

Dear Member,

As the end of the school year approaches, and we look ahead to the start of a new year in September, you may be considering the purchase of clothing or uniforms for your school's team, choir or group.

As members of a union, we share a responsibility to support workers not only within our own country, but around the world. Wherein boycotting companies with unfair labour practices only results in further hardship for the workers we want to support, we do ask that you act in one or both of the following ways to influence the way the garment industry conducts business:

- 1) Investigating your current uniform or garment supplier by asking them questions about their suppliers
- 2) Placing your next order with a company that supports fair labour practices

For your reference, we are including a resource package that includes: a list of unionized companies in Canada, a list of companies that have an ethical purchasing policy in place, and a list of organizations should you wish to further explore the "No Sweat" campaign.

The garment industry employs millions of workers worldwide:

- A large majority of these factories exist in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.
- Working conditions, labour rights and basic freedoms are considerably sub-standard.
- Sweat-shop styled factories frequently exploit workers (particularly women and children) in impoverished areas, producing low-cost garments by:
 - paying sub-standard wages
 - enforcing excessive working hours
 - limiting basic human rights
 - prohibiting union membership

The Political Action Committee has approached the school Board to encourage it to adopt an ethical purchasing policy for its schools and maintenance staff. We believe that as teachers, we can start the groundwork by using our consumer power to support favourable labour practices.

As teachers in one of Canada's largest school boards, we have an unparalleled opportunity to effect change.