

## Proposition in support of the strike:

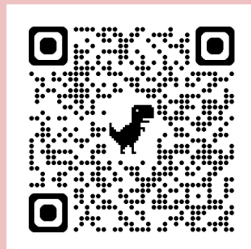
Be it resolved that [the name of the union] support the movement for social strike on May 1, 2026 by inviting members to:

- Respect the picket lines of organizations on strike.
- Participate in actions and demonstrations scheduled as part of May Day 2026.

Be it further resolved that, in the event that penalties are applied to unions and strikers, [the name of the union] call a special general assembly to decide on support and solidarity that it is able to provide.

**Written by:** Caucus pour un syndicalisme de combat (CASYS)

To see the evolution of strike mandates, see :  
<https://1mai.luttecommune.org/>



# 6 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON



## 1. What is a social strike ?

A social strike, like a strike in general, is a concerted stoppage of work, aimed at pressuring the government to oppose policies considered unjust and harmful to the population.

Unlike a more conventional strike, a social strike is about demands whose social impact is larger than a collective agreement. The idea is rather to seek improvement of living conditions for the entire population, which can also improve the working conditions.

Such a strike movement involves many different sectors of society, such as labour unions, student associations and community groups, united in the conviction that a more just society is possible.

## Proposition for strike:

Be it resolved that members of [the name of the union] strike on May 1, 2026 if the following conditions are met:

- At least 15 unions representing at least 7,000 members, including at least 5 from the [sector] or affiliated to the [regional council], strike on May 1, 2026.
- The [central union], the [regional council] or the [federation] support the affiliated unions on strike, so that they can adequately defend the right of the members to strike, in court if necessary, whether as part of collective bargaining negotiations or as a social strike.

Be it further resolved that this day aims to demand a massive reinvestment in the social safety net, withdrawal of repressive and anti-union laws and bills, and a commitment to a just socio-ecological transition.

3. Organize a local action on May 1, 2026 or participate in the actions already planned for this day. Please do not hesitate to contact organizations already involved in the movement to collaborate.

## 2. Why organize a social strike on May 1, 2026 ?

As we are at the political tipping point, we are not immune from the conservative, authoritarian and repressive turn that is sweeping the world order.

Our public services have been degraded by the succession of different governments, blindly obeying the neoliberal precepts, leaving people struggling to make ends meet.

In the name of zero deficit, it is a nonexistent social safety net and a dying planet that the political class is leaving to future generations.

The last few years of the CAQ regime have been the last straw. The government has chosen to reduce its revenue and squander public funds by transferring them to the private sector, rather than reinvesting in the public services for the people.

For example:

- **2022** : Distribution of \$500 cheque to each person earning less than \$100,000, for a total cost of 3.2 billion dollars.
- **2023** : Tax cuts leading to a recurrent loss of 1.8 billion dollars in revenue.
- **2023** : Announcement of investment of 1.34 billion dollars for the Northvolt project. The government bore the loss estimated at 270 million dollars due to the project's failure.
- **2024** : The government subsidizes the hockey team Los Angeles Kings' visit to Québec City for their preparatory matches, up to 5.6 million dollars. The profit for the Kings in the year 2022-2023 is estimated to be 143 million US dollars.
- **2025** : In March, the auditor general revealed that the government invested close to 1.1 billion dollars in the SAAQClic project, plagued with many failures.

Meanwhile, the government has implemented a series of austerity measures for the public sector; cap on investment, hiring freeze and historic budget cuts.

## How to participate ?

It is possible to participate in the social strike movement on May 1, 2026 at different levels.

1. Submit a proposal for social strike at the general assembly. A model proposition is attached at the end of this document. Please do not hesitate to ask organizations already involved in the movement to help you with your local mobilizations.
2. Submit a proposal of support for social strike at the general assembly, whether to bring financial or material support for organizations on strike or expressing your solidarity in the event that strikers are repressed. Indeed, it can discourage the government from taking a repressive action, if they note that repression will lead to other organizations joining in the strike movement. A model proposition is attached at the end of this document.

