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December 13, 2023

BY E-MAIL

The Honourable Donald Neil Plett, C  
The Senate of Canada  
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The Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain, ISG  
The Senate of Canada  
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The Honourable Scott Tannas, CSG  
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The Honourable Jane Cordy, PSG  
The Senate of Canada  
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Dear Senators:

**Re: Bill S-244 (An Act to Amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act and the Employment Insurance Act (Employment Insurance Council))**

I write on behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, representing more than 740,000 workers across the country, to convey our strong support for Bill S-244.

CUPE is Canada's largest union. CUPE represents workers in health care, emergency services, education, early learning and child care, municipalities, social services, libraries, utilities, transportation, airlines and more.

CUPE is confident that the proposed Employment Insurance (EI) Council will strengthen the tripartite nature of Employment Insurance. Since the federal government withdrew as a funding partner in 1990, workers and employers have been the sole contributors to EI. However, over time, the voice of workers in the administration of the EI program has waned. The establishment of the EI Council is crucial in fostering social dialogue among diverse stakeholders directly involved in the labour market. This inclusivity is pivotal in aligning the EI program more closely with the needs of Canadian workers.

Despite workers and employers funding training and labour-market programs through Part II of the *Employment Insurance Act*, institutionalized oversight or input from these stakeholders is lacking. Bill S-244 seeks to rectify this by establishing the necessary permanent, institutionalized tripartite social dialogue at the heart of the EI program. We believe this will lead to more effective and relevant programming under the Labour Market Development Agreements, which are sorely needed in the health and education sectors.

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**MARK HANCOCK**  
National President/Président national  
**CANDACE RENNICK**

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

**PATRICK GLOUTNEY, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER, KAREN RANALLETTA**  
General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

A permanent EI Council goes beyond the current practice of consultation and allows more in-depth information exchanges and negotiations between the three parties. Having all three parties participate in ongoing work on issues of common interest fosters the creation of constructive and long-lasting solutions that better serve all our interests.

CUPE firmly believes that the EI Council will facilitate effective coordination and advocacy for skills training, vocational education, apprenticeships, and continuous learning. Given Canada's ambitious transition towards achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and the rapidly evolving digital landscape, this becomes even more imperative. Senator Bellemare's proposal to include provincial representatives responsible for labour market policies and programs as observing members will help to bridge efforts taking place in federal and provincial jurisdictions.

Workers possess the closest knowledge of workplace changes across the country. CUPE applauds Senator Bellemare for collaborating closely with the Canadian Labour Congress in the development of this bill.

The consensus around Bill S-244 is notable. Labour, employer groups, the EI Commissioner for Workers and the EI Commissioner for Employers are united in our support of S-244. Enthusiastic support from these social partners will certainly put the EI Council on solid footing.

We urge you and the other members of your caucus to vote in favour of S-244.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH' followed by a stylized flourish.

MARK HANCOCK  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

:sm/cope491

cc:

The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages of Canada

The Honourable Diane Bellemare, PSG

The Honourable Marc Gold, P.C.

EI Commissioner for Workers, Pierre Laliberté

EI Commissioner for Employers, Nancy Healey