



Written Submission Law Amendments Committee – Bill 1

My name is Jeannie Baldwin and I am the Regional Executive Vice-President for the Public Service Alliance of Canada – Atlantic Region, representing 7200 PSAC union members in Nova Scotia. PSAC members wished to speak to the law amendments committee but were told that only written submissions were going to be accepted. What happened to democracy?

We do not support any legislation that will result in health care workers being forced into a union without having the opportunity to vote.

All four unions worked together and developed a plan to create Bargaining Associations, similar to the associations that exist in B.C. The plan would have addressed government concerns about too many bargaining units and contracts.

But this Bill isn't really about streamlining health care or improving access to needed services. It's clearly about diminishing the power of unions and health care workers, and setting the stage for wage restraint and diminished benefits.

Just like the Harper government, this legislation is being introduced with no public discussion or consultation with the affected workers.

Health care workers deserve our appreciation for the work they do, and should definitely have a say in which union will represent them in the future.

This legislation will drive health care workers out of Nova Scotia at a time when we're facing "alarming" shortages.

This type of legislation is unconstitutional and is the first of its kind in the country.

There is no instance in Canadian history where workers have had their union imposed on them. Health restructuring in BC allowed members to stay with their union by allowing for bargaining associations similar to what the NS unions have proposed. And it's worked well without any problems for the 20 years that it has been instituted.

In Saskatchewan, members were allowed to vote in run off votes. The only caveat was that unions with less than 15% of the new total combined membership were not allowed on the ballot. The same in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and PEI. In each of these provinces, workers were still given the right to choose.

Health care workers also deserve a government that respects its commitment and I would like to remind you of two key promises the Liberal party made to health care workers:



'Respect and continue to respect your hard-earned rights and collective agreement'

'All existing collective agreements will remain in place; successor rights will be protected; and benefits and salaries will be carried over into the new system.'

For all these reasons, I strongly urge the McNeil government to withdraw this Bill, and accept the bargaining association proposal. Barring that, they should absolutely allow all health care workers to vote. It's their democratic right.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Jeannie Baldwin', is written over a horizontal line.

Jeannie Baldwin
Regional Executive Vice-President, PSAC Atlantic