

From: alex baird <alexandrabaird@hotmail.com>
Sent: April-25-14 12:37 PM
To: Office
Cc: director@studentsns.ca
Subject: Law Amendments Committee re: Cancellation of Grad 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 register my disagreement with end of this programme. Please find below a letter I sent previously to Ministers Regan and Whalen. I trust this is satisfactory, but should you have any questions or require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached via email, or by phone at 461-4573 (home) and 495-9685 (cell).

Sincerely yours,
Alexandra Baird Allen

From: alexandrabaird@hotmail.com
To: kelly@kellyregan.ca; dianawhalen@gmail.com
CC: min_lae@gov.ns.ca; kontakjl@gov.ns.ca
Subject: Cancellation of the NS Grad Retention Rebate
Date: Mon, 7 Apr 2014 19:58:40 +0000

15 Fairmount Road
Halifax NS B3N 1H5

7th April 2014

The Honourable Kelly Regan, MLA
Minister of Labour and Advanced Education
6th Floor, 5151 Terminal Rd
P.O. Box 697
Halifax, NS B3J 2T8

via email: Kelly@kellyregan.ca
cc: min_lae@gov.ns.ca

The Honourable Diana Whalen, MLA
Minister of Finance
287 Lacewood Drive, Suite 303
Halifax, NS B3M 2Y7

via email: dianawhalen@gmail.com
cc: kontakjl@gov.ns.ca

Dear Ministers Regan and Whalen,

Re: Cancellation of the NS Graduate Retention Rebate Program

are actually voting. I, for one, would have seriously weighed this in my election decision. Instead, the democratic process was undermined and voter faith shaken by the lie of omission.

6. This program could have been phased out so that anyone who had already qualified for the rebate, and presumably therefore had planned elements of their lives around it, would continue to benefit from it as they had been promised by the Government of Nova Scotia. This is not a new idea: even the federal Conservatives recognized the merit of it in their handling of the elimination of the OETC. Instead, the abrupt cancellation of the rebate leaves recent graduates feeling betrayed, if not scrambling to accommodate the unexpected loss of income.
7. The new programs announced for students in the recent budget in Nova Scotia do not benefit recent graduates who are already working, either as employees or as entrepreneurs. The \$800 in interest elimination leaves out anyone who saved or worked in order to pay for their education without going into debt.
8. Many of the spending programs announced in the Liberal budget for Nova Scotia are focused on health care, something younger Nova Scotians are much less likely to use than are the older generations. This sends a clear message to the bottom end of the working age population of Nova Scotia that we are not a priority of this government. Is this the intended message of the Liberal Party?
9. Recent graduates will pay for these measures with a huge increase on their tax bill next year (and up to five years beyond that). This comes at a point in their lives when many can least afford it, having regard to the fact that they are starting out in their careers, starting out in new businesses, and starting new families (the much needed future population base of Nova Scotia). It comes at a point in Nova Scotia's history when we can ill-afford to lose even more people to Alberta or elsewhere: our working age population is rapidly shrinking; our birth rate is alarmingly low. We are in the midst of a catch-22 scenario whereby we need the energy and verve young people bring to communities in order to attract more youth to the province. Cutting the most significant program designed to attain this goal sends a strong message that the government's priorities lie elsewhere.

By eliminating the Graduate Retention Rebate, the Liberal government sends a clear message to the youngest cohort of the working age population in Nova Scotia that we are not your priority. I strongly encourage you to revise that message: continue the program for those who already qualify, but phase it out whilst implementing creative new strategies for current and future post-secondary students. No one is betrayed, the rules are not changed mid-game, and recent grads may have some faith restored in this province and its leadership – and continue to afford the extra 2% on the HST.

Sincerely yours,

Alexandra Baird Allen