
From: Phil Cousins [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 3:23 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Against Bill 75

I am writing in opposition to Bill 75 as a parent, taxpayer and concerned citizen of Nova Scotia. This Bill represents a gross erosion of the social contract of this province. The social contract is the story we tell ourselves and our children that keeps us getting up every morning and putting the best of ourselves into our work or our studies for the betterment of this Province.

The story goes something like this: If I work, pay my taxes and obey the law, the government will educate my children, I will be able to earn a fair wage and receive good healthcare if I become ill.

Bill 75 erodes the social contract on two fronts – denying students access to a quality education system and removing the collective bargaining rights for teachers so that they will no longer be able to negotiate a fair wage or improvements to their working conditions.

Teachers have been raising their concerns about the classroom for years and these are adequately covered in the other submissions to the Law Amendments Committee. From my own perspective I find it shocking that adults can exit the Nova Scotian school system and still not be able to read and write; this is a shameful state of affairs and it is an indication of government neglect. I know a number of NS teachers and I have the utmost respect for their capabilities and professionalism; the failure is of the school system itself, which does not adequately support the range of abilities in its over-crowded classrooms, does not provide for a textbook for every child and does not fail children and hold them back a year if they do not meet the learning outcomes.

The economic success of our Province depends on how well our children are educated; children are best educated when we let teachers teach. Surely this is a concept that this pro-business government can understand and get behind; it seems so short-sighted to under-fund education at the expense of future prosperity and tax revenue. Honestly it's this kind of attitude that holds Nova Scotia back from its full potential.

Teachers deserve to be well paid and well supported for educating the next generation. Teachers have done the hard work to educate themselves, many of them hold multiple degrees; they have 'paid their dues' by working as subs, TA's and hustling to find permanent positions, many of them for years without giving up hope that one day they will find a school where they can make a difference.

The government has treated the teachers terribly, strong arming them into wage structures that don't keep pace with inflation. The removal of the service award is nothing less than theft – deferred wages that many will now have to kiss goodbye if Bill 75 is passed.

It is transparent now that the Province's intent was never to negotiate in good faith as the Sword of Damocles – this egregious Bill – has always been lurking in the background as the government's trump card. This union-busting Bill is part of a broader attack on Provincial public sector workers and it falls in line with a global effort to weaken workers rights in the service of a capitalist system whose utter failure and moral bankruptcy has

been laid bare several times in recent decades, not least with the 2008 Financial Crash. Bill 75 is on the wrong side of history in this great struggle between humanity and a rapacious, parasitic corporate elite.

Nova Scotia is better than this; we should be able to find a balance so that the social contract works for its citizens again.

Respectfully,
Philip Cousins,
Dartmouth, NS