

From: Genevieve Allen <genevieve_allen19@hotmail.com>
Sent: April-28-14 2:09 PM
To: Office
Subject: Law Amendments Committee re: Cancellation of the Graduate Retention Rebate

To the Law Amendments Committee re: Financial Measures Act & Cancellation of the Graduate Retention Rebate

To Whom It May Concern,

I received a notification from the NS Students Association regarding the opportunity to speak on Monday about the cancellation of the Graduate Retention Rebate. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the session at the legislature, but would like the opportunity to voice my disagreement for the end of this programme. Please find my story below.

Sincerely,
Genevieve Allen Hearn

I am from the Annapolis Valley, my husband is from Toronto, and we met at Acadia University. After graduating, we did what most recent graduates do - we left the province. Four years later we returned to Nova Scotia because of our deep love and appreciation for this province and our intentional decision to not contribute to the debilitating 'brain drain' the province is currently experiencing.

We left Toronto knowing that we would take a hit financially. My husband took a job that paid significantly less than what he was getting in Toronto. I started a sole proprietorship and I run my contracts through my business. We bought a house in HRM and will eventually start a family, contributing to the future generation of Nova Scotia. The graduate retention rebate was factored into our decision to move back to Nova Scotia and was included in our budget for the next five years. While \$2,500 annually may seem an insignificant amount to those well established in their careers, it is of great significance to those of us who are just starting out - especially those who have started a business. In addition to high start-up costs, in order to go on maternity leave some day I have to pay taxes both as an employer and an employee, which leaves me with a very modest salary. My budget cannot react well to such sudden changes. Perhaps of more concern than the elimination of the rebate was how suddenly it was implemented, as nothing in the election process indicated that this program was in jeopardy.

I hear a lot of talk about how Nova Scotia needs to support young entrepreneurs. So far I haven't seen much evidence that the provincial government is doing so. This rebate is the one form of support that would assist me in building a viable career as a young, female business owner.

This is not a case of feeling entitled. This is a case of weighing our costs against our cohorts in other provinces. Our burden is already disproportionately higher than other provinces. In Toronto we were able to support local businesses with our disposable income. In Nova Scotia I'm being told to suck it up and eat ramen noodles. I ask this: does purchasing ramen noodles help the local economy? Is this the lifestyle we feel young professionals who work full-time deserve in our province? How can we feel like a contributing part of society if we can't afford to leave our homes? If we can lift financial burdens off young people, imagine what it would do for the province's economy. It is not a win for a segmented demographic - it is a win for everyone.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Genevieve Allen Hearn