

Honorable members of the Law Amendments Committee:

I write to you today as I am unable to appear in person due to medical concerns. I thank you for your time in reading this submission regarding Bill 75 and its impact on educators in this province.

I am a Speech-Language Pathologist and formerly a classroom teacher with the Halifax Regional School Board. I love my work. I love being able to support students and staff in a variety of areas – language development, alternative and augmentative communication, articulation and fluency disorders, and social communication, just to name a few. If I sat and discussed in detail all areas I service, my five minutes would be quickly used up. There is nothing more rewarding then knowing I have helped, in some small part, one of our students achieve and feel confident in their abilities.

However, the current education system makes this near impossible. Imagine a caseload of 130+ students, spread across five different schools, with students impacted by these concerns I just mentioned above. Imagine not only needing to service these 130 students directly, but also needing to spend time with staff to give them the support they need for these concerns. Imagine having the parents of 130 students waiting for you to call to advise them on progress and supports they can implement at home assist their children. Imagine students who wait all week to see the speech-language pathologist to target these areas of difficulty, knowing that with the speech-language pathologist they will learn the skills they need to deal with these difficulties.

I say imagine because I know you are not there in the schools to see this. But for our students, our parents, our educators and specialists, and our speech-language pathologists, this is their daily reality. Unfortunately, this situation is not unique to our speech-language pathologists, but to all people working in the education system. There is not enough time, not enough space, not enough resources, and not enough support. We need change – we need more specialists such as speech-pathologists, psychologists, and guidance, as you promised in your Throne Speech. We need more time in our schools, more time with staff, and more time for families. We need supports for classroom teachers so they can do what they are trained and eager to do. Most of all, we need the government's support in recognizing the dire conditions we are facing in our schools, and committing to doing something concrete about these difficulties.

Imagine you didn't have the words to express your concerns, your needs, or your thoughts. For many of our students, this is their reality. Educators want to support this. Please stop silencing our educators through your actions.

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Speech-Language Pathologist

NSTU Member