

Memorandum

To: All OPSEU Members and Staff
From: Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President
Date: _____
Re: AMAPCEO Strike Vote

AMAPCEO has recently conducted a strike authorization vote. While this is not a strike vote (in OPSEU terms) it is significant step, and a first for the association. It signals that their members have strongly rejected the concession demands being pressed on them by the Employer.

OPSEU knows what it is like to face hostility and attack by employers. We know that an association like AMAPCEO needs all the solidarity and assistance legally possible during this tough period.

We understand what the word "solidarity" means. This is why (within legal limits) we will stand with AMAPCEO members now. We know a successful attack on their members will harden the government when it comes time to bargain with OPSEU.

This is why we supported AMAPCEO mobilizing efforts to counter the employer's attack on their contract, including the concessions demanded to health insurance provisions. We encouraged our Locals to assist when AMAPCEO activists distributed their material to our members. I have also contacted AMAPCEO's Gary Ganage to offer support and solidarity from 130,000 OPSEU members. We know that an attack against one is an attack against all.

As time progresses, OPSEU will continue to assist AMAPCEO at a central level while we encourage our Locals and members to support their colleagues in the workplace.

At some point AMAPCEO members may authorize strike action, which may take the form of work slow-downs, rotating strikes or a full strike.

While we may support their action, we will not be in a legal position to join in, even though we think it is the right thing to do. We must individually and as a union, obey the law. To support AMAPCEO, it is illegal for OPSEU members to engage in strike actions. As we know from experience, a strike is a collective action by employees to stop or curtail work. The Labour Relations Act, 1995 defines "strike" as a cessation of work, a refusal to work or to continue to work by employees in combination or in concert or in accordance with a common understanding, or a slow-down or other concerted activity on the part of employees designed to restrict or limit output.

This means OPSEU members cannot affect the employer's work process, operation or equipment even if their AMAPCEO colleagues have the right to do so under the Act. Even so, there is a lot we can do to help after or before work, or away from the workplace. If a strike date is set by AMAPCEO we will be sending you more information on what can or cannot be done by OPSEU and its members. Ask your Executive of Staff Rep for help if a proposed solidarity action presents a concern. Above all, respect the law.

We all know that simple human support and understanding at work, at lunch or after work, can provide encouragement and strength to a worker under employer pressure. Many of us have been forced into this position, and fought through it successfully -- with dignity.

We will make sure AMAPCEO members know they are not alone at this difficult time. Your actions, together with support from central OPSEU, can build ties that will help if we need support in the future. That is what unionism is all about. *What we desire for ourselves we desire for all!*

When our colleagues are at risk we will reach out to help. As a union with more than 130,000 members and a lot of collective strength and experience, we have a lot to offer, especially when times get tough. OPSEU is a Union for Changing Times!

In solidarity,

Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President.