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PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS FILE FOR INJUNCTION AGAINST HEAVY-HANDED NEW LABOUR LAW

Unions Create Partnership to Defend Public Services

(WINNIPEG) Today the Partnership to Defend Public Services, representing more than 110,000 Manitoba workers, filed for an injunction against the so-called Public Services Sustainability Act, recently passed by the Pallister government.

"The Pallister government has passed a new law that fundamentally undermines collective bargaining rights. It's unfair and it's unconstitutional," said Manitoba Federation of Labour President Kevin Rebeck, on behalf of the Partnership. "We are launching a full constitutional challenge and we are seeking an injunction, to prevent this new law from being proclaimed until after a court ruling."

The Partnership today filed a statement of claim in the Court of Queen's Bench challenging the constitutionality of the Public Services Sustainability Act. The action includes a request for an injunction that would prevent the government from proclaiming the Act.

Rebeck said that for months public sector unions made every effort to engage in a constructive way with government but that the process was unproductive.

He also noted that government:

- Refused to answer any questions including those about their basic objectives or financial assumptions.
- Provided no feedback on proposals from public sector unions.
- Made no amendments to Bill 28, despite concerns raised by labour at committee hearings.

"Manitoba's public-sector unions came to the table with practical ideas to help reduce the deficit, but it's clear that the Pallister government was never serious about consulting with anyone," said Rebeck.

"This comes right on the heels of major layoffs and cuts to healthcare and other services people count on. Brian Pallister can use his majority in the legislature to get his way, but we'll be there to pushback every step of the way in court."

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Contact: Nammi Poorooshab, 204-953-2562 / npoorooshab@mfl.mb.ca

The Partnership to Defend Public Services represents more than 110,000 workers who are members of: AESES, CUPE, General Teamsters Local 979, IBEW 2034, IBEW 2085, IBEW 435, Operating Engineers of Manitoba Local 987, LALA, MAHCP, MGEU, MNU, MTS, PIPSC, UA Local 254, PSAC, UFCW 832, UMFA, UNIFOR, USW 7106, USW 7975, USW 8223, USW 9074, UWFA, WAPSO IFPTE Local 162 and the MFL.