



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **COMPENSATION DISPARITIES BETWEEN UNIONIZED AND NON- UNIONIZED WORKERS IN CANADA**

**Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources,  
Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons  
with Disabilities**

**Robert Morrissey, Chair**

**FEBRUARY 2026  
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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## **NOTICE TO READER**

### **Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons**

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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**44th PARLIAMENT – 1st SESSION**

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**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

has the honour to present its

**FIFTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied compensation disparities between unionized and non-unionized workers in Canada and has agreed to report the following:



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# COMPENSATION DISPARITIES BETWEEN UNIONIZED AND NON-UNIONIZED WORKERS IN CANADA

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## INTRODUCTION

During the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (the committee) held two meetings on compensation disparities between unionized and non-unionized workers in Canada. It heard from nine witnesses in relation to this study, including union representatives, labour organizations and officials from Statistics Canada, and received three written briefs.

## UNION MEMBERSHIP IN CANADA

Based on data from the Labour Force Survey, Josée Bégin, Assistant Chief Statistician, Social, Health and Labour Statistics Field at Statistics Canada, stated that three out of ten employees in Canada either belonged to a union or were covered by a collective agreement in August 2024, compared to 34% in 1997.<sup>1</sup> Pierre-Antoine Harvey, economist at Centrale des syndicats du Québec, noted a larger decline since 1981, when the percentage of employees who were union members in their main job was 38%.<sup>2</sup> Witnesses suggested various reasons for the decline, such as requirements in labour legislation that hinder unionization, the changing nature of workplaces and employment (for example, workplaces no longer being as large or geographically concentrated as they once were),<sup>3</sup> difficulties organizing in a virtual setting, and fears of retaliation in the context of a housing crisis and other economic challenges.<sup>4</sup>

The committee also heard about divergent trends between different regions and economic sectors. For example, in 2024, union coverage was 76% in the public sector,

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1 House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA), *Evidence*, 19 September 2024, 1100 (Josée Bégin, Assistant Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada).

2 Ibid., 1205 (Pierre-Antoine Harvey, Economist, Centrale des syndicats du Québec); René Morissette, *Unionization in Canada, 1981 to 2022*, Statistics Canada, 23 November 2022.

3 HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1250 (Bea Bruske, President, Canadian Labour Congress).

4 Ibid., 1250 (Tristen Wybou, Executive Vice-President, British Columbia General Employees' Union).



compared to 15% in the private sector.<sup>5</sup> Some provinces have higher union coverage rates than others, with Quebec ranking highest at 39.1% in 2025, and Alberta ranking lowest at 23.6%.<sup>6</sup>

## BENEFITS OF UNION MEMBERSHIP FOR WORKERS

Witnesses told the committee about earnings advantages associated with union membership.<sup>7</sup> For example, Josée Bégin indicated that in August 2024, unionized employees earned an average hourly wage of \$37.26, compared to \$34.30 among employees who were not unionized.<sup>8</sup> Witnesses provided various reasons for this difference, including workplace and industry characteristics,<sup>9</sup> as well as the role of collective bargaining in achieving higher wages for unionized workers.<sup>10</sup> The committee also heard about the benefits of the union wage premium for specific groups of workers such as younger workers, women, persons with disabilities, and racialized individuals.<sup>11</sup> In addition, witnesses pointed to a more even wage distribution among unionized employees,<sup>12</sup> with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) highlighting the role of this wage compression in reducing inequality.<sup>13</sup>

The wage disparity between unionized and non-unionized workers, although still present, is declining. Josée Bégin told the committee that unionized employees earned

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5 Statistics Canada, *Follow up to HUMA Committee questions from Statistics Canada*, 24 October 2024; and HUMA, *Evidence*, 19 September 2024, 1115 (Isabelle Marchand, Director, Centre for Labour Market Information, Statistics Canada).

6 Statistics Canada, *Follow up to HUMA Committee questions from Statistics Canada*, 24 October 2024.

7 HUMA, *Evidence*, 19 September 2024, 1210 (Courtney Glode, Director, Fish, Food and Allied Workers – Unifor); HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske); HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1145 (Scott Archer, Business Agent, UA Local 663); HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1145 (Wybou); HUMA, *Brief*, Canadian Labour Congress; HUMA, *Brief*, Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers; HUMA, *Brief*, International Longshore & Warehouse Union Canada.

