

Bill 14: A High-Profile Reform, but One Lacking Substance

Montreal, March 31, 2026 – After dominating Quebec news in 2025, the reform of the Labor Code aimed at better addressing the public's needs during strikes or lockouts risks generating much more noise than results, concludes a new study by the Centre on Productivity and Prosperity – Walter J. Somers Foundation (CPP).

Effective as of fall 2025, this reform expands the government's scope of intervention regarding essential services by creating a parallel framework whose boundaries can be extended by government decree. In the researchers' view, this law will have limited impact. "By choosing to rely on discretionary government intervention rather than generally applicable mechanisms, the government is missing an opportunity to establish a genuine mechanism for resolving labour disputes in the event of an impasse," summarizes Robert Gagné, CPP Director and co-author of the study. However, Quebec faces a major structural challenge due to a particularly high concentration of labor disputes in the public sector; which is why it is necessary to effectively modernize the Labor Code."

Toward an efficient reform of the Labor Code

To identify a path to reform that could effectively reduce the intensity of labor disputes, the researchers compared the ten provincial laws governing labor relations in Canada between 1976 and 2024 using econometric analyses. "Our analyses show that certain legal provisions have a decisive effect on the duration of disputes," explains the director. "This is particularly the case with a provision that temporarily suspends the unions' monopoly on representation so as to allow employees to vote directly on their employer's final offer in the event of a deadlock in negotiations."

Poorly defined when it was incorporated into the Labor Code in the early 2000s, this provision does not reach its full potential because it relies on the decision of an administrative body rather than being enforceable, as is the case in most provinces where such a provision is in effect: "Simply guaranteeing access to this mechanism could help significantly reduce the intensity of labour disputes," explains Jonathan Deslauriers, Executive Director of the CPP. "By limiting the parties' ability to unduly prolong negotiations when the conditions for a settlement are met, this mechanism would help prevent the emergence or persistence of protracted disputes, without infringing on employees' right to strike."

Download the study to learn more:

[Labor Disputes in Quebec: Measuring the Impact, Identifying Leverage Points](#)

About the Centre for Productivity and Prosperity — Walter J. Somers Foundation

The Centre for Productivity and Prosperity — Walter J. Somers Foundation has a dual mission. It is dedicated to research on productivity and prosperity, with Quebec as its main subject of study. In addition, it works to disseminate the results of its research through transfer and education activities.

About the Walter J. Somers Foundation

The Somers family established the Walter J. Somers Foundation in tribute to the founder of the Walter Group. Through different donations, the Foundation pursues the family heritage of commitment to the community and contributes to the prosperity of Quebec society, firstly by helping to improve its productivity but also by supporting excellence in youth education.

For more information:

Jonathan Deslauriers
Media Relations Manager
514 340 6449 | info.cpp@hec.ca