## 6. What is a strike floor ?

In order to minimize the risks and maximize the balance of forces of the movement, a minimum participation threshold is typically set as a condition for calling a strike. This is what we call a strike floor (plancher de grève).

Therefore, when the floor is reached, the union can legitimately exercise their strike mandate. This allows for certainty that we are sufficiently numerous to take part in the strike movement.

It is the general assembly that decides the strike floor that is appropriate for them.

The government claims to lack the means to offer adequate funding, while depriving itself of billions of dollars of revenue and giving gifts to their friends in the private sector at the expense of services for the population.

The past year has also been full of various bills that seek to undermine the labour movement's capacity for action, as well as that of civil society as a whole. We are witnessing a centralization of power in the hands of the state, at the expense of our collective and individual rights.

We are already seeing the devastating effects of Law 14 (formerly Bill 89), while an employer seeks to resort to it for the first time to break the strike of childcare workers in Roberval. The concerns over the instrumentalization of the notion of “well-being” of the population, to crush any labour protest, seem to be confirmed.

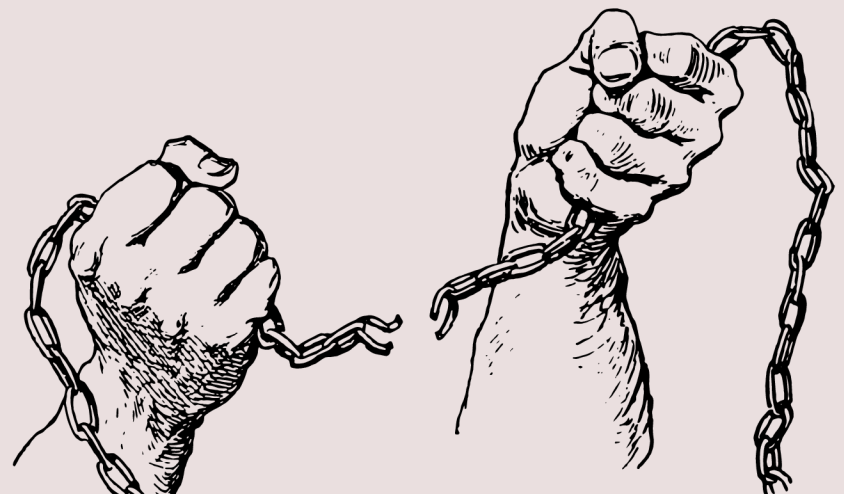
If the Bills 1 and 3 are adopted, the labour movement's capacity of action would further be restrained. We are therefore at a decisive moment for the survival of social movements.

Over the last year, we have repeated actions to have ourselves heard by the government, but in the face of their indifference, we do not have any choice but to increase the pressure. May 1st is a historically and symbolically meaningful moment for workers, and that is the reason why community groups, labour unions and student associations are responding to the call for a social strike.



strike. Indeed, since the recognition of the right to strike in Québec, the state has not hesitated to suspend it and to order a return to work through special laws more than fifty times, even as a strike was conducted perfectly within the law.

A social strike is therefore not without a risk, but it is precisely for this reason that we need to take its organization seriously.



To the best of our knowledge, these strike movements, although illegal, have not led to any penalties stipulated by law, except for the case of Cégep de Rosemont<sup>[1]</sup> in 2015.

The balance of forces built by the strikers and their solidarity have been sufficient to dissuade the state and the employers from repressing their movement.

It is also more common than we might imagine that unions engage in spontaneous illegal strikes, especially in the private sector, to contest unjust decisions of their employer. Mass civil disobedience, as in 2012 when the people rose up against the special law of the Liberal government, reminds us that legality is above all a question of the balance of forces.

The government itself doesn't always operate within the legal framework, especially on the question of the right to

[1] Six professors were suspended for two weeks with salary, and one week without salary. FNEEQ-CSN supported them legally and financially, compensating for their loss of salary. The professors were supported by a movement of solidarity that went beyond their Cégep. It is the only recorded case of penalty in the strike movements recently.

### 3. Is a strike effective ?

A strike is a means that stood the test of history, whether it is exercised in the context of collective bargaining or for political actions outside of it. It is notably through the exercise of strike action itself that workers' associations have succeeded in winning recognition of strike as a right.

