

## **MESSAGE BOX**

Stronger public pensions. Safer workplaces and public spaces. Better jobs. For Canada's unions, it's a labour of love.

We stand for fairness. [Fairnessworks.ca](https://fairnessworks.ca)

### **First, some background information**

This year, Labour Day coincides with the start of the next phase in our ongoing "Fairness Works" campaign, which aims to showcase how Canada's unions are working to improve the day-to-day lives of all Canadians.

This Labour Day, we are talking about concrete examples of this work:

- How unions won the first major expansion of [Canada Pension Plan benefits](#).
- How Canada's unions have [long worked to expose the danger](#) posed by asbestos and win a comprehensive ban on its import, export and use.
- How unions are working to end precarious work and restore the conditions needed for good, sustainable jobs, [including a living wage, stable work hours](#), time off when we're sick, and days off to spend quality time with those who matter most.

For example, if you're part of a "\$15 and Fairness" or "Fight for \$15" campaign in your community, please talk about it and talk about how local unions are helping to move it forward.

### **The language we're using**

- When we talk about the labour movement this year, we are using the phrase "Canada's unions" instead of "labour movement." For example, instead of talking about your local labour movement, you could say "unions here in Saskatoon."
- Instead of talking about how we "help" workers, we are emphasizing that by bringing them together, we empower workers with the tools and resources they need to build better working conditions and to contribute to their communities.
- We are talking more about how our work improves the lives of all Canadians, not just our members.
- Using the above language will help our messages to better resonate with the public and new/unengaged union members.

**Feel free to use the following in your own speaking notes.**

----- ***On CPP***

Earlier this summer, after nearly a decade of hard work, [Canada's unions won the first expansion of Canada Pension Plan retirement benefits](#) in fifty years. It wasn't easy, but it was absolutely necessary.

Why did we do this? The answer is simple – because after a lifetime of work, no one should have to struggle just to make ends meet, no one should have to retire into poverty.

We knew something needed to be done and not just for the one third of workers in the country with a union. The status quo had us headed for the rocks and a future with unbearable numbers of seniors living in poverty.

Today, 11 million Canadians don't have access to a workplace pension plan. Saving for retirement is harder than it was in the past. We needed a solution that worked for everyone. Expanding the CPP was the best way forward.

Much still needs to be done to help today's seniors who find themselves struggling to make ends meet. But expanding the CPP means a better future for today's young workers. They can look forward to a better public pension when they are ready to retire.

That's why we worked so hard. To provide a better future for the next generation.

----- ***On Good Jobs***

That better future is why Canada's unions are also [working to turn the tide against the growth of precarious work](#) – dead-end jobs that too often leave workers without fair wages or even the most basic protections.

Working for a living shouldn't mean living in poverty. Working for a living shouldn't mean not having enough time to care for your family, not having enough time to have a life. And it certainly doesn't mean having to choose between your health and your next paycheque.

Yet, this is the reality for too many workers today. It's especially true for young workers and it's no way to build a future. We've learned the hard way that good jobs don't just happen. They need to be grown and nurtured.

That's why Canada's unions are talking to the federal and provincial governments about recreating the conditions that create good jobs. We're talking about raising the minimum wage and paid time off to take care of ourselves and more time to spend with the people who matter most. We're talking about decent work hours and better legal protection for all workers.

That's why Canada's unions have joined the "\$15 and Fairness" campaigns in communities across the country. We know that good jobs deliver better futures. It's at the heart of what unions have always done.

Better jobs, safer workplaces and better lives for all Canadians.

### ----- ***On Asbestos***

Canada's unions are working to make workplaces and public spaces safer for everyone by [winning a ban on the import, export, and use of asbestos](#).

Even though Canada's asbestos mines are closed, imports of asbestos and goods that contain asbestos are on the rise – construction materials, brake pads, things we use every day even though there are made-in-Canada, asbestos-free alternatives available.

It's because of this that asbestos remains the number one cause of workplace-related death. About 2,000 people die in Canada each year from diseases caused by asbestos exposure. Diseases like mesothelioma (mezzo-thee-leo-ma) and lung cancer that cost our health care system \$1.7 billion a year.

Unions have stood up to employers and governments for over 40 years to protect people from asbestos. Hard bargaining with employers, meetings with government officials and politicians, even going on strike when it came to that... people's lives were at risk.

Is a ban coming?

Well, in April, the federal government said it would stop using asbestos in its new construction and renovation projects. In May, the Prime Minister told workers a more comprehensive asbestos ban was in the works, but didn't offer a timeline or a plan.

That's what Canada's unions, along with our allies in the health, research and legal communities, are working for now.

Winning a comprehensive ban on asbestos will save lives and put an end to the pain and suffering too many have endured.

----- ***A Labour of Love***

Our work is about making life better for everyone. It's about making a better future for the next generation. It's about fairness, equality and solidarity. Values that all Canadians share. Values unions put into action every day.

Stronger public pensions. Safer workplaces and public spaces. Better Jobs. And so much more. For Canada's unions, it's a labour of love.

Happy Labour Day!

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