



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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P3 survey dodges accountability question

OTTAWA - A pro-privatization group's latest poll doesn't ask crucial questions about transparency, oversight and public scrutiny of secret P3 deals.

"This poll leads Canadians down the garden path. It flags the infrastructure crisis and then promotes P3s as the 'solution'. Let's give Canadians the whole story. P3s develop and operate under an undemocratic cone of secrecy. Canadians have a right to decide how their tax dollars are spent, and how their services are run," says CUPE National President Paul Moist.

The Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships' poll asks selective and hypothetical questions about privatization of public services, including water, hospitals, roads and other community infrastructure. The poll's central question assumes P3s don't come with access, cost and quality concerns – a major stretch, considering experiences in Canada, Australia and Britain.

"Canadians are being backed into a corner and told there's no alternative to private sector financing and delivery," says Moist. "Canadians don't want deals that are structured to prevent public scrutiny."

"It's no surprise P3 pushers want to huddle behind the cloak of commercial confidentiality. When the facts do get out, P3s are revealed for the bad deals they are," says Moist.

"P3s leave citizens and decision-makers in the dark. Canadians deserve full disclosure of P3 deals before we get locked into decades-long contracts that cost more and deliver less."

In Ontario, health groups have gone to court to get basic financial information about a P3 hospital. In Vancouver, elected officials responsible for the final decision on a \$2 billion rapid transit line were denied access to key documents underpinning the project.

The Harper government is renewing its push to privatize services through P3s, a move that will widen the Conservative's ever-growing accountability gap, says Moist.

"With a \$13 billion surplus, it's clear we don't need to sacrifice public control to strengthen infrastructure and services. We can keep services in public hands, controlled by democratically-elected governments, not private companies," says Moist.

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