

POLITICAL PROGRESS

*Advocacy in Action
Keeping Local Union Leadership Informed*

May 2026

Sisters and Brothers,

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of building a strong working relationship with the Honourable John Zerucelli, Canada's Secretary of State for Labour. Since stepping into this role, Secretary Zerucelli has quickly distinguished himself as more than just a government representative. He has become a genuine ally and trusted friend of unionized labour.

His commitment to understanding the realities of our trades, supporting union-led training, and engaging directly with IBEW leadership across Canada has been clear and meaningful. Through visits to our training centres, participation in major meetings, and ongoing dialogue, he has demonstrated a sincere respect for the skilled union workforce that will help build Canada's future.

As our partnership continues to strengthen, I am pleased to share the following guest contribution from Secretary Zerucelli's office, which reflects a shared commitment to workers, training, and building Canada strong through union labour.

We look forward to welcoming the Honorable Zerucelli to address our delegates once again at our upcoming All Canada Progress Meeting in Niagara Falls from May 11 – 14, 2026.

In Solidarity,



RUSS SHEWCHUK
International Vice President
IBEW First District, Canada

KEY UPDATES FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE (LABOUR)



Spring Economic Update 2026 -
Canada Strong For All



Skills, Mobility, and Recognition



Training and Apprenticeships



Secretary of State (Labour) John Zerucelli addresses
delegates at the 2025 All Canada Progress Meeting in
Calgary, Alberta last August.

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SCAN ME





Secretary of State (Labour) John Zerucelli joins IBEW Canada's International Vice President, Russ Shewchuk and other leaders from Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU) following Prime Minister Mark Carney's address to delegates and partners during the annual Canadian Building Trades Conference at the end of April, 2026 in Gatineau, Québec.

SPRING ECONOMIC UPDATE 2026 – CANADA STRONG FOR ALL

Dear IBEW Members,

On April 28th, the Government of Canada outlined a clear and focused plan to strengthen Canada's economy amid global uncertainty by investing **over \$6B to recruit, train and hire up to 100,000 skilled trades workers**. We are accelerating nation-building projects and ensuring long-term economic resilience.

These investments send a strong and necessary signal: if Canada is going to build at the pace and scale required, **we must also ensure we have the skilled trades workforce ready to deliver**. From the beginning, we have been clear that building Canada strong **means keeping workers at the centre of it all**. That is why the federal government is moving from a fragmented approach to a coordinated, national workforce strategy **developed with labour, unions, training partners, and employers—to recruit, train, and retain the next generation of skilled trades**.



Secretary Zerucelli speaks with an apprentice at IBEW Local 230 in Victoria, British Columbia.

We are building big. We are building bold. And we are doing it now by building training centres to mobilize the next generation of our skilled trades workers. You spoke. We listened. Our highly trained skilled trades people are the ones who build this country and they are the ones who are building a Canada strong for all.

Canada's skilled trades are facing a real and growing workforce crunch, and our federal government is meeting it head on. We are taking decisive actions because the need is clear and urgent:

- **1.4 million trades workers** will be needed by 2033, including more than **600,000 Red Seal trades**, just to keep pace with retirements and baseline growth
- Major investments in housing, infrastructure, and defence will increase demand by an additional **120,000 to 185,000 workers**
- Annual demand for new apprentices is expected to reach **40,000 to 60,000**, while current supply remains significantly lower

Key measures include:

Skills, Mobility, and Recognition

- Supporting labour mobility for skilled trades with a Labour Mobility Tax Credit enhancement
 - Expense cap increased from \$4,000 to \$10,000 and reducing the minimum distance threshold from 150 km to 120 km
 - Helps skilled trades workers take on work where they are needed most, including on major housing, infrastructure, and energy projects

Training and Apprenticeships

- Expanding training capacity and infrastructure
 - \$225 million over five years through the Union Training and Innovation Program (brick-and-mortar stream) to support upgrades and expansion at union-run training centres



Secretary of State (Labour) John Zerucelli discusses training with two IBEW Local 230 apprentices at the training centre in Victoria, British Columbia.



Secretary of State (Labour) John Zerucelli joins Canada's Building Trades Union (CBTU) Executive Director Sean Strickland, to speak with apprentices, trainers and leadership from IBEW Local 213 at the Electrical Joint Training Committee's Training Centre in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia.

- Removing financial barriers and accelerating apprenticeship completion
 - \$3.4 billion over five years starting in 2026-27 (\$468M ongoing) to address challenges that stop apprentices from completing training and moving into permanent jobs
- Supporting apprentices and workers directly
 - Apprenticeship Training Grant providing \$400 per week while apprentices attend mandatory in-class technical training, for up to \$16,000 in total, paid in addition to Employment Insurance
 - \$5,000 taxable Apprenticeship Completion Bonus for apprentices who achieve Red Seal certification
- Modernizing and improving the certification system
 - \$75 million over five years to modernize and digitize the Red Seal Program
 - \$30 million over five years to advance a National Apprenticeship Strategy

Our government is working alongside unions to get this right with a clear goal in mind: expand access, reduce barriers, and drive completion; delivering results for workers and our economy.

Together, these measures help ensure that Canadian workers are at the centre of Canada's nation-building efforts. The Spring Economic Update 2026 makes clear that Canada's economic plan is a workers' plan. With workers referenced more than 100 times and unions named consistently throughout, the update reflects our government's commitment to building a strong economy in partnership with labour.

We will continue to keep you informed as details are implemented. We appreciate your continued hard work in building the infrastructure and electrification Canada needs.

Thank you,



THE HON. JOHN ZERUCELLI
Secretary of State (Labour)