

From: Linda Uhlman <lindau@tallships.ca>
Sent: April-28-14 12:39 AM
To: Office
Subject: Graduate Retention Rebate(GRR)

We are writing in support of Student NS and their stand calling on the government of Nova Scotia to return \$35 million it is taking away from young people as it eliminates the Graduate Retention Rebate (GRR).

My husband and I were both raised in NS. We raised 4 children here, all of whom have or are in the process of getting undergraduate degrees from a NS university. Two have also received Masters degrees in other provinces. All of our children paid for the graduate and post graduate work with student loans.

Our oldest son couldn't find work in NS after graduation, he was forced to go to BC where he settled down in a good job, found a wife and bought a house. Several years later with a desire to return home he secured a similar job here and returned to NS. He and his wife struggled financially with the move, a house to sell in BC, a place to live here, car payments and student debt.

Our second child, also wished to return to NS after graduation, he was fortunate enough to land a term position. With hard work he was able to turn this into a permanent position and he was on his way to a successful career here in NS. He was struggling with huge student debt, car payments and rent. Although he had a very good job, there was no money left over at the end of the month to save a down payment on a house. *He was however able to save three years of Graduate Retention Rebates to a make a down payment.* He works in a border community and could have settled in NS or NB. The house prices and property taxes appeared less in the small NB community, but he knew he had three more years of eligibility for the NS GRR. *This was in his opinion too much money to walk away from and he based his decision to purchase a house in NS on the NS GRR,* knowing that rebate would allow him to maintain his property for the next few years. The couple who sold their house so they could help a aging relative dealing with alzheimers, the real estate agent who made the commission, and the roofer whom he hired to work on the outbuilding; all benefited from NS GRR. As a result of this decision the NS government will receive tax from my son for many years to come. In 2013 he paid 3867.00 in provincial taxes, of course this amount would have been 6367.00 if not for the NS GRR. However had he decided to purchase property in NB, the NB government would be the beneficiary of that taxable income, not NS. The 2013 rebate, apparently the last he will receive will help with other repairs required to the property. My son made a decision based on the government promise that if he met the qualifications as outlined in 2010, he would receive a 2500.00 rebate for the next 6 years. I am not sure how anyone can have faith in government that can just say, oops we have changed our mind. At the very least young people in NS who have already qualified should get what they were promised. If the program was too expensive or not working, it should be phased out. It is not right to leave young people in a lurch who based their decisions on government policy. Many decisions to stay or go, to buy or not, were based on the 6 year NS GRR.

Our third child is in BC, she received an Alberta student loan which was entirely forgiven after graduation. She was not eligible for a NS loan because she worked in Alberta before getting her Masters. She is feeling fortunate that NS would not advance her the money to continue her education.

Our youngest child is currently attending a NS university, and whether he stays in NS or chooses not to remains to be seen. The GRR would have been incentive for him to remain here. With a huge student loan he may have no choice but to head west. The NS Government has done nothing to make NS more attractive to him or any young person graduating in the near future.

In closing I have to say it is embarrassing to listen to the current government promoting the elimination of interest on the NS student loans. My son paid over 3300.00 in interest on federal and provincial loans in 2013, elimination of the NS interest will not have a significant impact on that figure.

Sincerely, Wayne and Linda Uhlman