



IBEW British Columbia Provincial Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NAFTA is an opportunity to raise labour standards across the North American continent, a huge benefit to working Canadians

Victoria, BC, September 21, 2017 – As the next round of NAFTA talks head to Ottawa Sept. 23-27, Canada, the United States, and Mexico get back to work at finding an agreement. In the previous round of talks in Mexico City earlier this month, Canada stepped up and called out Mexico and the U.S. to end their “right to work” laws. This move is critical for Canadians. Canada knows that the labour standards in the U.S. and Mexico give those countries unfair advantage in attracting jobs. Specifically challenging are the low wage rates in Mexico and the right-to-work states in the U.S. This unfair advantage should be removed for the betterment of Canadians and the continent as a whole.

Canada is leading the way for what a country should be – supporting its citizens with a guaranteed minimum standard of living. Right to work (for less) laws are designed to weaken unions and their ability to advocate for all workers. Right to work legislation will result in a further decline in union membership and, with it, a further decline in workers’ wages.

The U.S., with its Republican-controlled Congress, is pushing even harder for national right-to-work laws. This would undercut the ability of unions to even exist, and dismantle efforts of unions to support the middle and working class and uphold employment, safety, health, and well-being standards for countless occupations. The middle class in Canada has already seen a drastic decrease, and it is critical Canada holds firm on their labour standards to ensure it does not erode further.

Phil Venoit
Chair, IBEW BC Provincial Council

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About the IBEW BC Provincial Council

The IBEW in BC has represented workers in electrical and power-line construction, power and gas utilities, as well as marine shipyards, cable-vision, railway, motor-winding, electrical wholesale, security, and electrical workers in all 3 levels of government since 1901.

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