
From: Tina Roberts-Jeffers [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 7:13 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Public Submission for Bill 75

To: Law Amendments Committee
Re: Bill 75

My name is Tina Roberts-Jeffers. I am writing today to discuss my concern over Bill 75. I am a stay at home mother to three small children and a member of the African Nova Scotian community. I write to you today with two issues in mind.

First, as a woman, I have been appalled at the tone of the negotiations and this bill. During work-to-rule teachers have been publicly chastised for not participating in voluntary services, maligned for not doing what amounts to personal favors for their employers (favors that are simultaneously indispensable and yet not even worth a cost of living raise). So I ask today at what point will you, the elected leaders of our province undertake the hard and arduous task of using the power and authority granted to you in support of gender equity, instead of asking a largely female work force to yet again forgo self, to further engrain the pay gap, the retirement savings gap, the wealth gap. I ask instead that you vote no. Take a position that challenges the status quo and halts the process of publicly shaming a predominately woman work force for the reasonable and responsible job action taken to secure a fair contract. This is where you can make an impact.

Secondly, the issues raised in the last several months are not and cannot be solved over night. Legislating a contract serves the purposes of balancing the budget, but does little to serve students. Teachers can't be compelled to organize prom, can't be compelled to take on the additional stress and responsibility of supervising fieldtrips, clubs, or teams. They can have wages imposed, they can have another committee struck, but more than 20 years ago the Black Learner's Advisory Committee was struck, resources were devoted, over 100 individual recommendations made, yet many of those recommendations from 1994 remain unaddressed. Black children are still suspended at three times the rate as other students in some school districts. Black children are still placed on individualized program plans at disproportionate rates. Black teachers are still underrepresented, the list goes on. I share the skepticism of teachers regarding this newest committee, regardless of assurances from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Many of the concerns teachers, parents, and students themselves have expressed will necessitate difficult conversations about how we organize ourselves. Conversations about race and class, conversations about why we would invest more money in tax breaks or corporations rather than the education system. We are capable of having these conversations and I encourage you to defeat this bill.

Sincerely,
Tina Roberts-Jeffers

P.S. I have abbreviated my remarks in hopes that they will still be considered even though I had previously added my name to the list of speakers and still hope to present in person before the committee.