- **Strike over price and wage controls in 1976:** 18,000 workers in the private sector went on strike at the same time as the public sector to oppose the repressive measures of the provincial and federal governments and their bills which planned a freeze of minimum wage and social assistance benefits, as well as a ceiling on maximum increase of salaries. In the fall 1976, the provincial government lost the election and the law was abolished in 1977.
- **Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) Strike against privatization of healthcare system in 2004 :** In 2002, the government of British Columbia adopted laws allowing hospitals to subcontract a part of their activities, leading to firing of 8000 workers in the public sector,

## 5. What are the risks ?

especially housekeeping, laundry and kitchen staff. HEU's mobilization culminated in a general strike in 2004, quickly repressed by the government that used a special law to end the strike and impose a contract. HEU members defied the special law and remained on strike, as thousands of workers from municipal, education and private sectors joined them in solidarity. Four days later, HEU succeeded in negotiating an agreement, minimizing the impact of new laws on the workers. In 2021, the government announced the end of sub-contracting in the healthcare sector, a fruit of more than 20 years of healthcare labour mobilizations in British Columbia.

- **BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) strike in 2005** : The teachers in British Columbia led an illegal strike in 2005 against various repressive and neoliberal measures in the education sector. In 2001, the government voted for a law declaring teaching as an essential service, preventing the BCTF from organizing against the attacks on their working conditions that followed. Despite the law, the BCTF members led a strike for two weeks to stop the government's neoliberal program, supported by other unions and the public.

In Québec, the right to strike is restricted and codified by the Labour Code. Unlike our European comrades, we do not have as much freedom in terms of the right to strike, which is why our experiences with a social or political strike are more limited.

Strike action while a collective agreement is in effect is considered illegal and risks repression. Sanctions can be applied to individuals as well as union organizations, ranging from financial penalties to dismissal.

That being said, past experiences show that the power in numbers allows us to protect ourselves from such risks. In Québec, we can count at least four movements for social strike in the modern era; the 1976 strike against wage controls, the anti-austerity strike in 2015, and the climate strikes in 2019 and 2022.

and immediate changes in response to anti-social and repressive attacks of the government. We therefore believe that the moment is ripe to move to the next step.



- **Student strike against the tuition increase in 2012 :** In order to force students on strike against the tuition increase to return to class, the government imposed a special law in May 2012 to modify the academic calendar and restrain the right to demonstrate and call for a strike. In defiance of the law, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in the streets of Montréal on May 20, upon an appeal by the Coalition large de l'ASSÉ (CLASSE). The Liberal government of Jean Charest ultimately lost the elections in the fall under the movement's pressure and the tuition increase was annulled by the succeeding government.
- **Social strike against austerity on May 1st, 2015:** A first attempt at a social strike was organized on May 1st, 2015, to protest against the government's austerity program. Around thirty CEGEP faculty unions, tens of thousands of students and hundreds of community groups – 856 social organizations in total – went on strike, despite the illegality of the act.

- **Climate strikes in September 2019 and September 2022:** : As part of the movement La Planète en grève, student associations, community groups and labour unions went on strike in September 2019, at the time of Greta Thunberg's visit to Montréal. In September 2022, building on their experiences in 2015 and 2019, more than 20 unions struck once again with a day of social strike. The outcomes of these mobilizations include introduction of institutional days dedicated to just transition in many CÉGEPs, as well as political engagement at the municipal and provincial levels, such as prohibition of sale of gas-powered cars, decarbonization of buildings and expansion of bicycle lanes.

#### 4. Can we not use another means to put pressure ?

Strike action does not prevent us from also using other means of pressure to make ourselves heard. Strike allows us to free our time to organize for various actions and make contentious actions flourish.

If we are to turn to a social strike at this point, it is because the means of pressure we have used so far have not been sufficient to make the government back down on their retrograde measures. Strike should not be taken lightly and it is an action of last resort when we have exhausted all our options.

Over the last year, we have repeatedly organized petitions, rallies, disruptive actions and demonstrations. On November 29, 2025, more than 50,000 of us from all corners of society demonstrated in the streets of Montréal to demand far-reaching