
From: Andrea Lantz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 11:51 AM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Fwd: LAC statement

Please see my statement for the Law Amendments Committee regarding Bill 75.

Feb. 16, 2017

I am writing my input for the Law Amendments Committee (LAC) regarding Bill 75 as I have been denied (as of yet) the opportunity to voice my thoughts and views in person. I am profoundly disappointed in the “democratic” process on display in Nova Scotia. I have been on the list to speak on the LAC since the weekend and received two calls from the legislative office to confirm that my name was on the list; however, when I called them today – after trying multiple times between my cases in the operating room today – I was told that no more slots are being scheduled. This is very disappointing. Please see my statement below:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the Law Amendments Committee today regarding Bill 75. I am addressing this committee as a concerned citizen of Nova Scotia. My fiancé is a high school teacher and I can tell you: my eyes have been opened to the sorry state of our public school system in Nova Scotia. Prior to being with my fiancé, I had no first hand exposure to the public school system here. I was born and raised in British Columbia, and moved to Nova Scotia in 1999. I attended university here in Halifax. I was very surprised in one of my first English classes in university when I got my first paper back from my professor and she asked if I had a specific teacher from a school in Halifax. I told her I had gone to school in BC and asked why she was questioning who I had for a teacher. I was very surprised when she told me that she was asking because I knew how to write an essay with a proper thesis statement and paragraph structure. Much of my first year in undergrad was a repeat of things that I had learned in high school BC. I remember talking to my chemistry professor who was from Ontario and have him complain about how poorly prepared Nova Scotian students were for university. He had done his training in Ontario and had just recently arrived in Nova Scotia. Since being with my fiancé, I have

heard about the absolute sorry state of public education in Nova Scotia. My reference to my experiences almost 20 years ago shows that the issues facing public education in Nova Scotia are not new – they have, however, gotten worse over the last 20 years. I had no idea what an Individual Program Plan a few years ago. I was surprised to hear how common they are and about the lack of support for those students and those on adaptations. Class sizes of 40 high school students with not enough desks shocked me. I do not understand how one teacher with limited supports can be expected to effectively teach to multiple levels in one class. I am so disillusioned with the state of public schools in Nova Scotia that I if we have children we may decide to send them to private school. How ironic is that? With a father who is a high school teacher we might put our children in private school. That is not right. It is not right at all. Teachers are asking for support. They are crying for it. I would request that the government listen to those cries for help **and instead of legislating more committees to study inclusion and classroom issues, amend the legislation to enact change now. Make hard caps from primary-12. Hire more EPAs with the funds saved from the 2 days offered in Tentative Agreement 3.** If this potentially unconstitutional legislation is passed, please make these amendments.

My main concern that has prompted me to speak here now is due to the nature of this legislation and the lack of fair negotiation that has gone on these last 14 months. I know the Premier has stated many times that his negotiations team negotiated 3 contracts with 2 union executives, but I take exception to that statement. There was no fair negotiating. Although it isn't widely stated in the media, teachers were told, either implicitly or explicitly that if they voted no to the first tentative agreement the government would table punitive legislation with harsh penalties. That is not fair collective bargaining as protected by the constitution. That was bullying – plain and simple. I am not delusional, so I know the chance of this happening is infinitesimally small, but **I would like an amendment to scrap Bill 75 all together.** I hope that enough Liberal caucus members listen to the concerns raised by the public and vote against this legislation. Students are falling behind and it is not due to work-to-rule; it is due to the status quo and is due to the failings of successive governments of all parties. There are no adaptations in real life. These are grade 12 students about to graduate and many of them cannot write a coherent essay. Is this the legacy you want to be a part of or will you stand up for overhauling and improving the system? If we continue to graduate people who cannot be productive members of

the workforce because they have been pushed through the school system, there will be more people on social assistance. I see patients of mine like that not infrequently. It is a vicious cycle. The problems in the public education system are due to successive governments, not just this one, but you can all be part of fundamental change. Thank you.

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