8 HUMA, *Evidence*, 19 September 2024, 1100 (Bégin).

9 Ibid.

10 HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1120 (Archer); HUMA, *Brief*, Canadian Labour Congress; HUMA, *Brief*, Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers; HUMA, *Brief*, International Longshore & Warehouse Union Canada.

11 Statistics Canada, *Follow up to HUMA Committee questions from Statistics Canada*, 24 October 2024; HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske); and HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1155 (Wybou).

12 HUMA, *Evidence*, 19 September 2024, 1100 (Bégin), HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske); HUMA, *Brief*, Canadian Labour Congress.

13 HUMA, *Evidence*, 24 September 2024, 1100 (Bruske); HUMA, *Brief*, Canadian Labour Congress.

31% more than non-unionized employees in 1997, with this gap falling to 20% in 2017 and 10% in 2023, due in part to wages rising more quickly for non-unionized workers.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to higher wages, witnesses told the committee about union members' greater access to employment benefits (such as pension plans, supplementary medical and dental care benefits),<sup>15</sup> increased safety on the job,<sup>16</sup> as well as increased access to training opportunities.<sup>17</sup> On this latter point, Scott Archer, Business Agent for UA Local 663, spoke to the importance of the Union Training and Innovation Program (UTIP) grants—a federal program supporting investments in training equipment and innovations in apprenticeship training—and recommended “expanding these grants to include bricks and mortar investment” to help unions increase training space.<sup>18</sup> The committee also heard about unions' role in helping unionized workers access rights such as “protection against discrimination in employment, promotion and layoff; and the right to grieve management's arbitrary actions.”<sup>19</sup>

## IMPACT OF UNIONS ON THE ECONOMY AND NON-UNIONIZED WORKERS

The committee heard about the positive effects of unions on the wages and working conditions of non-unionized workers.<sup>20</sup> Witnesses pointed to the “union threat effect,” referring to a phenomenon whereby “[t]he mere threat of unionization will drive employers to improve the working conditions of their non-unionized employees, in order to discourage them from organizing collectively” and to enhance recruitment and retention.<sup>21</sup> Several witnesses also noted the impact that unions can exert on working

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14 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1100 (Bégin).

15 Ibid.

16 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1245 (Glode); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1145 (Archer); HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress; HUMA, [Brief](#), Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers; HUMA, [Brief](#), International Longshore & Warehouse Union Canada.

17 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1100 (Bégin); HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress; HUMA, [Brief](#), Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers.

18 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1125 (Archer).

19 HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress.

20 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1205 (Harvey); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1210 (Glode); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1120 (Archer); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1130 (Wybou).

21 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1205 (Harvey); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1120 (Archer).



conditions and workers' rights across the broader workforce, including through advocacy.<sup>22</sup>

The committee also heard about the impact of unions on businesses and the economy. Pierre-Antoine Harvey argued that union presence has a negligible impact on economic growth, investment levels, inflation, unemployment and productivity levels, despite unions increasing the cost of labour.<sup>23</sup> Witnesses and briefs mentioned positive impacts of unions on the efficiency of firms and the economy at large, for example by creating stability and predictability of labour costs for employers,<sup>24</sup> incentivizing employee saving through retirement funds,<sup>25</sup> providing skills training and vocational education,<sup>26</sup> and contributing to the creation of venture and investment capital.<sup>27</sup>

## CHALLENGES FACING WORKERS

### Challenges Facing Unionized Workers

#### Contract-Flipping

Several witnesses raised concerns with the practice of contract-flipping, which involves the frequent re-tendering of contracts in workplaces that contract out services, such as airports. They explained that when a contract is re-tendered, employees working for the previous subcontractor may be employed by the new one, but with potentially less favourable terms and conditions.<sup>28</sup>

Dan Janssen, General Chairperson, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers—District 140, advocated for amending the *Canada Labour Code* to ensure that workers can retain their union and terms and conditions of employment in the event that a contractor or subcontractor of an airport authority is replaced.<sup>29</sup> The

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22 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1205 (Harvey); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1120 (Archer); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1130 (Wybou).

23 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1210 (Harvey).

24 HUMA, [Brief](#), International Longshore & Warehouse Union Canada.

25 Ibid.

26 HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress.

27 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1230 (Harvey).

28 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1240 (Harvey); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1240 (Glode).

