



OPEIU BULLETIN

Office and Professional Employees' International Union, Local 378
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May 21, 2004

URGENT BULLETIN RE: CANADIAN AUTONOMY

The future of your union is now literally in your hands!

Included with this letter is an important authorization form that we are asking you to sign immediately and return in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Your authorization will allow OPEIU 378 and all other Canadian OPEIU Locals to exercise our constitutional right to manage our Canadian operations separately from the OPEIU International in the United States.

It will also ensure that OPEIU members in Canada do not have to pay an extra \$2.00 per month dues increase proposal, which would raise dues to more than \$8.50 per member per month to be paid to the International Union in New York.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts to negotiate a mutually agreeable Canadian autonomy plan with the International, the American members of the OPEIU Executive Board have refused to fully address the needs of Canadian members and to recognize our right to Canadian autonomy.

They have indicated that they will not only attempt to increase our dues at our International convention in mid-June but also push through changes which radically infringe upon Canada's ability to participate in the democratic process of the Union and the right of Canadians to vote in matters directly affecting Canadian members. They also intend to take away Canadian OPEIU delegates right to vote for the International President and Secretary-Treasurer or to have any say over how our dues money is spent in the United States.

This is a deeply disturbing situation which we have done everything possible to avoid.

Your OPEIU Canadian National Committee has voted unanimously to take the steps necessary under the OPEIU's constitution to exercise our right to form an autonomous Canadian national union.

Every Canadian Local is sending its members an authorization form and a letter explaining our situation. All Canadian members are being consulted and asked to complete the "Canadian Autonomy Authorization form".

We strongly urge you to sign this form today and immediately mail it back. **Time is of the essence!**

Canadian National Committee members and Local 378 delegates will be attending the OPEIU International Convention in Florida starting June 18, 2004 and we need your support to ensure Canadian autonomy is not threatened by any actions that might be voted through by American members, who make up a strong majority of delegates.

By signing your authorization form, you are indicating your support for your dues money to stay in Canada and support our Canadian operations, not be sent to the United States.

This move to Canadian autonomy is a positive step towards running our own national union. Put simply, we want Canadian dues to fund Canadian operations as determined by Canadian members.

This move will not affect how Local 378 operates and our members will continue to receive all the union services they currently rely on, including representation and servicing on workplace issues, collective bargaining, education, communication and our Local 378 strike and defence fund.

As an autonomous Canadian union, we will have access to our own national Canadian strike and defence fund and we believe we can improve and expand existing services for members.

You should know that by becoming autonomous, we are following in the footsteps of many other Canadian unions who have left international organizations to become separate national unions.

If you want more information on this situation, please visit our OPEIU 378 website at www.opeiu.ca where you can view correspondence between the Canadian National Committee and the International.

In Solidarity,

Jerri New
Canadian Director
President, OPEIU 378

On behalf of your BC Region Representatives on the Canadian National Committee:

Doug Hill, International VP, Region 8, Vice-President, OPEIU 378
Karen Rockwell, Canadian National Committee, Vice-President, OPEIU 378
Sheila Morrison, Vice-President, OPEIU International, Secretary-Treasurer, OPEIU 15
Elaine Jackson, Canadian National Committee, President, OPEIU 15

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Encl.

PS: PLEASE **DO NOT DELAY** – WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT FOR CANADIAN AUTONOMY IMMEDIATELY – PLEASE SIGN THE AUTHORIZATION FORM AND MAIL IT **TODAY!**