

THE CONSERVATIVE ATTACK

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#2



Bill C-4: an attack on health and safety

New legislation will put UCCO-SACC-CSN members in danger.

As we pointed out in the first flyer in this series, our fundamental right as union members to collectively bargain is under attack from the Conservative government's Bill C-4, the omnibus budget implementation legislation. Buried in this bill's 308 pages is another assault that will effectively eliminate our right to refuse dangerous work under the Canada Labour Code.

Drafted without consulting any of the people it will affect, this legislation redefines "danger" in the code as meaning **"any hazard, condition or activity that could reasonably be expected to be an imminent or serious threat to the life or health of a person exposed to it before the hazard or condition can be corrected or the activity altered."**

With this watered-down language, it will be almost impossible to obtain a ruling of danger in order to protect the health and safety of our members.

This change sets us back to the Canada Labour Code prior to 2000, which was a much weaker protection for our health and safety. Indeed, it can be seen as a direct attack on one of the major achievements of UCCO-SACC-CSN, which was to enlarge the notion of danger in the landmark Verville decision of 2004.

The Federal Court ruling – which resulted in our members' right to carry handcuffs – affirmed that "danger" included

any existing or potential hazard or condition or activity that could reasonably be expected to cause injury or illness, including unpredictable human behaviour. The wording in Bill C-4 would eliminate these obvious elements of frontline correctional work as a consideration in the labour code.

The legislation will radically reduce the opportunity for our members to address dangerous work situations.

It is obvious that this new language is intended to handcuff the ability of unions to contest dangerous working conditions.

In addition to this, independent Health and Safety Officers (HSOs) will be replaced by political appointees serving at the pleasure of the Treasury Board President. This will introduce a biased process that puts

the government's narrow political goals ahead of our members' health and safety.

We encourage our members to contact their local Member of Parliament to voice their concerns about this major shift to the Canada Labour Code, which will make our job much more dangerous than it already is.

