



## FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### ***THE ABUSE OF POWER BEGINS***

Labour Council says democratic elections hijacked by Ontario's Conservative Government

**TORONTO, ONT** – The Toronto & York Region Labour Council condemns the Conservative government's ramming Bill 5 through Queen's Park to hijack the Toronto election and unilaterally slash City Council representation. This action, carried out with obscene haste and no public hearings, is a deeply disturbing indication of how Ontario will be run over the next four years. With no notice and no consultation, Doug Ford has decided to cut the Council to 25 seats from the current number of 47. If he applied the same formula of one Councillor per provincial riding elsewhere, most city councils across the province would be obliterated. But these deep cut are only aimed at Toronto.

A politician interfering in elections that are already underway is unprecedented in Canadian history. This move is not driven by a pursuit of miniscule savings within a \$11 billion budget. The surprise attack smacks more of revenge on Toronto Councillors who challenged Rob Ford's turbulent rule as Mayor. Without malice as the motive, any politician acting with integrity would take time to consult the people and change the boundaries for the following election.

And so the abuse of power begins. Nobody should believe that the Conservatives will stop at Bill 5 – and no one knows who will be the next target. We are seeing how a Trump-style leadership would operate – with complete disregard for justice. Whether it is around schools, healthcare, pensions or labour rights - it is guaranteed that in the next four years we will find ourselves defending things we have assumed were secure and fair.

The people of Toronto saw nothing but chaos and global ridicule when the Fords ran City Hall. They scrapped transit plans and cut services, outsourced jobs and targeted libraries for closure. We now see how that same chaos will be imposed from Doug Ford at Queen's Park.

Last time the Conservatives took over this province they dumped billions of costs on the property taxpayers. It took years to recover – in fact we are still paying for those destructive decisions that were masked by simple slogans and mean-spirited ideology. Crumbling schools, cancelled transit lines, increased poverty and boarded up housing are the legacy of that experience. We cannot afford four more years of chaos in Toronto or Ontario.

***The Labour Council is one of several community organizations sponsoring a public forum on Defending Democracy on Thursday August 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at Metropolitan United Church, Queen and Church St.***

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