



December 5, 2006

Mr. Dean Allison, M.P.
Chair
Standing Committee on Human Resources,
Social Development, and the Status of
Persons with Disabilities
House of Commons
OTTAWA, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Allison,

I am writing to you as Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to express the concern of Canada's business leaders about the rushed manner in which the Committee is considering Private Member's Bill C-257.

Because C-257 would amend the *Canada Labour Code* in a way that would shift fundamentally the balance of power between management and labour at the bargaining table in many critical sectors of Canada's economy, it is essential that Parliamentarians consider its potential consequences very carefully.

This bill affects more than the bargaining process for hundreds of thousands of Canadians in federally regulated companies and organizations. It also creates new risks of disruption, both of emergency services and of many other services that are vital to consumers and to enterprises across the country. Furthermore, it would impose these new risks at a time when Canadian manufacturers in particular are facing intense global competition that already has led to the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs in the sector, largely in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

The *Canada Labour Code* as it stands reflects a balance of power at the bargaining table that is fair and was reached through careful study and negotiation. The *Canadian Council of Chief Executives* (CCCE) therefore disagrees with the substance of Bill C-257 and would urge members from all parties to vote against it.

At the very least, however, members of the Committee have a responsibility to consider testimony from all Canadians who could be affected by its sweeping provisions, including representatives of labour, business, consumers and emergency services, as well as from experts in the field of labour relations in Canada and internationally. We would suggest that it is particularly important for

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the Committee to take the time necessary to hear witnesses from across Canada and especially from those provinces in which comparable legislation has been adopted.

We therefore are deeply disturbed that the Committee has chosen to restrict severely the list of witnesses and to allocate only eight hours to hear testimony this week before proceeding immediately to clause-by-clause consideration.

We urge the Committee to extend hearings on this legislation so that all affected parties will have an opportunity for input. The CCCCE indicated weeks ago our interest in appearing before the Committee to discuss the broader implications of this bill for Canada's competitiveness globally, and we know that many other organizations have asked for the opportunity to express concerns and been denied a voice.

Even if the Committee remains determined to permit only the current short list of witnesses over just two days of hearings, we would suggest that fairness and due process require the Committee to set aside a reasonable period for consideration of submissions by other means. In particular, we would suggest that the Committee delay clause-by-clause consideration until all parties that asked to appear as witnesses but were refused have had an opportunity to make detailed written submissions and until members of the Committee have taken the time to review and discuss these submissions and determine whether any of the points made in writing warrant further hearings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Stewart-Patterson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Stewart-Patterson
Executive Vice President

c.c. Members, Canadian Council of Chief Executives