



October 17, 2016

Bilan Arte
Chairperson, Canadian Federation of Students
338 Somerset Street West
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0J9

Dear Ms. Arte:

On behalf of the 130,000 members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), our Officers and Executive Board, I am pleased to provide you with \$10,000 to support your National Day of Action on November 2. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend your organization for your leadership on this important campaign.

Our members believe strongly in the goals of your campaign: to ensure universal access to education, regardless of financial circumstances; to improve equity of access for groups that continue to face barriers to participation in higher education; and to ensure that our public education system continues to be public, both in its goals and its funding.

We are proud to stand with you on this campaign. OPSEU continues to call for better access to work and education for groups that have been under-represented in higher education and the workforce for far too long. We need to ensure that Indigenous, racialized, and LGBTTIQQ2S individuals, as well as people with disabilities, those from low-income households, and members of other marginalized groups have equal access to education. This is an important first step to ending the intergenerational transmission of inequality, poverty, and marginalization.

It is also crucial to ensure that our public educational institutions remain just that – public. Across the country we see government funding to our universities and colleges dropping, to the point that we now find ourselves minority funders of our own system.

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Particularly in the case of Ontario's public colleges, we see funding levels dropping to the point where our province now has the dubious distinction of providing the least per-student funding of all provinces. This concern was highlighted in recent submissions by OPSEU's College Support and Academic Worker divisions to the Province's funding review. The current situation is a far cry from the publicly-funded college system our province launched 50 years ago with the public's interest at heart.

I also want to take a moment to commend you and your members at the Canadian Federation of Students for your continued leadership on these issues. Too many in the media write off today's youth as apathetic and disengaged, and as caring little about the larger society around them. Your track record on this matter shows this to be false. On behalf of OPSEU's members throughout Ontario I want to thank you for your continued efforts, and commit our members to stand with you as you push for changes that will improve the lives of generations of students to come.

Together, we will build a better society, where high-quality public education is accessible to all.

Sincerely,

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union

c: OPSEU Executive Board
Peyton Veitch, Treasurer, Canadian Federation of Students