October 30, 2025 |

Statements

# Canada’s federations of labour issue joint statement in solidarity with Alberta teachers, condemning Alberta’s use of notwithstanding clause

*Canada’s federations of labour, representing over three million workers in every province and territory, today released the following statement:*

We condemn the Alberta government’s decision to legislate teachers back to work, and its use of the notwithstanding clause to impose a collective agreement.

This action is a direct and deliberate attack on the fundamental freedoms of association and collective bargaining, which are protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The right to strike is a fundamental component of a meaningful collective bargaining process, a principle affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan.

By invoking the notwithstanding clause, Premier Danielle Smith and her government are not negotiating in good faith. They are treating the protections in the Charter as obstacles instead of fundamental rights.

Sending the message that Charter-protected rights are optional and can be set aside for political convenience is profoundly dangerous. When rights become optional, they cease to be rights.

This sets an alarming and dangerous precedent for every worker in Canada. If a government can so easily erase the right to strike in one province or territory, no workers' rights are safe anywhere in the country.

The use of the notwithstanding clause to break a strike is an affront both to democracy and to these teachers, substituting good-faith bargaining with legislative force. We stand in solidarity with the Alberta Teachers' Association and all education workers in their fight for a fair agreement that benefits students, supports teachers and strengthens public education.

We call on the Government of Alberta to immediately withdraw this legislation and return to the bargaining table. We further call on all provincial and territorial governments to affirm their commitment to the Charter and to pledge never to use the notwithstanding clause to violate workers' fundamental rights.

Our member unions will not stand idly by while the Charter is weaponized against the very people it is meant to protect. We will organize, we will educate, we will mobilize, and we will stand together to defend the rights of all workers across Canada. And we will oppose any politician who seeks to erode workers' hard-fought rights.

We stand in unwavering solidarity with workers who are fighting to protect the right to strike and to fair collective bargaining.

An injury to one is an injury to all. An attack on the rights of Alberta's teachers is an attack on every worker in Canada.

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*Together, Canada's provincial and territorial labour federations give voice to over three million workers, represented by the Alberta Federation of Labour, British Columbia Federation of Labour, Manitoba Federation of Labour, New Brunswick Federation of Labour, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, Northern Territories Federation of Labour, Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, Ontario Federation of Labour, Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour, Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and Yukon Federation of Labour.*

| **Teresa Acheson** | **Sussanne Skidmore** | **Gil McGowan** |
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| **Lori Johb** | **Kevin Rebeck** | **Laura Walton** |
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| **Magali Picard** | **Chris Watson** | **Melissa Marsman** |
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