
From: MacDonald, Jen <Jen.MacDonald@cdha.nshealth.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, October 01, 2014 5:38 PM
To: Office
Subject: Law Amendments Committee-Bill 1

Dear Law Amendments Committee,

My name is Jennifer MacDonald. I am a Registered Cardiology Technologist working in Nova Scotia for 13 years. I am writing to you only because the legislature is not allowing any more citizens to speak at law amendments. I vehemently oppose Bill 1. The proposed Bill is in direct violation of the Trade Union Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms-Freedom of Association. It has been stated that this is the least democratic, and most historic in that regard, piece of labour legislation in Canadian history. I have never been so politically offended or disrespected in my life.

The healthcare workers of Nova Scotia do not oppose a merger of our health authorities. We would however appreciate for our Canadian rights to be respected in the process. This has been successfully done in 5 provinces. The Liberals plan to dictate which union all healthcare workers in the province belong to without a vote. This is clearly illegal. An employer cannot choose who represents their workers to them. They think the semantics of their Bill will protect them legally because they will be appointing a mediator to make the "decision" for us all. The provisions are all laid out in the Bill as to who can go with whom so the mediator has nothing to decide. The Bill also legislates away the power of the neutral Labour Board. Not only does the Bill choose our unions for us, which in a few months will mean that I lose hard earned benefits, it states that we can never choose another union. This is again, clearly illegal.

Conservative MLAs have stated that Bill 1 encompasses too much and too many issues. Many of them believe that the Bill should actually be two Bills, one regarding the merger and another to deal with the labour side of the issue. There are obviously 7 MLAs who clearly oppose Bill 1 and are willing to speak for the people they represent. The rest of the MLAs are lying to their constituents with each concerned phone call and form email.

This is no longer a union issue or a provincial issue. My Canadian rights are being stripped away. Many people believe that this legislation is not legal and it will therefore cost more taxpayer money as it will be contested all the way to the Supreme Court level.

This will hurt the Liberal party at the provincial and federal level. I personally was considering voting Liberal in the upcoming election for the first time in my life and now, due to the fact that your federal leader has not answered my call to uphold democracy and slash this Bill, I won't be making that mistake.

This will hurt average Nova Scotians as well as union workers across all sectors. In a time that we are experiencing a Nursing shortage, expected to get worse each year, the Liberals have and continue to alienate many RNs out of the province with the essential services legislation earlier this year and now this. I wonder what do you plan on luring RNs back here with?!

The biggest issue I have with Bill 1 is not related to union membership or contract specifics but with the fact that it violates my democratic rights. If the majority of my colleagues in healthcare voted to go to a different union than I preferred, I would respect that because that is democracy, the same way I respect that the Liberals run this province right now even though I didn't vote for them either. Having a majority provincial government does not place a party above Canadian law. Health Authorities change but this does not change the right to Freedom of Association. I demand a vote on the matter of who represents me to my employer. This is my right. It is against Canadian law for the Liberal party to take this right away from me, regardless of any fancy language used to do so.

Please cease in the passing of this illegal, unethical, undemocratic piece of legislation before Nova Scotia sees a mass exodus of healthcare workers, mostly nurses and before the taxpayer has to pay the ensuing legal fees. It is not too late to listen to the concerns and respect the protected rights of your citizens. I expect in this country for my rights, protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to be upheld.

Sincerely Concerned,
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