



Notes for a Submission

By

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To the Law Amendments Committee:

Bill 92 Continuing Care Assistants Registry Act

Good morning,

Madame/Mr. Chairperson and Committee members – I am here today to speak to Bill 92 *Continuing Care Assistants Registry Act*.

My name is Jason MacLean and I am President of NSGEU.

The NSGEU is the largest union in the province representing over 31,000 hardworking women and men across the public sector in the provincial government, corrections, public schools, community colleges, universities, municipalities, community organizations and health care.

If passed, Continuing Care Assistants Registry Act will require all Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) in Nova Scotia to register with the Department of Health and Wellness every year.

CCAs will have to submit an application to the registry providing their name, current employment status, their employer information and their personal address and contact information on an annual basis.

The government feels this legislation will assist in recruiting and retention of CCAs. Creating a mandatory registry was one component of Recommendation Five on how to improve system performance and optimization by the [2018 Expert Panel on Long Term Care](#). The panel cited the need for a mandatory registry to address the lack of data to identify where needs existed in the system. A similar recommendation came out of the Health Association Nova Scotia 2014 report [Rising to the Challenge:](#)

[Responding to Increasing Demands in Home Care](#), where it was recommended that the Department of Health and Wellness improve data on the supply of CCAs by creating a mandatory registry.

Of all the possible steps that could have been taken to address the growing need for CCAs in Nova Scotia, Bill 92 is the smallest one, and it is woefully inadequate.

There are major issues that need to be addressed to solve the issues around recruitment and retention, namely wages and working conditions. A registry will not fix those issues.

Due to almost constant staffing shortages, CCAs are working massive overtime hours and have little access to vacation or time off when needed. If employers are having a tough time attracting and retaining CCAs, creating a registry will not fix the problem.

The Minister claimed in a Global interview (<https://globalnews.ca/news/7743151/nova-scotia-proposes-mandatory-registry-continuing-care-assistants/>) that wages are based upon contracts between the unions and employers. But those contracts are funded by government: they are the ones who have the ability to increase wages and benefits, and to attract people not only come to their sector, but to stay in it.

I expect you will hear from many people at this committee that long term care facilities and Home Care agencies throughout this province are underfunded by government. This chronic underfunding leaves them without

the capacity to provide adequate wages and a stable, standard work schedule.

The registry proposed in Bill 92 does nothing to help employers or the CCAs on the front line with these issues.

I am not here today to say the NSGEU is against this Bill. But I have a number of questions about the scope and intent of this registry. For example, can we have assurances that this will not be used as a punitive tool? Will this registry function as a mechanism to ensure all current CCAs have a chance to be brought up to a standard of training? Will it increase the economic wellbeing of these frontline professionals across the province? How long does government plan to collect data on this sector before finally acting on it?

Nova Scotia is currently sitting on plenty of recommendations from a number of studies into continuing care over the past decade. I would urge the Minister, the Department, and the members of this committee to investigate these existing recommendations, rather than waste any more time studying the problem.

The solution is simple, although clearly unpalatable to this government: they need to offer better wages and benefits to attract and retain workers to this sector.

Let's use this first, albeit small, step to move forward toward meaningful solutions for the good of all Nova Scotians who require the assistance a CCA provides and all of these hard-working professionals.

I thank you all for this opportunity to speak to Bill 92 and if you have a digital copy of my statement you will find some links below for further reading. Let's work towards meaningful solutions for the continuing care sector.

Studies:

<https://docplayer.net/20325491-Rising-to-the-challenge-responding-to-increasing-demands-in-home-care.html>

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/publications/Minister-Expert-Advisory-Panel-on-Long-Term-Care.pdf>

<https://nsgeu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/home-support-working-group-final-may-10-2019.pdf>