

Fighting for freedom: CUPW files court challenge

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OTTAWA - The Canadian Union of Postal Workers announced today it has launched its highly anticipated court challenge to the legislation used by the Conservative government to force postal workers back after they were locked out in June.

The Conservatives' heavy-handed use of back-to-work legislation has raised eyebrows across the country. Experts are saying that removing free collective bargaining and the right to strike from workers in the federal sector will be disastrous for the economy, poisoning labour relations for years to come.

"Freedom of association is a fundamental right," said Denis Lemelin, CUPW National President. "What other rights are they going to try to take from us if we let them get away with this one?"

The challenge, which will be heard by the Federal Court, is based on the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The union has retained Paul Cavalluzzo, a leading constitutional lawyer, known for his work on the Walkerton inquiry.

"Postal workers are doing the right thing, not only for their union but for other workers who may face being legislated in the future," said Cavalluzzo. "Few employers will negotiate in good faith when they can count on extreme government intervention to bail them out."

Roxanne Dubois, National Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students agrees. "One of the major sticking points for the postal workers during their negotiations was management targeting younger and newer workers," said Dubois.

"By stepping in on the side of Canada Post management, this government is telling the next generation that we are worth less."

"The Conservatives have rigged the legislation to reward management for shutting down the post office. It enforces wage rollbacks and compels the arbitrator to pick management's side," said Lemelin. "This sets a very dangerous precedent for everybody who has a job or who is going to have a job in the future."

"This government has declared open season on workers across the country. We believe we must do our part to stop it."

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