



For Immediate Release

ICBA encourages MPs to support union transparency bill

First private member's bill of session would bring accountability, transparency

(October 4, 2011 - Vancouver) The Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of B.C. is throwing its support behind South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale MP Russ Heibert's private member's bill that would require unions to publicly disclose their financial statements or lose their tax-exempt status.

"Workers in the unionized workplaces of Canada have no say when it comes to paying their dues. If they want the job, they hand over the money," said ICBA President Philip Hochstein. "If their workplace is being organized, they have a right to know just where their money would be spent. The transparency and accountability this bill would bring to union spending is long overdue."

Under the proposed bill, every labour union in Canada would be required to file a standard set of financials each year, which would then be posted on a public website.

Hochstein said that the vast majority of dues spent on political action by unions goes to support one party – the NDP. The wishes of many members who support other parties are forced to hand over money that goes to support causes and parties they do not support.

"Canadian law offers special privileges for unions – tax-exempt status for the union, the fact that dues are tax deductible for members. The disclosure that would come with this bill is a good first step in unions justifying their special privileges under the law," Hochstein said. "The people paying those dues have a right to know where their money is going. Canadians, who are providing these organizations tax-exempt status, also deserve the same kind of transparency we demand of other tax-exempt bodies like charities."

A Nanos Research poll in September 2011 indicated that 83% of Canadians agreed with mandatory public financial disclosure for both public and private sector unions on a regular basis.

About ICBA (www.icba.ca) *The Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of B.C. services and represents B.C.'s construction sector. ICBA's 1,100 members build in the multi-family residential and Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) construction sectors and are involved in virtually all major capital projects in British Columbia.*

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