29 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1115, 1245 (Dan Janssen, General Chairperson, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers – District 140).

CLC recommended that the federal government take action to “protect unionized workers against the nefarious effects of contract retendering.”<sup>30</sup>

Witnesses also advocated for legislative changes and sharing of best practices at the provincial level. Courtney Glode, Director of Public Affairs at Fish, Food and Allied Workers—Unifor, called for “federal support and coordination and setting best practices” to enable changes to provincial contract flipping legislation.<sup>31</sup> Dan Janssen and Pierre-Antoine Harvey mentioned provincial best practices in Ontario and Quebec.<sup>32</sup>

Dan Janssen raised concerns with the lack of advance notice to workers when a service provider may be changed and recommended that the federal government “[legislate] that the [request for proposal] process provides no less than a 16-week requirement for notice of the successful bidder,” aligning with the timelines of the group termination provisions in the *Canada Labour Code*.<sup>33</sup>

### Impact of Certain Government Policies on Unionized Jobs

Witnesses discussed the impact that certain federal policies may have had on unionized jobs and workers. Courtney Glode voiced concerns about a 2024 federal decision to allocate a “significant” redfish quota to corporate fleets,<sup>34</sup> explaining that increased corporatization of fishing fleets could result in “the eradication of not only our community-based fisheries but also the schools, the health care centres and all of those spinoff jobs that come from the fishery.”<sup>35</sup>

Scott Archer expressed disappointment about the use of foreign workers at the federally subsidized Stellantis battery plant in Windsor, Ontario.<sup>36</sup> He proposed requiring

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30 HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress.

31 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1245 (Glode).

32 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1240 (Harvey); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1200 (Janssen).

33 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1115 (Janssen); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1200 (Bruske). Note that under section 212(1) of the *Canada Labour Code*, an employer who terminates a group of 50 or more employees must provide notice to the Head of Compliance and Enforcement (a role designated by, or occupied by, the Minister of Labour) 16 weeks before the termination date. See [Canada Labour Code](#), R.S.C., 1985, c. L-2, Division IX.

34 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1210 (Glode).

35 *Ibid.*, 1215.

36 Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, [Canada and Ontario Establish An Auto Pact to Secure Stellantis-LGES and Volkswagen deals](#), News release, 6 July 2023; HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1105 (Archer).



employment of Canadian unionized workers on similar projects going forward,<sup>37</sup> and encouraged “labour agreements, or at the very least, prevailing wage policies to ensure these massive government investments equate to good paying jobs for Canadian families.”<sup>38</sup>

Scott Archer also spoke to the stress and uncertainty being faced by workers in the oil industry.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Courtney Glode raised concerns about the impact of the government’s Just Transition strategy<sup>40</sup> on workers in rural coastal communities, noting limited opportunities in these communities for work in other industries.<sup>41</sup>

### Right-to-Work Laws

“Right-to-work” laws allow workers to opt out of joining a union and paying union dues in unionized workplaces.<sup>42</sup> When asked about the right-to-work laws that have been adopted in some jurisdictions in the United States,<sup>43</sup> witnesses expressed concerns about the potential to weaken collective bargaining and, in turn, the advantages experienced by workers in unionized workplaces.<sup>44</sup>

### Government Involvement in Collective Bargaining

The *Canada Labour Code* permits the Minister of Labour to intervene in labour disputes. Notably, under section 107, the Minister may refer a question to the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) or direct the CIRB to take any action to “maintain or secure industrial peace and to promote conditions favourable to the settlement of industrial disputes or differences.” This could include directing the CIRB to order parties back to work and impose final binding arbitration. The Minister can also initiate back-to-work

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37 Ibid., 1210.

38 Ibid., 1125.

39 Ibid., 1230.

40 See Natural Resources Canada, [Sustainable Jobs Plan](#). The document notes, “The term ‘sustainable jobs’ has been increasingly used by the Government of Canada, as well as certain provinces, territories and external organizations, in the context of work on achieving what the international community refers to as ‘just transition’ for workers and the jobs of a net-zero emissions economy.”

41 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1220 (Glode).

42 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), [Right-To-Work Resources](#).

43 Ibid. According to the NCSL, as of 19 December 2023, right-to-work laws had been adopted in 26 states as well as Guam.

