worse by further lowering the threshold for decertification applications to reach a vote. This will destabilize collective bargaining, since C-525 also eliminates the code's existing prohibition against decertification applications where the union continues to bargain in good faith.

Conservative Senator Contact Info

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