

**For immediate release: Thursday December 16, 2004**

**Topic: Business leaders form coalition to oppose proposed changes to Ontario's Labour Relations Act**

**Toronto** – As the Legislature rises today, business leaders representing over 100,000 individual businesses and roughly 2 million jobs in key sectors of the Ontario economy announce that they have formed the Coalition for Democratic Labour Relations in order to oppose Bill 144, the Labour Relations Statute Law Amendment Act, tabled by Labour Minister Chris Bentley.

Coalition members take issue with the way this Bill threatens the fundamental principles of democracy, by removing employees' democratic right to vote on whether or not they choose a union and by impeding employers' right to free speech.

The Coalition is also seriously concerned with provisions permitting remedial certification, interim re-instatement, and card-based certification in the construction sector.

The Coalition is urging its members, and all citizens who share their concerns, to speak with their Members of Provincial Parliament who will be back in their constituencies for the winter break.

Coalition members have met with Minister Bentley and Labour Ministry Officials to discuss these issues and their broader concern that, as written, this legislation will have very negative implications both in the workplace and on investment in Ontario.

Without major amendments, the Coalition believes the Bill will create uncertainty in the business community, and will likely delay key decisions from being made on 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.

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The Coalition for Democratic Labour Relations includes the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG), Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME), Canadian Restaurant & Foodservices Association (CRFA), Greater Toronto Hotel Association, Ontario & Toronto Automobile Dealers Association, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA), Open Shop Contractors Association (OSCA) and Retail Council of Canada (RCC).