



**November 1, 2022**

**RE: CUPE Education Workers, the Right to Strike, and Condemning Bill 28**

The UTSU Executive Committee is stunned and alarmed by the introduction of [Bill 28](#) by [Education Minister Stephen Lecce](#). This illegal legislation fines public sector employees for striking, fines the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) for striking, and penalizes schools if they fail to comply with a mandate to keep schools open, even if it is impossible. Additionally, this illegal legislation invokes the notwithstanding clause to override the Canadian constitution and relevant Ontario law, and protects the legislation itself from any investigations as to its own constitutionality or legality. The legislation is an insult to human rights, labour rights, and constitutional law, and flies in the face of the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB), and the rule of law in general. The right to strike is a necessary tool for defending wages and rights.

According to the Market Basket Measure for Ontario municipalities, the minimum income required for a household to be able to pay for basic needs falls between \$42,000 to \$50,000. The idea that education workers should be forced to rely on just \$39,000 per year to support their families is unfathomable. Education workers shape our society, and are responsible for the success of generations of students. They deserve to be fairly compensated, not subjected to abuse by a government which refuses to respect the rule of law, labour rights, and ethics.

Punishing the right to strike calls into question this government's mandate to govern and its commitment to upholding a fair and democratic society in Ontario. We call upon every organization and person with a platform to express their unequivocal support for CUPE in rejecting this illegal legislation. The danger that this precedent sets cannot be exaggerated.

The impact that this will have on many students and community members at the University of Toronto also cannot be understated. Hundreds of students, faculty, and staff with children now must make last-minute arrangements to reduce disruption to their lives, simply because the provincial government refuses to respect the rights of thousands of education workers.

The University of Toronto Students' Union expresses its support for the CUPE workers who will strike this coming Friday to stand for public education and the right to fair wages. The UTSU will also be taking relevant action to express support and to push back against Bill 28.

We call on all University of Toronto students to join in showing solidarity with these workers, and we encourage everyone not to cross the picket line. Students who wish to express their support may attend one of many rallies across the province, email the Education Minister himself at [stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org](mailto:stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org), write him a letter and mail it to his constituency office at Unit 1 - 2220 King Rd., King City, ON L7B 1L3, or call him directly at 647-560-9700.

In solidarity,  
The UTSU Executive Committee