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News Release

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C-377 Backgrounder

Bill C-377 has moved to the Senate after passing 3rd Reading in the House of Commons by a vote of 147-135.

The purpose of C-377 is to extend the principle of public disclosure to a group of institutions that enjoy substantial public benefits - labour organizations.

Public disclosure will increase the confidence of Canadians that unions spend their money wisely and effectively.

The basic premise of this bill is that every labour union in Canada will file a standard set of financials each year, which will then be posted on a public website, much like Canadian charities already do.

Polls indicate that the vast majority (83%) of Canadians and unionized Canadian (86%) support this concept (Nanos Labour Day Survey, 2011).

Pension, health care and other regulated funds do not report under Bill C-377.

Benefits for individuals, including pension payments and health benefits, are not reported under Bill C-377.

The cost to government of implementation will be minimal: the Canada Revenue Agency estimates \$2.4 million over the first two years, and \$800,000 annually, thereafter.

The cost to unions will be minimal - for many, a software upgrade may be all that is necessary.

Union secretaries will not have their salaries disclosed. Only union employees earning over \$100,000, or those in positions of authority will disclose their pay.

C-377 does not apply to professional associations. These are different organizations that have a separate purpose from labour organizations. C-377 is constitutional. It simply requires the filing of a public information return. This is something that has been required of charities in Canada for 35 years.

Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany and Australia all have union

disclosure legislation.

Many Canadian unions with headquarters in the US (such as the United Steelworkers of Canada) have been publicly reporting under the US legislation, in place since 1959.

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For further information about the Bill, see: www.C377.ca

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