



**Northern Territories
Federation of Labour**

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**Fédération du travail
des Territoires du Nord**

Northern Territories Federation of Labour Statement on Ontario Governments Bill 28

The Northern Territories Federation of Labour (NTFL) stands in solidarity with the 55,000 CUPE Ontario School Boards Council of Unions (OSBCU) members fighting against the Doug Ford Conservatives and their draconian legislation that forces a contract on education workers and violates their constitutional right to strike and to bargain fairly.

The Ontario government's Bill 28 is a reprehensible attack on the fundamental rights of all unionized employees but in particular the 55,000 CUPE (OSBCU) members. The Doug Ford government has resorted to the notwithstanding clause to force a contract on education workers.

During an emergency news conference at Queens Park today, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association called the notwithstanding clause a "nuclear weapon" that was meant to be a "rare and exceptional power," and that its use in this instance is a gross overstep by the province.

"By imposing a contract, banning strikes and eliminating meaningful oversight, the government is violating workers' Charter right to freedom of association. This is both unconscionable and completely unnecessary," said Noa Mendelsohn Aviv, executive director and general counsel for the organization.

The use of the Notwithstanding clause is not only a dangerous and wildly irresponsible measure. It's an explicit admission that the Ford government knows it is violating fundamental Charter rights. And it is directed at the lowest-paid workers in the school system.

These workers — education assistants, custodians, library workers, maintenance workers, secretaries, early childhood educators and IT professionals — do critical



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work in Ontario's schools. Yet with an average salary of \$39,000 a year, many are on the brink of poverty.

This ham-fisted legislation is ultimately destined to fail. History shows us again and again that the collective bargaining process — where employers and unions negotiate in good faith and reach a genuine agreement — is the only road to durable, lasting stability in the workplace.

On behalf of the more than 10,000 members of our affiliated unions, we stand with the CUPE OSBCU workers. We encourage our members to show support for Ontario education workers at cupe.on.ca/dontbeabully.

And we call on the Ford government to reverse this shameful decision immediately, to allow the collective bargaining process to proceed without political meddling, and to allow Ontario's education workers to reach a fair agreement.

If the public allows our elected officials to simply disregard our charter rights so easily we will slowly lose them. This blatant disregard for our rights cannot go unchallenged.

In solidarity,

Avery Parle
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