

Subject line: Bill 148

Wednesday December 16th, 2015

Dear Chair of the Law Amendments Committee:

My name is Susan Durdle and I am writing to oppose Bill 148. I wanted to come in to speak, but I was informed that the list was full yesterday evening and this was the only time available since I am teaching.

Teaching has become an incredibly difficult job and the government's Bill 148 is going to worsen these conditions. Not only has the government stripped us of our constitutional right to fair collective bargaining, but this bill also impedes our ability to advocate for funding that would improve our students learning environments which are our working conditions.

I have classes of 30+ students where many speak little to no English, some have severe mental health conditions, and some read at a grade 2 level (I teach grade 11). I have no additional staff in my classroom to help me support these students and I feel like I am failing many of them because of this. How can one person possibly educate 30+ students with so many needs? The answer is, we can't. And there is no worse feeling than this, as I want to help all of my students succeed. I want to help all of my students reach their full potential. Instead, I effectively help about 50% of my students and fail to provide the support necessary for the other 50% to see their greatest success.

Then there is the curriculum. We continually change the curriculum, and the results are often far worse than they were before the changes. Active teachers need to be consulted when new curriculum is being developed. Having one or two former teachers consult on these projects is not enough.

And the biggest problem of all is time. Since I started teaching 11 years ago, I have had more demands on my time due to an increased need for reporting and paper work. Many people believe that our education system is failing our students, and yet instead of allowing teachers more time to plan for our extremely diverse groups of students, we are collecting data to prove we're either not doing well currently in some area, or making improvements in another area. What would improve student success is allowing teachers more time to plan for our students so that we are actually able to reach more than 50% of them.

I urge all Liberals to have the courage to vote against Bill 148, to show Nova Scotia's youth that you support them and their educators. I expect all members of the Conservative and NDP parties to vote against Bill 148 because it is wrong and it violates workers' rights.

The only way for this province to develop to its full potential is for our government to invest in its future, its people.

Sincerely,
Susan Durdle