

## **News Release**

### **Ontario Construction Employers Call on Next Provincial Government to Immediately Overhaul or Abolish Ontario College of Trades**

Toronto, September 20, 2011 – A broad coalition of small, medium, and large construction employers across Ontario is calling on the next provincial government to take immediate action to either overhaul or abolish the Ontario College of Trades.

The call comes in response to a major study of the College completed by Cardus, a leading Canadian think tank. Created by the Government of Ontario in October 2009 with a mandate to modernize the skilled trades in Ontario, the College of Trades has been designed to be an ineffective, biased and potentially costly waste of taxpayer's money, according to findings from the study.

"The Ontario College of Trades must not move forward in its current form," said Sean Reid, of the PCAC and Co-Spokesperson for the Coalition. "The next provincial government must act fast to either overhaul or abolish the College of Trades and engage in a collaborative, open and transparent process with all stakeholders in the sector to address the serious issues affecting skilled trades in Ontario."

As outlined in Cardus's review, *College of Trades: An Impossible Institution*, the Ontario College of Trades has four key design flaws:

- 1) The College was founded on the premise that a self-regulating body would solve the very real issues in Ontario's skilled trades sector with no research-based evidence to support this claim.
- 2) The College is poised to become a massive bureaucracy to support 157 trades in Ontario with a significant financial cost which will ultimately be funded by Ontario taxpayers, businesses and skilled tradespeople.
- 3) The College's governance structure is dominated by representatives of compulsory certified trades in Ontario, to the detriment of uncertified trades which form the majority of skilled tradespeople in the province.
- 4) The College's role is redundant as skilled tradespeople in Ontario are already well regulated by other regulatory bodies.

"This province is in the midst of a fragile economic recovery with the skilled trades playing a critical role in supporting our economy," noted Jason Ottey of RESCON and Coalition Co-Spokesperson. "The last thing Ontario's employers and skilled tradespeople need is an ineffective, unfair and expensive College of Trades that will do nothing to help us address the critical issues facing our sector, including a projected shortage of 360,000 skilled tradespeople by 2025."

As Cardus notes in the conclusion of its review “All of the issues presented in our review of the College.... suggest that the College of Trades is an impossible and unnecessary institution.”

A complete copy of the Cardus review can be found at [www.cardus.ca/research/workandeconomics/publications](http://www.cardus.ca/research/workandeconomics/publications)

### **Additional Statements from Coalition Members**

"The College of Trades, in its present form, will do nothing to address the critical issues, such as the shortage of qualified tradespeople in Ontario. In addition, it will impose a financial burden on taxpayers, businesses and tradespeople. The next government must take immediate action on this." **Rob Bradford - ORBA**

“The College of Trades governance structure will be massive requiring over 600 individuals to fill various positions on the Board of Governors, divisional boards and trade boards. The sheer size and complexity casts serious doubt on the ability of the College of Trades to achieve its mandate and the administrative support required to make this governance structure function effectively will require large financial resources to be paid for by taxpayers, employers and tradespeople.” **Clive Thurston - OGCA**

“The College of Trades was established to address the challenges facing the skilled trades in Ontario, yet there is no evidence-based research demonstrating that the College will be able to address these issues.” **Susan McGovern - OSWCA**

“The College of Trades, as it is today, will add another layer of regulation to Ontario’s already well-regulated trades sector and create unnecessary financial burden on employers and skilled tradespeople.” **Eric Lewis – HCAT**

“The College of Trades governance structure has a built-in bias towards representatives of compulsory certified trades to the detriment of non-compulsory certified trades which are the majority (74%) of tradespeople in Ontario. From the start, the entire process for appointing members to the various governance bodies at the College of Trades has been shrouded in secrecy with little or no public consultation with the skilled tradespeople it will be regulating.” **Frank Viti - Merit Ontario**

“Decisions by the College regarding apprenticeship ratios and compulsory certification are made by a three person panel to be appointed by the College. Criteria for panel members and the appointment process remains hidden from the public. How can employers and skilled tradespeople have confidence in this process and resulting decisions?” **Stephen Sell – OEL**

### **About the Coalition**

The coalition of construction employers calling on the next provincial government to immediately overhaul or abolish the College of Trades includes:

- HCAT - Heavy Construction Association of Toronto
- Merit Ontario
- OEL – Ontario Electrical League
- OGCA - Ontario General Contractors Association
- ORBA - Ontario Road Builders' Association
- OSWCA - Ontario Sewer & Watermain Contractors Association
- PCAC - Progressive Contractors Association of Canada
- RESCON – Residential Construction Council of Ontario

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