

We are trade unionists
speaking up together

amtogether
NOW!


Tax Fairness, Public Services,
Good Jobs & Labour Rights



Join us on the **Road to Fairness**

The rich are getting richer and the rest of us are being left behind.
It doesn't have to be this way! We just have to start talking about it.

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We are the
ones we've been
waiting for

We can do this. We can make things more fair. In fact, we are the only ones who ever have. We are the only ones who ever really want to.

It's the story of our lives. It's how we are Canadian. We trust ourselves to create "the true north strong and free" and we do—every day, all of us.

We do all the work that makes Canada work. We make the important choices that make us Canadian. Not the politicians. Not big business. We do it. All of us everyday people. We've been at it for the last 146 years and it still works.

Time and time again we make the same choice: we choose to be a nation of good friends and neighbours—first. It's in our bones, in our DNA. We want to look out for one another. It's our first instinct—our national instinct. We want to make things as fair as possible, to eliminate unfair advantage, to give every Canadian a chance to make it through on their own and to bounce back whenever life squeezes too tight.

That's how we got Medicare, old age pensions and unemployment insurance. It was our idea to create them all. The politicians and big business were against all of it. They said it couldn't be done and shouldn't be done. We made them do it, anyway. We knew what we needed, what we were ready to pay for and what was only fair.

We need to do it again. We need to remind them again that *Only Fair Is Fair* and that the way things are now isn't even close.

We don't need to wait for anyone else to show us how. We know how. We really and truly are the ones we've been waiting for. Let's begin today.

All together now!

ONLY FAIR IS FAIR
Income inequality isn't!

GROWING INCOME INEQUALITY STINKS

It is always an insult and an injury. It is always grossly unfair. There is no real way to justify any part of it. Never was. Never will be. But, for a long, long time most of us just learned to live with it. The damage it did was not deep enough or obvious enough to make us worry. Not any more.

Income inequality today threatens to wreck all we have and all we want to be. It is a bloated and ravenous monster that is pulling us apart. There is no safe way to ignore it or live with it.

INCOME INEQUALITY STINKS

Right now the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) running our top corporations get paid 235 times as much as the rest of us. **235 TIMES!** Each of us would have to win a multi-million dollar lottery every year we worked to match their average annual take home pay of **\$7.7 MILLION**. They earn more in just one year than most of us earn in **FOUR WORKING LIFETIMES**.

Inequality on this scale was unheard of even in the bad old days of the robber barons. It cannot be endured much longer. The actual damage it does to our economy is too great. The deeper damage it does to our spirit of community, of civil society, of social solidarity, of simple togetherness is seering and soul destroying.

Gross income inequality on this scale is the net result of our acceptance of government policies and actions that require us to: abandon even the pretense of tax fairness; cannibalize and privatize quality public services; severe labour rights from human rights and smash good jobs into smithereens. All this can only harm us as individuals and as a nation.

THE GOOD NEWS is that income inequality is not like bad weather or bad luck. We don't just have to suck it up and carry on. We can do something about it. We can make our governments listen to us and act to make the reduction of income inequality their number one priority.





LABOUR RIGHTS ARE MY RIGHTS

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This should be obvious to all of us. But it isn't.

It should be obvious because labour rights come with the territory every bit as much as freedom of speech, freedom of religion or free elections. Once you live here all those freedoms, and more, are yours. By right. No ifs, ands or buts. All part of how we want to present ourselves to the world as a true democracy. All of it guaranteed in law by our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. But, when it comes to labour rights, none of that counts for very much very often.

LABOUR RIGHTS GET LITTLE RESPECT

Labour rights are like the 98-pound weakling on the beach. No one is afraid to kick sand in his face. Because nothing ever happens to anyone who does. So, it's always open season on labour rights. In fact, it is those who are supposed to be the jealous guardians of all our rights who violate our labour rights most often.

Since 1982, our governments have passed 204 pieces of legislation that have restricted, suspended or denied collective bargaining rights for Canadian workers.

Little wonder that it does not seem very obvious to us that: "Labour right are my rights."

LABOUR RIGHTS FOR ONE AND ALL

We've got to find and create ways to stand together with courage and conviction and proudly say: "Labour rights are my rights."

The more we do that, the more we will find the strength to again stand up to privilege and win back what is ours by right: a fair and full share in all the wealth we work to create.

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PUBLIC SERVICES TELL OUR STORY

At home. At work. At play. And so they should.

Canada would not be Canada without them. It would be something less. Something smaller. Little more than a collection of strangers scrambling to do well for themselves, by themselves. We decided not to be that nation.

PUBLIC SERVICES TELL

OUR STORY

We decided to be something better. We decided to be ourselves. And so we are. Our public services are a big part of the reason why.

