

# Workers' Rights Campaign

# "TIPS"

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## for effective workplace discussions

Although social media is increasingly important, person-to person discussions are still the best way to communicate with members and build a campaign.

### First steps...

- ▶ Your discussions with members will be most effective if they are part of an initiative planned by your union, to engage members.
- ▶ This can be challenging work – ask your union to set up a buddy system or committee for support.
- ▶ Ask for training on campaign issues and discussion skills.
- ▶ Review the campaign's Main Message (on the back of this sheet) and campaign materials.

### Discussions with members

In almost every workplace there are opportunities for brief discussions with co-workers: sometimes on-the-job, before or after work, at break or lunch.

Establishing a respectful relationship with members is as important as the message we are delivering.

- ➊ Start with members who are solid union supporters, rather than someone who may be antagonistic.
- ➋ Make a point of talking with members who may feel excluded from the union.
- ➌ Consider your options for opening the discussion with members: Use a leaflet, newspaper article or workplace event as an opener. Or just ask, "Have you heard about..."
- ➍ Deliver the campaign's Main Message clearly. Use leaflets that are designed for union members.
- ➎ Ask questions that invite members to reflect on what is at stake for them.

(If you are using the Labour Council Workers' Rights ALERT, ask the questions listed in the right column.)

**6 Listen carefully to members' comments and questions.** If you don't know the answer, ask your union for clarification.

- ▶ Don't argue. Find openings. Look for points of agreement.
- ▶ Don't challenge everything that you disagree with.
- ▶ Don't get angry. Listen carefully and patiently explain.
- ▶ Stay on message. Avoid long tangents. Bring the discussion back to the impact of Conservative policies on the union member you are speaking with. "This is about *you!*"
- ▶ You may encounter difficulty. Some members may need to air complaints before they can really listen to you.
- ▶ Be patient. Lay the groundwork for future discussions.
- ▶ It often takes three or more discussions - to both listen and to be heard.
- ▶ Get support. Share your experience with others who are talking with members about the campaign.
- ▶ Invite members to visit union websites that have campaign materials.
- ▶ Invite them to information meetings and campaign events. Ask them to talk with family and friends.

### Workers' Rights Campaign Main Message

- ➔ Harper and Hudak are promoting changes to labour laws that would create a low wage economy and harm Canadian society in many ways.
- ➔ Under the Conservative scheme, workers could become "free riders" who opt out of the union and don't pay dues, while still receiving all the benefits of union membership!
- ➔ This would seriously divide and weaken unions - and drive down wages, benefits and pensions.
- ➔ We *must* defeat Harper and Hudak. Together we can win thousands of union members to join the campaign!