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CUPE Saskatchewan applauds Supreme Court decision restoring balance to collective bargaining; calls for more consultation

REGINA - CUPE Saskatchewan applauds the historic Supreme Court of Canada decision handed down today which recognizes the constitutional right of public sector workers to go on strike and has determined the Saskatchewan Party Government's essential services legislation to be unconstitutional.

"We are very pleased that Canada's highest court has ruled to restore balance to collective bargaining by recognizing that the right to take strike action, if necessary, is critical to maintain balance during collective bargaining," said Tom Graham, President of CUPE Saskatchewan.

Today's decision stems from labour legislation passed by the Saskatchewan Party Government in 2008 - *The Public Service Essential Services Act* - which put unjust limits on which public sector workers could go on strike in the province. The Supreme Court struck down the law because it violated Saskatchewan workers' *Charter* right to freedom of association. The decision affirms that all workers, in all provinces, have the constitutional right to strike or to have another way to resolve labour disputes if their work is essential to health, safety or security.

"With this decision, we are hopeful the Government will meaningfully consult and include unions before moving forward with any new essential services legislation to ensure it is fair and respects the rights of workers in the rare event of a strike," said Graham.

In response to the Supreme Court decision, the Minister of Labour has confirmed the provincial government will scrap Bill 128 – an amendment to essential services legislation drafted before the ruling.

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