

February 16th, 2017

Law Amendments Committee  
Red Chamber,  
2nd Floor, Province House  
1726 Hollis Street  
Halifax, N.S.

RE: Bill No. 75 - Teachers' Professional Agreement and Classroom Improvements  
(2017) Act

To the members of the LAC:

Good day to you all. I would have preferred to sit before the Committee to have my voice heard but the Liberal bullies are restricting the amount of people, who wish to speak, from having their say in front of the Committee.

Let me start by introducing myself. My name is Andrea Heans and I have been a teacher for 13 years. My current assignment is at a junior high in the Halifax Regional School Board. My teaching assignment sees me teaching 4 homerooms of Grade 7 Core French and 4 homerooms of Grade 8 Social Studies. Over 230 students cycle through my room on a daily basis at ½ hour intervals. Never in my 13 year career have I had such a schedule as this, or a teaching assignment like this. Nothing can be achieved during ½ hour blocks of time but they are needed to alleviate the growing number of behavioural problems that I am now faced with. Unfortunately this is also due to the growing attention problems presented by succeeding generations. It also does nothing to help prepare them for high school which I used to pride myself on being able to do. Now I am barely able to keep my head above water. My largest class number is 33 with numerous behaviour, cognitive and attendance issues which makes it feel like 40. My smallest class is 24 but with numerous behaviour, cognitive, attendance and mental health issues which makes it feel like 45. I could go on and on but it would take days and pages and I am running out of time. My classroom was built in 1975 to accommodate a grade 1 class. Imagine trying to cram over 30 nearly adult sized teenagers into a small area where they practically sit on top of one another. You think that I am exaggerating but my MLA Joachim Stroink has seen my classroom and has turned a blind eye to it and told me that we will have to “agree to disagree,” on the issue of education and Bill 75. Come to think of it the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia has turned a blind eye to what is really happening in classrooms all across the Province and are now forcing people (ie teachers) to agree with them through the proclamation of Bill 75. Last time I checked there were over 9300+ experts on education in Nova Scotia and none in the ranks of the Government, but the

experts are not being heard. The Government can spin whatever rhetoric they like about listening to the teachers but there are enough people in the province that are smart enough to not buy into the rhetoric.

I am a member of the Liberal Party. I have voted Liberal since I was eligible to vote in 1993, the year the PCs were decimated to 2 seats Federally. I voted once for a Conservative who now happens to be a Liberal but that is neither here nor there. Right now I am not proud to be a member of the Liberal Party and I intend to actively campaign against all Liberal members seeking re-election once the writ is dropped. I will be there to remind people what Bill 75 has done to not only the education system but the good, hardworking people of Nova Scotia. The next time the Liberals hold a review of Mr. McNeil's leadership, I will be there to lobby against his retention as Leader of the Party. He no longer reflects the values that I hold dearly or those of the Liberal Party of Canada. The Liberal Party that I joined champions the middle class, of which I am a member, and upholds democratic and Charter freedoms of our great country. This government wishes to strip me of my Charter rights. Remove pieces from a previously, fairly bargained agreement which is not legal as both parties did not agree to the removal of the aforementioned pieces, which means that bargaining did not happen in good faith and could never have happened in good faith because of the Government's holding legislation (bill 148 and 75) over the heads of the negotiating team and by extension their membership. This is unacceptable behaviour by those who supposedly hold the ideals of the Liberal ideology close to their heart. It is now looking more like the ideology that is currently taking place south of our border.

In my grade 8 Social Studies classroom we focus on Canadian Identity and explore the nearly 150 year post-confederation history of Canada. Outcome 8.4.1 states the following items that a student must demonstrate: Take age-appropriate actions that demonstrate the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (local, national and global); examine the concept of citizenship, define rights and responsibilities, examine the criteria for becoming a Canadian citizen, examine the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, demonstrate an understanding of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, develop a definition of responsible citizenship, plan and carry out age-appropriate actions that demonstrate responsible citizenship. The lesson my students are taking away right now is not a lesson from me but from the Government via the media. My students are learning that an elected body can run roughshod over the very people who trusted them to represent their interests. The Government is teaching my students that the Government is above the law and does not need to follow or uphold measures laid out in the Constitution or Charter. The Government is teaching my students that a majority Government can bully and steamroll the responsible citizens of this province into submission and as a teacher who takes the learning of her students very seriously and teaching them to be active citizens; I cannot unteach the lessons of the Government. I was fortunate enough to be one of 70

teachers at the Teacher Institute for Canadian Parliamentary Democracy last year in Ottawa. I learned about our Democracy, our Charter and our Judicial system but I cannot unteach the lesson the Government has just taught my students. I would not know how or where to begin because the damage that bill 75 will cause to my classroom will be irreparable and the lessons altered.

Mr. McNeil claims that proclaiming bill 75 will bring normalcy back to the classroom. My normal in the classroom was dysfunctional at best. Is that the normal we want? The normal he actually speaks of is the extracurriculars that we took away during WTR and he knows that even he cannot mandate nor legislate a person's acts of volunteerism and the extras with this despicable piece of legislation that violate Charter rights and is an assault on the unionized members of the middle class.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Andrea Heans  
