

HANDS OFF OUR CAMPUSES - Bill 33 POST-SECONDARY CAMPAIGN BRIEF

Purpose of this Document

This briefing serves as a toolkit for action. Bill 33, the *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025*, threatens our schools, our campuses, and our communities. Fighting back means building a campaign and a movement that can't be ignored, and that starts with understanding this issue and our plan to fight it.

This document equips campaign volunteers with the knowledge, messaging, and engagement strategies needed to mobilize people across Ontario. Together, we'll sharpen our message, amplify our voices, and show Doug Ford that people are standing up against his agenda.

- What Bill 33 does and why it matters.
- How it impacts schools, postsecondary institutions, and communities.
- How to talk to different audiences about the Bill.

Timeline and Goals

Our campaign is moving on a fast timeline, with a clear target: **October 20th**, the date Queen's Park returns to session. By then, we need to show the strength of our opposition to Bill 33 loud and clear.

This campaign aligns powerfully with the Fall back-to-school season. As students, parents, and educators head back into classrooms and onto campuses, the impacts of Bill 33 are front of mind. This gives us the perfect opportunity to mobilize communities, spark conversations, and build visible momentum.

Our central goal is to gather **5,000** petition signatures against Bill 33 to present at Queen's Park on October 20th. This will demonstrate not only the depth of public concern, but also the breadth of our growing movement. Every conversation at the doors, every signature collected, and every volunteer trained brings us closer to making sure this government cannot ignore us.

Overview of Bill 33

Bill 33, the *Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025*, is a wide-ranging provincial bill that would represent a fundamental power shift in our education system, away from democratically elected local school boards, student unions, and autonomous universities, and into the hands of the Premier's Office and Cabinet Ministers.

This Bill would make significant changes to the *Child, Youth, and Family Services Act, 2017*, the *Educations Act*, the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*, and the *Ombudsmen Act*. Its impacts on our post-secondary education (PSE) system can be understood as follows:

- Requires "merit-based admissions" policies, but leaves "merit" undefined — enabling the government to restrict equity-focused admissions pathways.
- Allows the Ministry to decide which ancillary student fees are "permitted," potentially eliminating funding for food banks, sexual violence support centres, student clubs, and unions.
- Introduce research security plans with little legislative oversight, potentially introducing government interference into academic freedom.

The Bill is framed by the government as improving transparency and accountability, but education stakeholders warn it will:

- Centralize control in the Premier's Office.
- Harm marginalized students and underfunded student services.
- Threaten institutional autonomy at colleges and universities.
- Distract from chronic underfunding in education.

Why It Matters

- Threatens funding for essential student services funded through ancillary fees (e.g., food banks, mental health supports, sexual assault centres, 2SLGBTQIA+ groups, critics of the government).
- “Merit-based admissions” sounds fair but ignores systemic inequalities. Without equity-based pathways, marginalized students (first-generation, Indigenous, racialized, disabled) face higher barriers to entering postsecondary.
- Increases bureaucratic oversight without addressing Ontario’s last-place ranking in per-student postsecondary funding.
- Research security requirements risk political interference in academic freedom.

Core Campaign Messages

When speaking to the public, keep messages simple, emotional, and connected to local realities. Key Message Pillars:

- University & College Autonomy Matters – University and college autonomy is a core part of Canada’s world-class research expertise. Top-down control from Queen’s Park threatens our competitive advantage.
- Student Services Save Lives – From food banks to mental health supports, these programs exist because students fund them. Bill 33 threatens to cut them without replacing them with provincial funding.
 - Do we want the Ford Government picking and choosing which student services get funding? This is a threat to student-funded groups that criticize the government, support 2sLGBTQIA+ students, vocally defend Palestine, or do anything else that Doug Ford finds inconvenient.
- Equity in Education – “Merit-based” without equity means shutting the door on marginalized students.
- Fund Education, Don’t Politicize It – Ontario is last in per-student funding; Bill 33 adds red tape instead of solving the crisis.
- This Government’s Track Record – Remind people of other Ford government scandals and broken promises.

Volunteer Talking Points

- Start with a local connection: “In our schools...” or “On our campus...”
- Explain what Bill 33 changes in one sentence: “It threatens academic freedom, cuts essential services, and makes it harder for marginalized students to succeed.”
- Emphasize who is hurt: “Students lose services, campuses stay underfunded, and communities lose accountability.”
- Direct people to take action: “Join the campaign, contact your MPP, and spread the word.”

