

Submission from the Council of Canadians to Law Amendments re: Bill 148, the Public Services Sustainability Act

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments, as I was unable to secure a time to present in person.

I make these comments on behalf of the Council of Canadians, Canada's leading citizens' organization since 1985, with over 100,000 supporters and 60 grassroots chapters across the country. We promote progressive policies on fair trade, clean water, energy security, public health care, democracy and other issues of social and economic concern to Canadians. The Council has five local chapters and approximately 1,000 supporters in Nova Scotia.

The Council of Canadians stands in solidarity with the labour movement in condemning Bill 148, which would force agreements on public sector workers. Collective bargaining is protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and this bill violates the spirit of the Charter and the Supreme Court of Canada's more recent ruling upholding this right.

How can Finance Minister Randy Delorey support both the long-term sustainability of Nova Scotia's public services, including respecting the collective bargaining process, while at the same time forcing non-negotiable five-year agreements with little to no wage increases?

The timing also seems rather convenient, coming on the heels of a fiscal update indicating that our small deficit doubled in three months, in order to continue with the austerity agenda to which this government is so committed. In a time when the economy is stalled, giving 75,000 public servants across the province less than cost of living increases will shrink our economy, since those families will be tightening belts and not spending.

The Council of Canadians asks this Committee to respect the will of the people and represent the views that have been expressed before you, which I'm told include over 40 people speaking against the bill and only two supportive of it in more than 12 hours of presentations: reject Bill 148.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Giles

Atlantic Regional Organizer | Organisatrice régionale, Région Atlantique

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