

# IAM Challenges Government Attack on Workers Rights

## **IAM gains intervenor status to argue for Constitutional Protection for Free Collective Bargaining at Supreme Court of Canada**

The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers has been granted the right to intervene in the upcoming Supreme Court of Canada hearing into Saskatchewan's Bills 5 and 6. These Bills, passed by the Saskatchewan Party (formerly the Conservative Party) provincial government in 2008, which gave the government the unilateral right to declare any or all of its employees essential and take away their right freely collective bargain and to strike.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and over 20 other Saskatchewan unions have appealed these Bills to the Supreme Court of Canada, which should hear the case this year. As an intervenor, the IAM will be able to present arguments against unfair government interference in collective bargaining.

The IAM is currently challenging in the Federal Court the Harper Conservatives' Bill C-33 of March, 2012, which took away the IAM members' right to strike at Air Canada, and imposed a settlement based on the employer's last offer. The Supreme Court ruling on the Saskatchewan Bills will undoubtedly affect the outcome of the IAM's case on Bill C-33.

The Saskatchewan Bills are part of a trend across Canada of governments legislating against free collective bargaining, and will likely serve as a "test case" for the Supreme Court to clearly lay out how the Canadian Constitution and Charter of Rights protect workers' right to freely collectively bargain and strike if necessary.

Bill C-33 and the Saskatchewan legislation have already been condemned by the International Labour Organization as breaches of ILO Conventions and Canada's international legal obligations.