It took courage, tenacity, ingenuity and a boundless spirit of generosity to create the public services that would give us the kind of country we wanted. But we did it—together. We created our kind of Canada.

MEDICARE IS THE SHINING STAR in our kind of Canada. It is the public service that is the model for what all public services should be like.

- It is universal—that means it is available to all Canadians, all the time, no matter where we live in Canada.
- It seems like it's free because we don't have to pay any extra fees beyond our taxes to get all of it.
- It is non-profit—nobody makes any money off it.
- It applies to everything—not just to certain illnesses or injuries in certain circumstances.

These same principles apply to all our best public services. They are universal, free of charge, non-profit and all-inclusive. They apply to police, fire and paramedics; to child protection, addiction counselling, and home care; to old age pensions, snow plowing and early childhood education; to food inspection, highways maintenance, and



street cleaning. We don't pay extra for them. We don't really need to think about them. We just expect them to be there. And they are. Along with the hundreds upon hundreds of other public services we depend on to get through all our days safe and sound.

OUR KIND OF FUTURE

The future of our kind of Canada depends on public services. The more we eliminate or modify them, the more we reduce access to them or even limit access to them to those who can pay, the more we drift away from the kind of Canada we have built together.

If we turn public services into a private, for-profit, cash-and-carry enterprise more and more of us are going to be left out or left behind. This is not how we can stay true to ourselves. This has no place in our story.

Our story is the story of a country filled with people who want to improve everybody's chance of getting a fair shot at a good life. We've been doing that with public services. That's why public services were, are and will always be the story of our life.

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TAX FAIRNESS SEALS THE DEAL

The deal that we all agree to. The deal that makes it possible for us all to live together.

The deal that says each and every one of us is ready to pay his or her fair share of taxes to keep Canada going the way we want.

The deal that says nobody gets a free ride. Everybody pays. Little kids when they buy a chocolate bar; business billionaires when they buy a company. Everybody pays their fair share.

Not perfect. But a deal that 99% of us can live with and have used to build the Canada we have today. But 1% of us—the richest 1%—keeping finding ways to weasel out of that deal. The last thing they want to do is pay their fair share.

TAX FAIRNESS SEALS THE DEAL

They use their influence to get tax breaks, tax shelters, tax holidays, tax rebates, tax loopholes to lower and lower and lower what they have to pay. All the while leaving the rest of us to pick up the slack or just do without more and more of the public services we need and want because we don't collect enough from those who do not pay their fair share.

THE REMEDY IS SIMPLE: Keep to the deal.

Make everybody pay their fair share again. Expect those who have more, to pay more. Make income tax truly progressive again. Introduce new taxes, like a Robin Hood Tax that would take a tiny, tiny bit from each of the millions of deals bankers do every day.

Without tax fairness there can't be a fair deal. And without a fair deal there can't be the kind of Canada we know and love.

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GOOD JOBS GIVE US A FAIR SHOT

That's all most of us ever ask for or expect. We figure we're entitled to that much. After that we're on our own. Fair enough.

We know some folks feel entitled to more and get more—because their parents are rich or connected. It's not exactly fair, but we can live with it—so long as we get our fair shot. It's not a lot to ask. At least it didn't used to be. But it is now. Getting a good job now is harder and harder.

Good jobs last long enough to let you plan a future. They pay well and deliver good



GOOD JOBS GIVE US ALL A FAIR SHOT

pensions and other benefits. Plus, they make employers play by the rules set out in labour standards laws, so bosses can't just do what they like, however they like. Not perfect. But fair enough.

There was a time when most of us could count on getting a chance at a job like that. We could count on getting our fair shot. Not any more. This is no accident.

Our governments let business smash good jobs into small bits or ship them overseas. Business said it was good for business and that was good enough. It wasn't and isn't.

WE NEED A MODERN INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

A modern industrial strategy will recognize that "we are all in this together": sometimes

as bosses, sometimes as workers, always as taxpayers. It is just one policy tool that government can and should use to take direct action in order to manage things for the greater good of us all.

A modern industrial strategy will not favour employers or workers, or green-tech, or high-tech, or low-tech. It will get us to consider all the possibilities and to "work smart."

A modern industrial strategy will allow us to make choices to shape a future we like, instead of being pushed to learn to live with whatever future we get. It cannot help but lead to new business opportunities. And, best of all, plenty of good jobs.

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The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is made up of hundreds of thousands of public and private employees across Canada. It is comprised of the members of BCGEU, CUBGW, HSAA, HSABC, MGEU, NAPE, NBU, NSGEU, OPSEU, PEI-UPSE & SGEU. We are all proud members of the Canadian Labour Congress.

