

COALITION FOR DEMOCRATIC LABOUR RELATIONS

February 18, 2005

Dear :

On behalf of the Coalition for Democratic Labour Relations, we are writing to you today to urgently bring to your attention the serious impact that Bill 144, the *Labour Relations Statute Amendment Act*, will have on the provincial economy, and to request your support for our amendments to the legislation.

The Coalition for Democratic Labour Relations is comprised of 12 industry associations, representing over 100,000 small, medium and large businesses and roughly 2 million jobs in key sectors of Ontario's economy. The Coalition was established in opposition to Bill 144, in order to communicate our shared concerns. Attached is our press release with further information on the Coalition.

When Bill 144 was introduced, it was presented as the tool to achieve "fairness and balance" in the workplace. **Coalition members couldn't disagree more.** We take issue with the way this Bill threatens the fundamental principles of democracy, by removing the democratic right of employees to vote on whether or not they choose a union and by impeding an employer's right to free speech.

We have begun to hear anecdotal evidence from several of our members that they are reviewing investment decisions based on the negative effect of Bill 144. The labour relations environment is one of the key elements that business people in Ontario, and business leaders looking at potential investments in Ontario, use to determine when and where to invest in the new plants and stores that create jobs.

Without major amendments, the Coalition believes the Bill will create uncertainty in the business community, and will likely delay key decisions about investments and hiring. The potential loss of investment and job creation will erode the government's ability to invest in its priorities of health care and education. This couldn't come at a worse time, especially given the recently revised forecasts predicting slower economic growth for Ontario in 2005.

The Coalition has worked collaboratively to develop proposed amendments to the legislation that will achieve fairness and balance. We have met with the Minister of Labour and expressed our serious concerns to him, and have also met with the Minister's staff to present and discuss our proposed amendments. We urge you, a democratically elected Member of Provincial Parliament, to support the principles of democracy, and to support our proposed amendments to Bill 144. Specifically, they are: