

Independent Union Confederation Fights Harper's Anti-Labour Bill C-377

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Conservative MP Russ Hiebert

Toronto, Canada ([rushPRnews](#)) 05/22/12 — A national union confederation is preparing for a major fight against a Conservative Private Member's Bill that will radically increase the administration costs of managing a union and interfere with the private, internal activities of democratic organizations.

The [Confederation of Canadian Unions](#), the largest federation of independent unions in the country, says that Bill C-377, put forth by Conservative MP Russ Hiebert (South Surrey – White Rock – Cloverdale), will create a burden that smaller, independent unions simply can't handle.

Bill C-377, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, will require all labour organizations to make exceedingly detailed annual financial reports covering a range of expenses.

“Independent unions, some of which have under 50 members and one staff person, will in no way be able to fulfill these new obligations,” says CCU President Joanie Cameron Pritchett. “They don't have the expertise in accounting to manage this, nor will be able to afford to hire the necessary

personnel to do so.”

Mathieu Ravnagat, Member of Parliament for Pontiac, says that Bill C-377 will create approximately 17.5 million hours of paperwork for unions throughout the country, and each of them will need an average of 700 hours of work annually to comply with the requirements.

Pritchett wrote a letter to Prime Minister Harper, Minister of Labour Lisa Raitt and Hiebert, warning that the bill is a direct attack on the independence of unions.

The bill also stipulates a \$1,000 a day fine for

late filing, which Pritchett argues is “completely out of range for the finances that smaller unions in Canada have.”

“Many independent unions actually have to rely on volunteers to carry out the day to day administration of their organization,” she says.

The authors of Bill C-377 argue that any organization in Canada which enjoys a tax exemption must report their finances so that taxpayers can assess the value of such exemptions. Yet Bill C-377 only applies to labour unions.



CCU President Joanie
Cameron Pritchett

“What about corporations or other organizations?” asks CCU Vice-President John Hanrahan. “Many of them engage in political activity, advocacy and lobbying, and benefit from billions of dollars of tax credits, deductions and other loopholes. Will oil companies and banks also have to meticulously detail their finances like unions will have to?”

The CCU, like other unions in Canada, already imposes stringent constitutional requirements on all financial activities, many of which are even subject to a democratic vote by the union's executive.

“The federal government, instead of imposing another bureaucratic interference on labour unions,” says Pritchett, “should instead re-focus its energy on job creation and ensuring that the rights of workers everywhere, whether in a unions or not, are protected.”

CCU President Joanie Cameron Pritchett is available for media interviews. Please contact the number below.

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Contact: Joanie Cameron Pritchett, CCU President

416.736.5109

jcpritchett@ccu-csc.ca

www.ccu-csc.ca

Media Contact Name: Joanie Cameron Pritchett

Media Phone: 416.736.5109

Media Web Address: <http://www.ccu-csc.ca>

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