

OPEN LETTER
To the
PREMIER OF ONTARIO AND MINISTER OF LABOUR

As one of the final acts of 2018, your Conservative government introduced legislation that would rip up all construction union agreements with cities, school boards, universities and hospitals. This is nothing short of a full-scale attack on workers' rights in this province – and something none of you talked about during the election campaign.

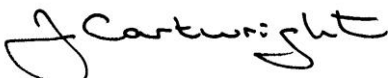
In Toronto that will decimate bargaining rights of nearly all of the union trades, most of which have been in existence for a century or more. To decide that you have the authority to simply take away those agreements with a stroke of a pen is breath-taking. The Supreme Court has overturned similar anti-union legislation in recent years because, unlike your government, it recognizes that the Charter protects basic labour rights. Labour rights are fundamental to a just society.

Toronto has the most productive construction workforce in North America – the product of many generations of immigration combined with a deep commitment to apprenticeship and skills training. Union training centres have an enviable record of success in apprenticeship graduation and skills upgrading through life-long learning. Union members and unionized contractors contribute financially to ensure that these crucial skills are passed on to the next generation. And the safety record in union construction is dramatically superior to the non-union sector.

Despite the fact that many construction workers voted for your party on June 7th, you somehow believe that you should attack the very agreements that ensure they have decent wages and working conditions. It is clear that you do not respect the skills of our members or the framework of collective bargaining that provides stability to their working lives. Your party needs to re-evaluate its approach to the hard-working men and women who build our cities and this province every day.

There are many other aspects of the Bill that are deeply flawed and should also be withdrawn. I urge you to abandon Bill 66 in its entirety.

Sincerely,



John Cartwright
President

January 8, 2019



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