

# How to challenge the Conservatives' Message

In the months ahead the Conservatives will increase their efforts to mislead people about their labour law plans. Some of their messaging will be directed at union members. Here are suggestions for challenging the Conservative message.

## BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT IS AT STAKE

Harper and Hudak are promoting changes to labour laws that would:

- ▶ *Result in lower wages and benefits and harm pensions*
- ▶ *Hurt both union and unrepresented workers by creating a low wage economy*
- ▶ *Create an even greater imbalance of power and wealth in society*

Under the Conservative scheme, workers could become “free riders” who opt out of the union and stop paying dues, while still receiving all the benefits of union membership. This would seriously divide and weaken unions. This tactic is imported from the U.S., where it has harmed working families and lowered the standard of living.

*We **must** defeat Harper and Hudak. Together we can win thousands of union members to join the campaign!*

## EXPOSE THE CONSERVATIVES' CODE WORDS AND DOUBLE TALK

### **A competitive economy?**

The Conservatives' goal is to reduce our wages and cut benefits and pensions. They aren't going to win votes from workers by announcing that - so they use code words like “competitive economy” to mask their intentions. That's code for low wages.

Guess who would be competing? It would

be a growing pool of insecure workers underbidding each other for work.

Our country can do much better. We must build a “GOOD JOBS” strategy with training, investment in research and development, higher employment standards and other measures to build a prosperous, sustainable economy.

## **A flexible workforce?**

The Conservatives talk about the need for a “flexible workforce”. These are code words as well. They want to scrap everything in our collective agreements that give workers security, safety and decent working conditions. “Flexible” means powerless.

## **Out of date?**

Lots of things are out of date. Poverty in the midst of plenty is out of date! All the power and wealth in society in the hands of the 1% - that’s out of date! Poverty wages – definitely out of date! Unions? Over a hundred years ago there were politicians claiming that the labour movement was obsolete. Since then, unions have lifted millions out of poverty. Today, workers need unions more than ever!

On the other hand, what is more out of date than the Conservative Party? Look at their record on social issues. They have been always been out of date on women’s rights, measures to combat racism, LGBT rights and the environment.

## **Workers’ right to choose**

The Conservatives talk a lot about workers making “choices”. If the Conservatives are successful in breaking our rights, every single “choice” will be made by employers! First of all they will choose to strip our collective agreements!

## **Conservatives - on the side of workers?**

One of the most outrageous claims of the Conservatives is that they are now on the side of workers. Their record proves the opposite. Any time there is a dispute between workers and employers over wages and benefits, guess which side the Conservatives are on?

## **Conservatives - on the side of “democracy”?**

The Conservatives have been widely condemned for their abuse of power in trying to silence their critics. They want to starve unions financially because unions play a progressive role on social issues. Do you think Harper and Hudak would try to silence the labour movement if it went along with their policies? The social causes and public services supported by the labour movement represent the values of the vast majority of Canadians.