

CAUCUS SOLIDARITY AND OBSERVANCE OF THE OATH OF OFFICE AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT

As elected Members to Prairie Council, we take the following Oath of Office:

“I, _____, DO HEREBY SINCERELY PLEDGE MY WORD AND HONOUR TO PERFORM THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO ME IN THE LOCAL UNION CONSTITUTION, TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY AND WITH COMPLETE GOOD FAITH TO SUPPORT, ADVANCE AND CARRY OUT ALL OFFICIAL POLICIES OF THE LOCAL UNION AND TO PROMOTE A HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION-FREE ENVIRONMENT. I WILL, AT ALL TIMES, DEVOTE MY EFFORTS TO FURTHER THE AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND BEST INTERESTS OF THE CANADIAN OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES UNION. I WILL ALSO SURRENDER ALL BOOKS, PAPERS AND OTHER PROPERTY OF THE LOCAL UNION IN MY POSSESSION TO MY SUCCESSOR IN OFFICE.”

The COPE Local 397 CODE OF CONDUCT contains the follows excerpts:

- Our Code of Conduct sets out our standards and expectations of the behaviour of our elected officers, staff and members at National Conventions and Conferences, all schools, meetings, and other events attended as a representative of COPE Local 397.
- The Code of Conduct is intended to deal with complaints of inappropriate behaviour at events attended as a representative of COPE Local 397.
- As COPE Local 397 members, elected officers and staff we must commit to the Union and each other that we will be governed by the principles of our Code of Conduct.
- We will agree:
 - to be respectful of our views and the views of others,
 - to communicate openly and honestly,
 - to offer support and encouragement to everyone,
 - not to discriminate, bully or harass each other,
 - not to engage in offensive language or conduct,
 - to commit to respectful and appropriate conduct on social media,
 - to take responsibility and not engage in inappropriate behaviour due to abuse of alcohol or other drugs while participating or representing our Local Union in union activities including social events.

Local 397 will adopt the Labour Movement’s use of the following guidelines, modelled after the Canadian Parliamentary System, to determine “Caucus Solidarity”. Resolutions and decisions made are determined either through consensus or by vote.

- *In the Canadian Parliamentary system, the Prime Minister appoints a cabinet and holds cabinet and caucus meetings with elected members of the governing party. Cabinet solidarity refers to the tradition that once decisions are reached in cabinet/caucus, they are supported by all members, regardless of their opinion before consensus. A breach (or breaking with) cabinet solidarity traditionally requires the offending member’s resignation or firing.*

- *Operating under the principle of "solidarity," means that an elected official may disagree and state their personal opinions during private meetings, but must present a unified front on all decisions to the public. Thus, the ministers must publicly support the decisions made by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet/caucus as a whole. Collectively, the ministers will be held accountable for these decisions, even if they do not personally agree with them.*
- *The Cabinet's collective decision-making process has traditionally been protected by the rule of confidentiality, which enhances Cabinet solidarity and collective ministerial responsibility. Confidentiality ensures that Ministers can frankly express their views before a final decision is made.*
- *The Cabinet works through a process of compromise and consensus building, which leads to a Cabinet decision. The Cabinet and its committees do not vote on issues before them. Instead, the prime minister (or committee chairperson) "calls" for the consensus after the ministers have stated their views on the matter under consideration.*
- *Cabinet solidarity means that all members of the Cabinet must support Cabinet decisions. In private, the ministers may voice their opinions and concerns. However, in public, the Cabinet ministers cannot disassociate themselves from or repudiate the decisions of their Cabinet colleagues unless they resign from the Cabinet. Additionally, Cabinet ministers must present their opinions during decision-making, but after the Cabinet makes a decision, the ministers must maintain confidentiality about the process.*
- *Canadian ministers are held jointly accountable for all decisions of the Cabinet, so they may have to answer for decisions they were personally against. Additionally, the ministers are individually responsible and accountable to Parliament for all acts by their respective departments. This principle of "ministerial accountability" means that each minister has ultimate responsibility for the proper functioning of his or her department and all other organizations within his or her portfolio.*

When attending a meeting, picket line, rally, convention, conference or otherwise named labour or political gathering, you are elected or appointed by COPE Local 397, and it is incumbent on you to adhere to the Oath you have taken, the COPE Local 397 Code of Conduct and the principle of "Caucus Solidarity", defined below:

- Once decisions are reached in caucus, they are supported by all members, regardless of their opinion before consensus. A breach (or breaking with) caucus solidarity traditionally requires the offending member's resignation or sanctions.
- An elected Member, delegate of COPE Local 397, or a Member representing COPE Local 397 may disagree and state their personal opinions during private meetings, but must present a unified front on all decisions to the public. Thus, the Members must publicly support the decisions made by the caucus as a whole. Collectively, the Members will be held accountable for these decisions, even if they do not personally agree with them.
- Caucus' collective decision-making process has traditionally been protected by the rule of confidentiality, which enhances caucus solidarity and collective Member responsibility. Confidentiality ensures that Members can frankly express their views before a final decision is made.
- Caucus solidarity means that all members of the Caucus must support Caucus decisions. In private, the Members may voice their opinions and concerns. However, in public, the Members cannot disassociate themselves from or repudiate the decisions of their Caucus unless they resign from the Caucus. In fact, Members may have to answer for decisions they were personally against.
- Additionally, Members may present their opinions during decision-making, but after the Caucus makes a decision, the Members must maintain confidentiality about the process.
- Any Member found to be in contravention of this Policy will have the choice of offering their resignation or facing sanctions up to an including loss of membership in the Local.

New: June 9, 2017