

A Message to Construction Workers



Do you want a low-wage future for construction?

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN GREATER TORONTO TODAY EARN DECENT WAGES AND BENEFITS. It took a lot of effort by previous generations to raise those standards, although some people think it happens naturally because we are highly skilled and work hard. But the reality is that in many other parts of North America, people are paid far less for the same skills. The main reason we get good wages is because the construction industry in Toronto is highly unionized.

There are powerful interests that want to change that. So-called Merit Shop contractors are lobbying relentlessly to undermine union wages and conditions. They have succeeded in much of western Canada, and are now focused on Ontario. Conservative politicians are pledging to import US-style legislation that will weaken unions. If they succeed, our standards will go down and many more Canadians will be stuck in a low-wage economy.

Look at what the Conservatives are doing to lower our living standards:

- ☛ Massive cuts to Employment Insurance, including loss of hiring hall protection;
- ☛ Repeated abuse of the Foreign Temporary Worker Program;
- ☛ Bad trade deals and refusal to protect Canadian jobs –like when Caterpillar bought and shut down the Lovat Tunnel Boring machine plant in Etobicoke
- ☛ Change Old Age Security coverage to age 67
- ☛ Abolishing the Federal Fair Wage Schedule for construction
- ☛ Wanting to scrap the apprenticeship ratio that protects training standards

Please turn over

Conservative leaders Stephen Harper and Tim Hudak plan to create a low-wage economy - by weakening unions

The Conservatives want to introduce a scheme that would encourage union members to become “Free riders”. The “Free riders” would pay no dues but still get the advantage of union membership! *Does that sound fair to you?* With a divided membership and loss of union resources, imagine what would happen to your wages and benefits!

Together we can make Canada a *better* place to work and live

- ✓ We need *more* good jobs – including good jobs for youth and diverse communities.
- ✓ We need secure pensions for seniors.
- ✓ A low-wage economy cannot support quality health care, education and other public services.
- ✓ Don't let the Conservatives weaken our unions. Protect the wages and benefits of all workers.
- ✓ Defend apprenticeship and training standards.

Here is what *you* can do:

- ❶ TAKE A FRESH LOOK at your collective agreement and what it means to you and your family.
- ❷ DON'T FALL for the “Free rider” con job.
- ❸ NEVER VOTE FOR A politician who supports low-wage policies.
- ❹ DOES YOUR UNION HAVE an email list? If it does, make sure you are on it!
- ❺ VISIT www.lowwageeconomy.ca for more information about the Conservatives' plans – and for information about campaign actions that you can join.



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