
From: Heather Smith <heathersmith.msw@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 01, 2014 2:51 PM
To: Office
Subject: Submission to Law Amendments re: Bill 1 (amended - please submit in place of my previous letter)

Dear Members of the Law Amendments Committee:

I am writing to submit my objections and concerns related to Bill 1 - the Health Authorities Act.

First and foremost, this Bill violates my Charter Rights by allowing the government (and my employer) to dictate my relationship to a union and a collective agreement of their choosing. Pursuing this Bill puts the Liberal government in a clear, anti-democratic conflict of interest.

Bill 1 is an assault on women and their families. Approximately 80% of health care workers are female. Eroding the financial and social security of women is an attack on equality and will not benefit the economy.

Bill 1 does nothing to address the real concerns underlying growing health expenditures in this province. Scapegoating unions does not recognize that our continued focus on acute, reactive care does not address the very real need for prevention and wellness. Targeting workers does not stop rapidly escalating prescription drug costs. Eroding the wages and benefits of women, and their families, will not improve our health, or the health of Nova Scotians in general. Nothing in Bill 1 recognizes or addresses the challenges we face with an aging demographic.

In 2013, the Liberals ran on promises to uphold fair collective bargaining and to respect workers' rights. These promises have been shattered.

There is a very real likelihood that there will be an injunction granted against Bill 1, reinforcing the dictatorial, anti-democratic leanings of the Liberal government. How will this make you look?

How will it look when taxpayers learn of the legal expenses they will have to bear to pay for the court challenges against Bill 1?

How will it look when there is a mass exodus of health care workers out of the province? When you have to close beds due to staffing shortages? When wait-times increase even further? When you have to spend even more on over-time?

I strongly encourage you to really think about this. The Liberal government has rejected viable, reasonable, financially prudent alternatives, like the bargaining association model, already proven in other provinces. It is not too late to reconsider.

If you stay the course, this Liberal government will go down in history. Not for making Nova Scotia a better place, but for causing chaos, unrest, inequality and economic decline. There is no pride in that.

I demand that my Charter Rights be upheld.

Sincerely,
Heather Smith, MSW, RSW
Clinical Social Worker