



The stuper (sic) and angry columnist. There is nothing super about Mr. Cross

Once again, your guest commentator, former statistician Philip Cross (The stuper union; There's nothing super about CAW-CEP merger), used precious newspaper real estate to rant about unions and their very existence. A fellow at CD Howe Institute, a right-wing think-tank, Mr Cross is repeating the Institute's rhetoric: unions are bad for the economy as they are in the way of ruthless job creators who want to be able to move jobs in friendly (read anti-union states) and ask for wage reductions even when they are reaping monstrous profits (Caterpillar). Luckily, Mr. Cross stopped short of blaming unions for the financial crisis of 2008.

So I was not surprised to read in the [Financial Post](#) that he underlined the recent vote on dues increase at the Canadian Association of Professional Employees as a good sign of change for the union movement. First, members rejected the increase because they felt we did not present a good case, at a time when many of their colleagues are losing their jobs. But what Mr. Cross failed to write is that our members were able to vote down that increase because they were asked: this is exactly how union democracy is supposed to work and it is not a change, but normal conduct of business in our unions. Second, for a former statistician, he has a way of using false data that is astounding. Our rent is not one million dollars per year and it does not represent 17% of our dues revenues, as implied by Mr. Cross. We also negotiated a 11% decrease of our rent over the next decade. The central location of CAPE's National Office is immediately accessible to approximately 80% of our members with a commute time of less than 15 minutes for most. It is within walking distance of members working at several departments. This contributes to lowering our transportation expenses and facilitates our exchanges with our members.

And finally, I do not feel our members are attacking our union. Leave this for people like Mr. Cross and MP Pierre Poilievre who are doing everything they can to undermine our right to form unions and to bargain collectively, hiding their attacks behind the right to work ideology. Even if it saddened Mr. Cross, workers belonging to unions are still earning better wages than non-unionized workers: in a bleak economic climate like the one we are currently in, this is good news for hard working women and men and we should work to increase the number of unionized workers so they can get better working conditions.

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