Building an Audience

In order to build a campaign, we first must build capacity. This means reaching out beyond your usual networks to find allies who share your goals and are open to working together. Typically, you will look to groups that are directly affected, activists with an interest in the issue, any politicians who have to care about what these folks think, other progressive orgs, and any other likely prospects you can think of. Do not neglect to reach out to NDP members in your riding, as well as the executive committees of nearby ridings!

For Bill 33, we recommend reaching out to lots of folks, including but not limited to:

- Parents – Emphasize loss of local school board accountability and the negative impacts of police in schools.
- Students – Focus on threats to campus services, student democracy, and equity admissions.
 - Engaging with ONDY & ONDP campus clubs for recruiting volunteers & building campus-based campaigns
 - Student Groups (ex. Ontario Student Voices, OUSA, Canadian Federation of Students)

- Educators & Education Workers – Highlight loss of autonomy, funding cuts, and the Bill’s failure to address real classroom needs.
 - OCUFA, OPSEU-SEFPO, CUPE, PSAC
- Francophone Communities – Stress threat to constitutionally protected Franco-Ontarian education rights.
- General Public – Link Bill 33 to broader government overreach and mismanagement.

You will need to tailor your message to the specific audience, of course. Bill 33 really has “something for everyone”, so there is plenty to work with. Remember, our best chance here is a coordinated approach.

Tactics for Awareness-Raising

- For Bill 33 advocacy we recommend focusing especially on directly contacting government MPPs to let them know their constituents are frustrated and upset by this:
- **Petitions to the Legislature**
 - The Legislature will be back in session in late October, and we should aim to bring at least 5000 signatures to the chamber to show how Ontarians feel about this. You can bring petitions with you to events, hold in-person meetings and ask folks to sign, and give them to allied orgs to collect signatures independently. Remember that the pages need to come back to you in order to count.
- **Digital AYNs**
 - AYNs cannot be directly submitted to the Legislature, but they are effective organizing tools nevertheless, and a huge number on an AYN can serve as a powerful talking point when it comes time to make the case to the government that they’re on the wrong track. Post links to these on your social media, bring QR codes to tablings, and ask folks to reshare after they sign.
- **Physical Letters to PC MPPs**
 - Government members need to feel that their constituents are angry about this if we are going to stop it. This is the optimal task for folks who are not normally super political or partisan, as hearing from those folks will matter more to government MPPs. If there are local groups who are helping, you can facilitate by providing lists of office addresses, refreshers on how to send letters (you do not need a stamp to send mail to an MPP), and some guidance on what the important points to hit are. If desired, you can use the attached template letter.
- **Emails to PC MPPs**
 - A list of office emails for government members, the Premier, and the Minister of Education are provided. In order to maximize the likelihood of a human being reading your email, it is best to not use identical subject lines.
- **Phone Zaps**
 - A phone zap is much like an email blitz, except the object is to fill up the entire voicemail boxes of the politicians you’re addressing. You will want to get as many folks as possible onto a zoom call, and share a list of phone numbers to call through. Each person calls the numbers, one by one, and leaves a voicemail at each number until the voicemail boxes are all filled.
- **Flyering**
 - This is fairly straightforward, but can be used to build capacity for everything else. You will want to print a few hundred to a few thousand flyers, and recruit volunteers to get them delivered in strategically-targeted areas. This can be neighbourhoods near schools, where lots of students live, or just near local MPP’s offices. This will get people’s attention and hopefully drive signups via QR code that we can use to recruit for the letter-writing and (especially) email-writing campaigns.
- **Canvassing**
 - This is by far the most labour-intensive tactic, but also by far the most effective in demonstrating to people that we are serious about this issue. There is no real substitute for actually talking to people in person. You can use Populus to make maps and track where you’ve been, go knock doors with the petitions. It will be slow going (especially when compared with tabling at a big festival or event), but equally, the process of recruiting folks, training them, and going out canvassing is a great dry run for the kind of organizing we will need to do in the next campaign.

- **Media Push**

- We will leverage key moments in the academic year and legislative timeline, such as government press releases, key semester dates, and any announced closures or disruptions, to drive media attention to the real impacts of Bill 33. At these moments, we'll organize press availabilities with MPPs and local campus supporters to highlight our message and keep the issue in the public eye.
- In addition to earned media, we will identify educators, student leaders, and non-profit advocates directly affected by Bill 33 who can share their stories in op-eds and local media. By amplifying their perspectives, we ensure the narrative is grounded in lived experience and rooted in broad community concern.

Suggested Timeline for Local Organizing

- Reach out to your network with an email about this issue by September 13th
- Organize a canvass/phonezap/AYN drive by October 13th
- Host an event to write letters to Doug Ford by October 20th