
From: Doug Gillis [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 04, 2018 6:49 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bill 72 opposition

Good day,

My name is Doug Gillis and I live in Hatchet Lake. I'm writing to you regarding the Glaze Report and Bill 72. I'm not a parent or a teacher and when it comes to unions in this province, I haven't been generally supportive over the years but I respect their rights and their duties to protect the rights of workers.

I have read the Glaze Report. I have done my best to understand it. What I cannot find in the report is any actual examples of how removing principals and vice-principals from the NSTU or how eliminating the English language school boards and replacing them with bureaucratic appointees will actually help students learn and help teachers better perform their jobs. The data and test scores that the report itself is based upon can't even be fully trusted as other test scores show our students at or above the national average. In many cases, we're inside the top three provinces. Math can be made to prove anyone's point so let's call that a wash to be fair to both sides.

Everyone seems to be in agreement that the status quo is not working. Teachers made that argument loud and clear last year when Bill 75 was unfairly implemented. Teachers have been asking for more support staff to deal with complex classrooms and they've been asking for more supports in helping students with mental health issues. These are large requests because of the nature of classrooms today but these are not unreasonable requests. They are not unreasonable because they would directly affect the state of classrooms in this province, which is what teachers and parents have been asking for. What the government is suggesting seems to help no one, except whomever is politically appointed to be on the proposed provincial advisory council. I have concerns about the transparency of this board. Will they operate under the same cloak of secrecy that the current NSHA board does? What will their salaries be? Where will there be true savings if these new appointees are paid in the same range as the heads of the NSHA? I ask because none of that has been disclosed.

There are also serious concerns with the elimination of school boards as you are in effect, silencing many elected women in this province and providing what appears to be little more than a token seat for African-Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq communities. How can you expect a member from Bear River (for example) to fully understand and speak out regarding the specific concern of a citizen from Membertou?

I also take issue with the hypocrisy of eliminating the English-language school boards but leaving the Acadian board unaffected. Are the democratic rights of Acadians more important than the rest of Nova Scotians? I fully support the Acadian school board and understand its important role but I fully support the democratic institution of school boards elected by all Nova Scotians. Why doesn't my government?

I'm appealing to each and every one of you as a citizen concerned about the heavy-handed, dismissive and bullying way the government has operated these past 5 years. I'm concerned because it appears that style is going to continue on into the next election. I urge you to please talk to a teacher. Ask a teacher. Listen to a teacher. I've done it. I've asked several. I believe they would like to work with the government. I believe they want the best for their students. I believe the opportunity to work together is right in front of all concerned parties. I do not believe the Glaze Report will help students. I ask, when the time comes to vote on Bill 72 that you reject it. Vote "No" on Bill 72. I ask each of you as human beings who cannot be oblivious to what is happening in our province. Use your head. Use your heart. Use your conscience. Try working with the teachers. The sledgehammer that the governing party wields has done it no favours with doctors, teachers, nurses and the public in general.

I believe that the teachers standing in front of Nova Scotian classrooms every day have a better idea of what needs to change and how it can be implemented. They would certainly know better than someone from Ontario (in the midst of its own education disarray) who spent a few weeks to travel our province, spoke to a select few and charged us \$75,000 to tell us essentially what the government wanted to hear.

Try working with teachers. Help change the tone. If you truly want to help the students and help this province turn the corner you'll have a much easier time if everyone is pulling in the same direction.

Regards,

Doug Gillis