



**Merit Canada Welcomes Passage of Union Secret Ballot Bill**  
*Fundamental democratic right now protected in federally regulated sectors*

OTTAWA (December 16, 2014) – Merit Canada welcomes the passage of Bill C-525, the *Employees' Voting Rights Act*, in the Senate today, the final step in an 18-month process to bring basic standards of democracy to the union certification process in federally-regulated sectors, including secret ballot voting.

“An individual’s decision whether or not to support a union drive is a deeply personal one that should be free of any possible intimidation or impropriety – from employers and union organizers. The best way to guarantee that is through a secret ballot vote,” stated Terrance Oakey, President of Merit Canada.

Under current practice, a workplace can be unionized if a union provides the Labour Board with cards it claims have been signed by employees representing 50% +1 of the target workplace, a system Merit Canada believes is ripe for intimidation and manipulation.

Bill C-525 will require union organizers to get expressions of support from 40% of workers in federally-regulated sectors in order to force a vote on union certification. That vote would then be held by secret ballot. If a majority of those who vote support joining the union, then certification proceeds.

“Merit Canada wishes to thank those MPs and Senators who have supported this legislation since its introduction in June 2013, and particularly its sponsor, MP Blaine Calkins. Secret ballots are fundamental to our democratic process and need to be applied to union certification votes,” added Oakey.

Six provinces already employ the model for union certification envisioned by Bill C-525 and this merely applies it to federally-regulated sectors. A Leger Marketing poll found over 80% of workers support secret ballot votes on unionization.

“This reform should be welcomed by union leaders since workers want it and it greatly enhances the legitimacy of the unionization process. Moreover, union leaders already endorse secret ballots for their own electoral processes, so this merely extends that practice to votes on certification,” stated Oakey.

Bill C-525 comes into force six months after it receives Royal Assent.

**About Merit Canada**

Merit Canada is the national voice of Canada's eight provincial Open Shop construction associations. Open Shop companies and workers build more than 70% of the industrial, commercial/institutional, and residential construction projects coast to coast to coast. As of June 2011, the Canadian construction sector employed 1.26 million Canadians with 900,000 working in the "open shop" sector.

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For further information:

Terrance Oakey

President, Merit Canada

[terrance.oakey@meritcanada.ca](mailto:terrance.oakey@meritcanada.ca)

(613) 601-2350