

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **40 years of successful Ontario labour relations unravelling under Wynne and Flynn**

### ***Proposed changes to Labour Relations Act will affect thousands of Ontario skilled trades workers***

**LONDON, ONTARIO, April 10, 2018** – Ahead of the provincial election on June 7, Premier Kathleen Wynne and Minister of Labour Kevin Flynn are working to quickly and quietly push through amendments to the *Labour Relations Act* in Ontario. If passed, the amendments would remove the bargaining rights of more than 4,000 LIUNA concrete form workers across Ontario and void parts of a province-wide agreement that has been in place since the 1970s.

Premier Wynne and Minister Flynn are advocating to abolish the legislation that protects the LIUNA/Operating Engineers Concrete Formwork Collective Agreement. The Carpenters Union requested amendments that would allow them to represent other trades in southwestern Ontario other than their traditional jurisdiction, which would make them the only union named in the *Labour Relations Act* that would be given such power.

“So far, Premier Wynne and Minister Flynn have not followed legislative process with this amendment,” said Brian MacDonald of the London District Concrete Forming Contractors Association. “They are trying to push the changes through quickly and are not taking into consideration input from the industry. If this change passes and carpenters are able to negotiate on their own, it could result in disruption to job sites across the province,” he said. “Jobs will be held up by one small group negotiating a special agreement, and this has the potential to drive up costs and add more uncertainty to Ontario’s economy.”

More than four decades ago, LIUNA worked alongside industry associations to draft the original Collective Agreement that now represents employee and employer interests across multiple trades, including Labourers, Formsetters, Cement Finishers, Rodmen and Operators. The agreement has been effective in increasing efficiencies, eliminating disputes, and protecting employee rights to freedom of association.

It has not been shown that there is currently any instability in the industry, and the proposed changes to the *Act* will cause a disruption in labour relations.

“We have been proud to work together with signatory employers and organizations for more than 40 years to negotiate a successful all-sector, all-employee agreement that allows concrete formworkers to be represented on industrial, commercial and institutional projects throughout Ontario,” said Jim MacKinnon, Business Manager at LIUNA Local 1059.

If the proposed changes are passed, members covered by the Concrete Formwork Collective Agreement would lose their bargaining rights and conditions to work on industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) projects outside the areas covered by LIUNA Local 1059 in London and LIUNA Local 625 in Windsor. Employers could face project delays and efficiency losses as LIUNA members may choose not to work at job sites where they are not represented by LIUNA. This would compound an already severe skilled trades shortage across Ontario.

“It’s absolutely shameful,” said MacKinnon. “Why change? Why now? If this goes through, other unions and contractors will see that the province-wide ICI bargaining system is open to special amendments, and that favoured status can be bought. This could plunge us back into the days of dysfunctional labour relations of the 1970s.”

Luis Tavares, one of the thousands of concrete formworkers who stand to lose their bargaining rights if the amendment is passed, is concerned for his future. “I’m just trying to make a living to support my family. I want to be able to work on ICI projects outside of London without having to be forced to become a member of another union,” he said. “I don’t want to lose my choice of where I work, or who I am represented by. Most of all, I don’t want my LIUNA pension or health benefits to be in jeopardy. I want to be free to work throughout Ontario to provide for my family.”

Premier Wynne and Minister Flynn are working to push the amendment through in the coming weeks. However, there is still time to make your voice heard. Workers in Ontario have the right and should demand the freedom to choose the union they had been members of for 40 years to represent their interests.

Contact your local MPP this week and demand they say ‘no’ to biased and unfair changes to the *Labour Relations Act*, or contact Kathleen Wynne by calling 416-325-1941 or visiting <https://correspondence.premier.gov.on.ca/EN/feedback/default.aspx>

### **About LIUNA Local 1059**

Chartered in 1953, the Labourers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 1059 [www.liunalocal1059.com](http://www.liunalocal1059.com) represents workers in London, Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford, Huron, Perth, Grey and Bruce counties. Working for more than 240 different employers, its 3,000 members include 2,350 construction and 650 maintenance, light manufacturing and security employees.

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