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April 24, 2015

## **MEDIA RELEASE: Joint Statement Against Bill 100**

**Halifax, NS** – Students, Faculty, Staff and the Labour Movement are united against Bill 100 introduced on April 22. According to Rick Clarke (President of Nova Scotia Federation of Labour), “This Bill raises serious concerns for all of us, and will be legally challenged if not changed from its present form”.

At the very least, we think that Section 8 and references to it throughout the Bill must be scrapped. Ideally, Bill 100 should be put on hold until there has been full and broad public consultation before it goes any further in the legislative process.

This Bill will infringe on the rights of students and workers and in the end, provide no new measures to present fiscal mismanagement at Nova Scotian universities. Instead, under the guise of making universities more accountable, the McNeil government is using this legislation to attack workers’ rights. In the same way that Bills 1 and Bill 37 attacked healthcare worker’s rights, Bill 100 (the Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act.), introduced on April 22, will create a tool to do exactly the same thing to unionized workers throughout the University sector.

Under this Bill, if a University wants to enter into a revitalization process and if it determines it has a “significant operating deficit”, the University gets broad, sweeping powers under Section 8 with respect to workers’ rights. It can forbid the signing of any collective agreement, ban strikes, and take away the ability of unionized employees to start or continue any grievance that relates in whole or in part to the development of the revitalization plan or process.

This Act does nothing to improve accountability of university administrators, but seriously undermines the rights of students and workers. Collective bargaining plays a pivotal role in protecting academic freedoms and quality education in Nova Scotia, and it should never be at risk.

Students and workers are the whistle blowers for administrative malpractice at our universities. This Bill will muzzle internal criticism and give university administrators an easy way out if they jeopardize the fiscal health of their institutions through mismanagement.”

We called for financial oversight during the university consultation last fall to ensure that money is not diverted from universities’ core operating budget, which fund academic programs, to capital investment, administrative compensation, and other non-academic budgets. Bill 100 does not reflect this key concern. It substitutes generic accountability to the taxpayer” political advertising for educational priorities. Do we want a post-secondary education system that primarily satisfies business interests, or one that educates people?

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In giving Universities these unprecedented powers with this Bill, the McNeil Liberals are once again attacking workers, while at the same time, eroding the relative autonomy of our Universities. How many court challenges and Supreme Court of Canada decisions will it take for this Government to realise that the right to strike is a Constitutional Right?

In conclusion, Section 8 and any references to it in Bill 100 must be scrapped. As the government is clearly rushing to end the Spring Sitting of the Legislature, the best immediate step to take would be to table the Bill so that there can be full and broad public consultation before it goes any further in the legislative process.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2015

### **SFL SUPREME COURT DECISION INFLUENCES INTERNATIONAL LABOUR LAW**

After months of advocacy from workers and their unions, the right to strike has been recognized by the employers' group and the government group at the International Labour Organization (ILO) following a crucial tripartite meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from February 23-25, 2015.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) was invited by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to attend the tripartite meeting in Geneva. SFL president, Larry Hubich, was able to attend the meeting and talked with many ILO representatives (worker, employer and government) about the recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling, which determined that Canadians have a constitutional right to strike.

"The worker, employer, and government groups at the ILO were interested in hearing about the SFL's Charter Challenge with regards to the Saskatchewan Party government's unconstitutional Bill 5," said SFL president Larry Hubich, "in fact it was our Charter Challenge win that helped end the deadlock at the ILO – as up until now there was a stalemate between the worker, employer, and some government groups," he added.

Since 2012, the employers' groups have been challenging the right to strike because they argue it is not explicitly expressed in ILO Convention 87, even though for years it has been universally accepted by governments, workers, and employers alike. This has meant that cases of serious labour violations in many countries have been left unaddressed by the ILO as the employers' group refused to budge on the issue.

The statement follows a global protest day in defense of the right to strike by union federations on February 18<sup>th</sup>, involving more than 100 actions in over 60 countries. The protests were designed to put pressure on both governments and employers at the ILO. Significantly, the government group also strongly endorsed the right to strike at the February meeting. The statements are available here:

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_346764.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_346764.pdf)

"We knew the SFL's Supreme Court win would have major implications both provincially and across the country," said Hubich, "but now we see our win having a major positive impact for workers around the world. This is a very significant development, and all working families in Saskatchewan should be proud of what we've been able to accomplish," he added.

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The SFL represents over 100,000 working people across the province in 37 affiliated unions.

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