

Members of the Coalition for Democratic Labour Relations on Bill 144:

"We are all very concerned about the direction the government is taking with this legislation," said Len Crispino, President and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. "We are looking to work with the government to ensure Ontario has a Labour Relations Act that creates harmonious workplaces without stifling the economy."

According to Ian Howcroft, Vice President, Ontario Division for Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME), "industry in Ontario is under intense pressure from offshore competition causing manufacturers to shift investments elsewhere. Companies must rely on flexibility and innovation to remain competitive under these circumstances. The proposed changes to the labour relations act threaten businesses flexibility and will impact investment decisions causing high value manufacturing jobs to leave Ontario."

Judith Andrew, Vice-President for Ontario for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said, "The proposed changes will be particularly devastating in small workplaces. The re-introduction of remedial - or more accurately - penalty certification means that if a small business owner, who is not an expert in labour law, does something that is interpreted as an unfair labour practice during a certification drive, his or her employees could wind up with a Union they don't want."

Diane J. Brisebois, President & CEO for Retail Council of Canada said, "A strong economy is absolutely necessary to ensure the well-being and growth of the retail sector in this province and the more than 700,000 retail jobs it supports. This Bill creates uncertainty in our communities, and uncertainty means small and large merchants will be putting off making major decisions about investment and hiring. Retailers cannot support a Bill that undermines the democratic process."

"Certification on the basis of membership cards is a major step backwards for workplace democracy in the construction sector where already, the wishes of only a few employees, even with a vote, can dictate the unionized status for hundreds," said Phil Besseling, President of the Open Shop Contractors Association.

"The restaurant industry is particularly concerned about the absence of a democratic process under the proposed legislation. Giving political appointees the power to automatically declare a business unionized regardless of the wishes of employees will upset workplace relations and will hurt small business and employment by discouraging investment," said Joyce Reynolds, senior vice-president, government affairs of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association.

Terry Mundell, President & CEO of the Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association stated, "The fundamental principle of democracy has always been the right to vote by secret ballot. Governments are elected by it. Ontario's labour legislation should be no different."