



Federal government moving towards union transparency legislation

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OCTOBER 4, 2011 (OTTAWA) - With a new Private Member's Bill now introduced in the House of Commons, Canadian labour organizations, including unions, may soon be required to open up their finances to public scrutiny.

"Union financial disclosure legislation is long overdue in our country," says Peter Coleman, President and CEO of the National Citizens Coalition. "Canadian unions have operated in the shadows for too long, enjoying numerous benefits at the taxpayers' expense."

In Canada, labour organizations and union dues also are exempt from taxation - which amounts to hundred of millions of dollars in foregone tax revenue each year.

The new Private Members Bill, sponsored by Conservative MP Russ Hiebert aims to hold unions to at least the same level of scrutiny that charities are subject to. In order to retain their tax exempt status and for union dues to remain deductible from taxable income, they must disclose their financial activities.

The proposed legislation will allow all Canadians to see how tax-deductible monies are being spent by these tax-exempt organizations, and will also allow unionized Canadians to see how their dues are being allocated.

"This is something an overwhelming majority of Canadians want to see," adds Coleman. "It is only the union bosses and their political cronies that are opposed to this disclosure."

It is clear that union leaders and their political allies are out of touch with Canadians on this issue. The Nanos Research State of the Unions 2011 survey recently found that 83% of all working Canadians and 86% of unionized Canadians support financial disclosure for both public and private sector unions.

"The National Citizens Coalition has been working hard for many years to see this matter addressed, and we will not stop until effective disclosure legislation is in place to hold labour organizations to a significantly higher standard of accountability."

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