



MEDIA RELEASE

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OPEIU 378 News Release

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OPEIU Local 378 wins major victory as BC Supreme Court throws out U.S. International union's attempt to gain injunction to stop Canadian autonomy

VANCOUVER – OPEIU Local 378 has won a major victory in BC Supreme Court in its efforts to become an autonomous Canadian union.

Late Thursday Justice Ian Pitfield rejected an injunction application filed last week by U.S. International OPEIU executives attempting to stop an ongoing national membership authorization process and ordered the International to pay costs to OPEIU 378 in the case.

“This is a major win for OPEIU’s Canadian members in their efforts to run and control their own union in Canada,” said Jerri New, President of the Office & Professional Employees’ International Union (OPEIU) Local 378. “We are well on our way to gaining the support of a majority of Canadian members for autonomy and the court has clearly said we are exercising our democratic rights in doing so.”

New said it was outrageous that the union’s own US-based International would have filed an injunction application against its own Canadian members, which has further strengthened their resolve to separate from the American union.

“It was very encouraging that after hearing our side of the argument Justice Pitfield ruled in our favour and also awarded us court costs,” said New, who is also Canadian Director for 35,000 OPEIU members across the country. “We hope that the US International executives will now end their legal harassment of Canadian OPEIU members and let us decide our own future freely.”

New said the International has also fired the Canadian National Committee’s legal counsel and taken other steps to frustrate the autonomy drive.

OPEIU Local 378 represents about 11,000 members in British Columbia, including workers at ICBC, BC Hydro, Terasen, Accenture, Hastings Racecourse, TransLink and other employers.

The dispute came to a head after the union’s Canadian National Committee rejected the International executive’s proposal to increase dues by \$2 a month. The Canadian members then decided to exercise their national autonomy rights under section XIV of the OPEIU constitution, triggering the International’s legal attack, as well as an International plan to remove Canadian OPEIU delegates’ right to vote for the International President and Secretary-Treasurer or to have any say over how their members’ dues money is spent in the United States.