

# unifor: bill c-4 a threat to labour-management relations

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OTTAWA, Nov. 26, 2013 /CNW/ – It is inappropriate for the Harper government to bring in sweeping labour law changes through an omnibus budget implementation bill, making proper consultation and consideration much more difficult, Unifor told the federal Standing Committee on Finance at hearings today into Bill C-4.

"It is risky to undertake ad hoc changes for partisan or ideological reasons. Doing so risks serious and long-lasting damage to labour-management relations in the federal public service," the union said in a submission by Unifor Director of Transportation Ron Smith and Unifor Local 2182 President Chad Stroud.

Their submission recounted the long history of consultation that has led to past changes to labour law affecting workers governed by the Public Service Labour Relations Act. Unifor represents such affected workers as Coast Guard Radio Operations employees, Printing Services Group Non-Supervisory employees and Transport Canada Air Traffic Control employees. Unifor also represents House of Commons Technical Group staff, governed by the Parliamentary Employees Staff Relations Act.

Smith and Stroud raised concerns about provisions in C-4 that will allow the employer to unilaterally declare work and essential service, rather than determining that through negotiations with its unions.

"Unifor and other bargaining agents can have no confidence that the unilateral power that Bill C-4 would grant to the government to determine what is an essential service will not be abused," the submission reads.

Smith and Stroud also took issue with changes that Bill C-4 would make to the arbitration process for affected employees, saying the narrowing of issues that may be considered by an arbitrator will undermine the legitimacy of the process, and are not needed.

"Bill C-4 is a solution in search of a problem," the submission says.

Founded on Labour Day weekend with the merging of the Canadian Auto Workers and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union, Unifor is Canada's largest union in the private sector with more than 300,000 members in every sector of the Canadian economy. Local 2182 represents Canadian Coast Guard Marine Communications Officers.

To read the full submission, go to: [http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/finance\\_committee\\_bill\\_c-4\\_labour\\_law\\_brief.pdf](http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/finance_committee_bill_c-4_labour_law_brief.pdf)

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