44 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1225 (Glode); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1225 (Harvey); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1225 (Bruske).

legislation. Several witnesses and briefs commented on government involvement in the collective bargaining process.<sup>45</sup> For example, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada asserted that “When an employer believes that the government will intervene to force the parties into binding arbitration or impose back to work legislation during a strike, there is no incentive to bargain.”<sup>46</sup>

## Challenges Facing Non-Unionized Workers

### Barriers to Unionizing

Witnesses stressed the importance of removing barriers to unionization.<sup>47</sup> Some emphasized the importance of supporting unionization in the private sector, with Courtney Glode enumerating policies such as “single-step card-check certification, anti-scab legislation,<sup>48</sup> contract flipping legislation and, particularly relevant for our members, resource management decisions that support working people.”<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Pierre-Antoine Harvey noted that strengthening access to unionization for private sector workers “requires changes to labour laws,” and that the federal government “can set an example in this respect in the Canada Labour Code.”<sup>50</sup> Harvey also recommended encouraging the creation of more sectoral unions, with membership based on economic sector rather than employment at a particular company, as well as facilitation of multi-employer certification, whereby employees of multiple smaller companies can access joint unionization.<sup>51</sup>

In its brief, the CLC recommended a range of actions to promote unionization, such as:

- Studying legal barriers to forming unions;

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45 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1240 (Janssen); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1240 (Bruske).

46 HUMA, [Brief](#), International Longshore & Warehouse Union Canada.

47 HUMA, [Brief](#), International Longshore & Warehouse Union Canada; HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress; HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske).

48 Note that [An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012](#), S.C. 2024, c. 12, received royal assent on 20 June 2024. This act amended the *Canada Labour Code* to, among other things, revise the scope of the prohibition relating to the use of replacement workers during a legal strike or lockout in the federally regulated private sector, and came into force on 20 June 2025.

49 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1215 (Glode).

50 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1230 (Harvey).

51 *Ibid.*



- Studying, for example, “the feasibility of a union default” in certain industries with low union density; “graduated models of legislated collective representation” such as broader-based bargaining; and “legal frameworks that would extend access to collective bargaining for freelancers and truckers;”
- Strengthening penalties for “illicit company practices that seek to interfere with workers’ efforts to form unions” (such as the threat of layoffs and reprisals).<sup>52</sup>

### Creating Additional Labour Protections

Bea Bruske called for the legislation of additional labour protections for workers in non-standard jobs, such as temporary workers and gig workers. She spoke to positions that are renewed continuously but not made permanent, potentially decreasing access to wage increases or benefits.<sup>53</sup> Bea Bruske explained that gig workers are often not categorized as “employees” under labour legislation, meaning they may not have access to the same rights, benefits or protections as workers in more traditional employment.<sup>54</sup> In relation to this concern, the CLC recommended that the federal government “eliminate the payroll and tax advantages that provide an incentive for employers to misclassify employees as independent contractors,” and that it “clearly define employee to include dependent contractors,” as well as hold employers and temporary employment agencies jointly liable for labour standards violations.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, Dan Janssen advocated for a living wage for airport workers, highlighting calls on Transport Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada’s Labour Program to establish an airport worker minimum wage, as well as a House of Commons petition to this effect.<sup>56</sup>

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52 HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress.

53 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1245 (Bruske).

54 Ibid.

55 HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress.

56 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1115 (Janssen); House of Commons, “[e-5050 \(Employment and labour\)](#),” *Petitions*.

## CONCLUSION

During this study, the committee heard that while unionization rates have been declining, unions still provide powerful wage premiums and other workplace benefits. Witnesses' recommendations focused on ways to support unionized workers, including by addressing the potential negative impacts of contract retendering. Witnesses also raised concerns about certain government policies affecting unionized workers, the potential effects of "right to work" laws, and government involvement in collective bargaining. Finally, they discussed ways to facilitate union membership, and to improve labour protections for non-unionized workers, including those in non-traditional employment.



## APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

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The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

### 44th Parliament – 1st Session

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<b>Centrale des syndicats du Québec</b> Pierre-Antoine Harvey, Economist	2024/09/19	123
<b>Fish, Food and Allied Workers - Unifor</b> Courtney Glode, Director, Public Affairs	2024/09/19	123
<b>Statistics Canada</b> Josée Bégin, Assistant Chief Statistician, Social, Health and Labour Statistics Field Isabelle Marchand, Director, Centre for Labour Market Information	2024/09/19	123
<b>British Columbia General Employees' Union</b> Tristen Wybou, Executive Vice-President	2024/09/24	124
<b>Canadian Labour Congress</b> Bea Bruske, President D.T. Cochrane, Senior Economist	2024/09/24	124
<b>International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers - District 140</b> Dan Janssen, General Chairperson	2024/09/24	124
<b>UA Local 663</b> Scott Archer, Business Agent	2024/09/24	124



## **APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS**

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The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

**Canadian Labour Congress**

**International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers**

**International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada**



# MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meeting No. 21](#)) from the 45th Parliament, 1st Session and ([Meetings Nos. 123, 124 and 129](#)) from the 44th Parliament, 1st Session is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Morrissey  
Chair



## **HUMA Supplementary Report**

### Conservative Party of Canada Workers First Policy

#### **Introduction**

The Conservative Party of Canada thanks the witnesses who contributed to this study on compensation disparities between unionized and non-unionized workers.

The testimony reinforced what millions of Canadians already know: working people are falling behind.

Despite the wages, workplace benefits, and training advantages often associated with union membership, the affordability crisis under this government has eroded real earnings across the economy.

Evidence before the Committee confirmed:

- Union membership has declined from 38%<sup>1</sup> in 1981 to 30% in 2024<sup>2</sup>.
- The wage premium associated with unionization has shrunk from 31% in 1997 to just 10% in 2023, not because non-union workers are thriving, but because both groups are losing ground to rising prices.<sup>3</sup>

This supplementary report outlines the Conservative response: a workers-first approach that prioritizes affordability, fairness, and the independence of collective bargaining, consistent with the Conservative Party of Canada's Workers First Policy.

#### **The Problem: Workers Falling Behind**

Witnesses repeatedly emphasized that workers across Canada, whether unionized or not, are navigating the same economic pressures: soaring housing costs, rising food prices, and stagnating real wages<sup>4</sup>.

The narrowing gap between union and non-union wages is not a sign of greater prosperity. It is a sign of stagnation. Conservatives share the concern that workers are being squeezed from all sides: a declining share of unionized jobs, shrinking wage growth, and inflationary policies that reduce purchasing power.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 1205 (Pierre-Antoine Harvey, Economist, Centrale des syndicats du Québec); René Morissette, [Unionization in Canada, 1981 to 2022, Statistics Canada, 23 November 2022](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Evidence - HUMA \(44-1\) - No. 123 - House of Commons of Canada](#)

<sup>3</sup> HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1100 (Bégin).

<sup>4</sup> HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1100 (Bégin).

## **A Changing Workforce: Decline of Unionization and Skills Pathway:**

### **Falling Unionization**

Statistics Canada reported that only three in ten workers were unionized or covered by a collective agreement in 2024, down from 34% in 1997<sup>5</sup>.

Private-sector coverage (15%) lags far behind public-sector coverage (76%)<sup>6</sup>.

### **Structural Barriers**

Witnesses cited multiple barriers to workers organizing due to modern workplace structures—smaller worksites, virtual employment, and fears of employer retaliation in an affordability crisis.<sup>7</sup>

### **Contract Flipping and Job Instability**

Workers in federally regulated sectors—especially airports—are vulnerable to contract-flipping, producing wage losses, reduced benefits, and arbitrary changes in working conditions.<sup>8</sup>

Conservatives agree that job stability must be protected and that federal tendering practices should not undermine workers' negotiated terms.

## **Government Policy Failures and Uncertainty for Workers:**

### **Foreign Workers on Federally Subsidized Projects**

The committee heard concerns about the use of foreign labour at the federally subsidized Stellantis battery plant, despite the scale of public investment intended to support Canadian jobs.<sup>9</sup>

This government's approach has left Canadian tradespeople sidelined from projects their tax dollars helped fund.

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<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, Follow up to HUMA Committee questions from Statistics Canada, 24 October 2024; and HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1115 (Isabelle Marchand, Director, Centre for Labour Market Information, Statistics Canada).

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, Follow up to HUMA Committee questions from Statistics Canada, 24 October 2024; and HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1115 (Isabelle Marchand, Director, Centre for Labour Market Information, Statistics Canada).

