

From: Natalie S <natalie.steele@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 01, 2014 11:56 AM
To: Office
Subject: Concerned health care worker on Bill 1

Hello,

It is my understanding that I have the right to request that my concerns be read to the legislature. I have outline my most prominent concerns below and would appreciate them being brought forward to the legislature.

My message:

I have now had a chance to read Bill 1. I have several concerns about my rights as a health care worker with the introduction of this bill.

There are several sections of concern:

-I am concerned that a union body will be 'mediated' to represent me, when I as the member have rights to choose who represent me. This, in my opinion, does not represent me as a health care worker nor do I agree to have a mediator decide on my behalf what my collective agreement should include. Those collective agreements have been fought for over decades and the progress achieved was not easily accomplished. Now my choice to work for a particular employer based on some of the benefits that were offered to me as an incentive to become an employee are being threatened. Moreover, I am concerned that a collective agreement that represents the needs of those working in rural Nova Scotia who have different costs of living, who have different job requirements, who have different historical needs in their workplaces is potentially going to represent me (an urban, higher cost of living health care employee). Ultimately one wonders how much will be lost in order to save the government money. And with the recent admission on the government's behalf that they can no longer predict how much money is going to be saved, it starts to make one think that the goal all along was to save money at the expense of front line, over worked and already underpaid employees.

- The concept of a mediator is also very troubling. No matter who this mediator body is, they will presumably be consumers of the Canadian health care system and as such will bring with them preconceptions on the rights of the tax payer and the rights of the health care workers. As such their role as being a mediator will be a biased one. Also, the Bill suggests that if 'agreement' cannot be had between the unions and employers then the Minister gets to appoint a mediator. I do not believe that the Minister is in a position to appoint such a mediator, the Minister has a significant bias that cannot be hidden and also becomes the arbitrator as to whether or not the unions and employers have 'agreed' on a mediator. This language is so vague that ultimately it positions the Minister as the sole decision maker that does not have to be held responsible to the collective of thousands of employees who are wanting their needs to be well represented by an unbiased and balanced mediator. As an elected member of this government, there is a significant level of responsibility, to me and my fellow employees as health care workers, on you to ensure that this Bill represents my needs and not the fiscal needs of a government bent on flipping a significant deficit into a surplus in less than one election term.

- I also have concerns about other language surrounding the mediation process. There is a section that states mediation is to take no more than 45 days. This is the resolution of thousands of lives of hard working individuals in this province and I think that 45 days is an unreasonable amount of time. Moreover, there is a

clause that outlines the right of the mediator to hold public consultations, however it also says it is not necessary to do so. In my opinion the mediator should be REQUIRED to hold public consultations to hear the significant challenges of the public they are making decisions on, and to tie this point back with my previous one, public consultations, if done well would add to the time taken for consideration on the mediator's behalf and would require more than 45 days.

All of this to say that I am fully aware of the bargaining association proposed by the union bodies and in a very short time frame. They performed exceptionally with the tremendous pressure to figure out the simplest solution to a very complex scenario that still represents the current rights of employees across the province. I urge you to reconsider your position on this Bill and the bargaining association proposed by the unions. I would like to see you represent my needs in government and my needs are best reflected through the bargaining association. Plus I would like to see you work towards collaboration with your fellow MLAs to put a stop to this Bill because I assure you my needs are similar, if not exactly the same, as those of all Nova Scotians.

Respectfully,

Natalie Steele Quinn