



USING BILL 148 TOOLS FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Sometime early in 2018, Bill 148 will become law. When it does, unions and workers will suddenly have a new set of tools to use for organizing and winning economic justice for hundreds of thousands of Ontarians. They won't be everything we wanted, and still not everything needed to correct the imbalance of power in the modern economy. But workers have produced wonders using even the most basic tools – when given a chance to apply their skills and creativity.

Here's what we will have won:

- Card-check for sectors dominated by contractor competition – cleaning, food services, security and community home care. That means once a majority of workers sign a union card, they get certified as the union for the workplace. No more mandatory vote interval tainted by intimidation and fear.
- Successor rights for workers in cleaning, food and security services – if the contractor changes, people keep their jobs, seniority and union agreement.
- Easier access to unionization – including the right to get a full employee list once 20% of workers have signed union cards. A lower bar for remedial certification if the company engages in reprisals or misconduct, and easier first contract arbitration. Possible consolidation of new units with existing agreements.
- Equal pay for part-time, contract or temp agency employees doing a similar job as permanent employees. This has massive implications – many companies have built their business model on poverty wages, enforced by the insecurity of temp agency employees in the workplace.
- Better “just cause” provisions, and no limit on return to work rights after a labour dispute.

Imagine what it would take to empower all these workers who have new rights. What would “organizing to scale” look like in Ontario in 2018?

If our movement seizes the opportunities provided in Bill 148, we would carry out a mass information blitz to tell people about opportunities to join a union or get a raise. Unions would hire new organizers to support union drives wherever people are being exploited - speaking the many languages found in today's workplaces. We would co-ordinate test cases taken to the Labour Board to assert the new conditions for remedial certification and ensure accurate employee lists are actually being provided.

Labour and community allies would take on very public fights with company owners who try to avoid paying temp or contract workers less than the law requires. High profile contract bargaining struggles would set the stage for even stronger legislation to address issues left out of Bill 148, such as sectoral bargaining, limits on temp work, and card-check for all.

Every union should step up to help create this new environment for hopeful and courageous action. That means making the organizational decision to devote more resources to organizing, building a collaborative approach with other unions, and reaching into their memberships to discover ways to bring a “union yes” message to family member and neighbours. It means ongoing support for the \$15and Fairness campaign, and recruiting activists from diverse communities to be part of this effort. We are about to win many of the improvements to labour law that we have worked years to achieve.

Let’s make sure we pick up the tools needed to complete the job – and start building a **fairer economy for all!**

November 2017

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