<sup>7</sup> HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1210 (Courtney Glode, Director, Fish, Food and Allied Workers – Unifor); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1110 (Bruske); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1145 (Scott Archer, Business Agent, UA Local 663); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1145 (Wybou); HUMA, [Brief](#), Canadian Labour Congress; HUMA, [Brief](#), Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers; HUMA, [Brief](#), International Longshore & Warehouse Union Canada.

<sup>8</sup> HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1240 (Harvey); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1240 (Glode)

<sup>9</sup> Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, [Canada and Ontario Establish An Auto Pact to Secure Stellantis-LGES and Volkswagen deals, News release](#), 6 July 2023; HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1105 (Archer).

## **Resource Sector Policies Undermining Communities**

Witnesses described how federal quota decisions<sup>10</sup> and the “Just Transition”<sup>11</sup> approach threaten fisheries, rural economies, and resource-dependent jobs.<sup>12</sup>

Conservatives maintain that workers in these sectors deserve certainty, not policies that weaken local economies and jeopardize livelihoods.

## **Interference in Collective Bargaining**

Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code allows the Minister to direct the CIRB to impose arbitration and end strikes. Witnesses warned that frequent government intervention removes incentives for employers to bargain in good faith.<sup>13</sup>

Conservatives agree heavy-handed political interference undermines free and fair collective bargaining.

## **The Conservative Approach: Fair Work, Real Paycheques, Affordable Lives**

The testimony received reinforces the need for a balanced, practical, workers-first labour policy—one that respects unions but also recognizes that the affordability crisis is the greatest threat to Canadian workers today.

## **Reward Work and Make Life Affordable**

Consistent with witness testimony and the CPC platform, Conservatives will:

- Cut taxes for working Canadians.
- Control inflationary spending that erodes real wages.
- Ensure federal policy prioritizes paycheques, not bureaucracy.
- Support private-sector job creation across regions and industries.

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<sup>10</sup> See [Natural Resources Canada, Sustainable Jobs Plan](#). The document notes, “The term ‘sustainable jobs’ has been increasingly used by the Government of Canada, as well as certain provinces, territories and external organizations, in the context of work on achieving what the international community refers to as ‘just transition’ for workers and the jobs of a net-zero emissions economy.”

<sup>11</sup> Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, [Canada and Ontario Establish An Auto Pact to Secure Stellantis-LGES and Volkswagen deals, News release, 6 July 2023](#); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1105 (Archer).

<sup>12</sup> HUMA, [Evidence](#), 19 September 2024, 1210 (Glode).

<sup>13</sup> HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1240 (Janssen); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1240 (Bruske)

## **Strengthen Training and Apprenticeships**

Witnesses emphasized the importance of federal training programs such as UTIP and the need for investments in training facilities.<sup>14</sup>

Conservatives will:

- Expand UTIP to include facilities, equipment, and innovation.
- Restore the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit.
- Allow tradespeople to deduct travel expenses for work in other regions.
- Improve EI for apprentices to reduce barriers to completion.

## **Protect and Respect Workers**

Conservatives will:

- Uphold the independence of collective bargaining, free from political interference.
- Ensure federally funded projects create good-paying Canadian jobs, not foreign-subsidized labour pools.
- Maintain high labour standards while removing regulatory barriers that discourage hiring.

## **Close the Public-Private Divide**

With unionization concentrated in the public sector, Conservatives will:

- Support wage growth tied to productivity and job creation.
- Encourage investment in private-sector industries that create lasting, middle-class careers.
- Ensure public spending supports Canadian job creation—not rising administrative costs.

## **A Different Vision for Working Canadians**

The evidence presented to the Committee makes one fact clear: the challenges facing workers, contract-flipping, wage stagnation, training gaps, and affordability pressures, require a government that respects work and restores opportunity.

The Conservative Party of Canada remains committed to:

- An economy that rewards work, not political favouritism.
- A labour market where every worker—unionized or not—can build a good life.
- A federal government that protects bargaining, promotes training, and ensures Canadian jobs come first.

## **Conclusion**

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<sup>14</sup> HUMA, [Evidence](#), 24 September 2024, 1125 (Archer).

Canadian workers deserve more than rising prices and shrinking opportunities. They deserve a government that prioritizes affordability, respects their work, and ensures that economic policy strengthens, not undermines, the pathways to secure, well-paid jobs.

The Conservative Party's Workers First plan delivers that vision: lower taxes, higher take-home pay, a stronger workforce, and a fair chance for every Canadian to build the life they want.

