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News Release

Russ Hiebert
Member of Parliament



Union Financial Transparency Bill Passed By Commons

(Ottawa) - Conservative MP Russ Hiebert's Private Members Bill C-377 requiring financial transparency for labour organizations, was passed by the House of Commons tonight.

"I am thrilled my bill has made this dramatic step forward through Parliament, tonight," said Mr. Hiebert. "We are a lot closer to the public learning how the substantial benefits they provide to labour organizations are being used."

Mr. Hiebert said he hoped the Senate would consider his legislation in a timely manner. "Now that the elected lower house of Parliament has passed this bill, I hope our colleagues in the Senate will be able to give it their attention in the near future. If the Senate can pass this bill in the coming months, then Canadians will have an opportunity to see the first year's filings from labour organizations before the next federal election," he said.

The Income Tax Act provides substantial benefits to labour organizations and their members, Mr. Hiebert noted. "They operate tax-free, their members receive full income tax deductibility for their dues payments, and they receive their strike pay tax-free. Dues deductibility alone costs the federal treasury in the range of half a billion dollars a year," the four term MP said. "I believe there is a genuine public purpose served by requiring financial transparency in all institutions that receive a substantial public benefit: We do it in government, crown corporations and charities, and will soon do so on native reserves. Now we're extending transparency to another set of institutions that enjoy public benefits - labour organizations."

Mr. Hiebert said he was disappointed by the misinformation that some critics of Bill C-377 have been disseminating. "Despite the claims of a handful of labour leaders, Bill C-377 will not cost labour organizations much to comply with. Remember, responsible organizations are collecting this information already. In many cases, their only costs may be a software upgrade to allow them to file their financials," he said.

"The Canada Revenue Agency has also provided an estimate to Parliament of what the now amended C-377 will cost taxpayers. Over the first two years it will

cost \$2.4 million and subsequent years will cost \$800,000. I believe that is quite a reasonable cost to achieve transparency for this important group of institutions that represent workers," said Mr. Hiebert.

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

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