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November 9, 2020

Hon. Brian Pallister,
Premier of Manitoba
204 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Premier Pallister,

On behalf of the 80,000 North American members of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), we are writing to express our indignation to the provincial government's recently proposed legislation, *Labour Relations Amendment Act (Bill 16)*. This legislation will lead to further divisiveness in labour relations with Manitoba's public servants, and result in a disservice to taxpayers.

For nearly two decades Manitoba has had an enviable environment of engagement between employers and employees. Unfortunately, the Pallister government's approach towards workers has undermined this once productive labour-management relationship with Bill 16, the latest in a long string of anti-worker policies. This is proven out by the fact that the Manitoba Labour Management Review Committee (LMRC)—the joint labour/management entity created to give labour relations recommendations and advice to lawmakers—refuses to advocate for the radical changes called for in the legislation. These changes include the elimination of neutral arbitration after 60 days of a labour disruption, mandating costly and onerous financial reporting requirements upon unions, and liberalizing the union decertification process. Make no mistake about it, if allowed to stand the implications of Bill 16 will be longer and costlier strikes, lockouts, and a further deterioration of the labour/management relationship.

It is important to point out that history is not on the side of the Pallister government. For example, in the fall of 2015, the Canadian public soundly rejected a similar anti-worker approach from Prime Minister Stephen Harper, one which included Bill C-377 that also sought to attack labour organizations with needless and onerous financial reporting requirements. Yet Bill 16 is nonetheless consistent with Bill C-377, demonstrating a willingness by the provincial government to ignore previous failed attempts to saddle unions and associations with undue financial red tape and unnecessary administration. IFPTE believes that it would be worthwhile for the government to consider the outcome of the 2015 federal election as a testament to workers opposition to such measures.

Lastly, we believe that the timing of this legislation exhibits a tone-deaf approach by the Pallister government during the greatest health crisis in a century. For this and all the reasons laid out above, we urge the provincial government to cease its attacks on working Manitobans and the organizations to which they belong.

Sincerely,

Paul Shearon
IFPTE President

Matthew Biggs
IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer/
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Richard Mahe
WAPSO/IFPTE Local 162 President
IFPTE Canadian Area Vice President