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Statement from COPE President Annette Toth on Alberta government's strike busting

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Annette Toth, President of the Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE), has released this statement in response to the Government of Alberta's use of the notwithstanding clause to attack the rights of teachers and to end the teachers' strike. COPE represents tens of thousands of union workers in both the public and private sector across Canada:

COPE strongly condemns the Government of Alberta and Premier Danielle Smith's assault on the rights of the striking teachers in Alberta by invoking the notwithstanding clause to force teachers back to work.

No matter how the Government of Alberta attempts to frame it, this is nothing but an attack on the fundamental rights of teachers who are exercising their rights as workers and doing their part to defend public education and students in Alberta by asking the government to address critical issues that are affecting the educational experience, including class sizes and the need for student support.

By taking this action, the Government of Alberta is also showing they have little regard for workers' rights in general and would be willing to use this method to attack workers and union members in any sector as they see fit.

Our union, and our tens of thousands of members across the country, stands in solidarity with the teachers in Alberta, and with the Alberta Teachers' Association, in their continued efforts to defend public education and workers' rights in the face of a government that has shown little regard for either.

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COPE/SEPB respectfully acknowledges that we are privileged to live and work on the traditional and ancestral territories, both unceded and treated, of Indigenous Peoples and Nations across Canada, each with their own unique traditions, histories, and cultures.

Avec égard, le SEPB/COPE reconnaît que nous sommes privilégiés de vivre et de travailler sur des terres traditionnelles et ancestrales, non cédées ou visées par des traités, des peuples et nations autochtones du Canada, avec des traditions, histoires et cultures qui leur sont propres et uniques.