

February 16, 2017

Members of the Law Amendments Committee:

Although our Government is limiting the number of individuals who wish to speak to the Law Amendments Committee, (and shame on you!), they can't limit the number of individuals emailing their submissions.

I am a proud Nova Scotian and unionist. When you're raised by a long serving president of the largest union in Nova Scotia, you become what you exposed to. He did so much good for the people of Nova Scotia and I feel it's my turn to do whatever I can in that respect, too. So, I put on my hat and channel my father when facing this disrespectful, anti-union Government.

My sister, Anita MacLeod, teaches junior high Phys Ed in Dartmouth and my cousin, Adele Cox, teaches in Glace Bay. My Dad was a teacher, my grandmother was a teacher, my aunt was a teacher, and my uncle was a teacher. I have countless friends who are teachers. I can read, write, do math, think critically, and understand cause and effect because of the fantastic teachers I had growing up. I have two children who are in our broken public education system. I count myself as fortunate that they are bright individuals who don't struggle with learning and therefore don't require any additional supports in the classroom – but there are many in their classes who do, and I hear from those parents the struggles their children face. Why should children have to share textbooks, sometimes which are outdated? Why should children have to rush to class so they don't have to be one the ones who sit on the floor because there are not enough desks? Why should children, who don't bother showing up for class or don't complete their work, be moved in to the next grade? Why should my child have to compete with 30+ other students for teacher attention?

First, I want to thank our Mr. McNeil, Karen Casey, and the rest of our majority Liberal government for uniting the NSTU membership like never before. We saw this when each of the tentative agreements your Government offered were turned down, because in all fairness, they were a slap in the face of those people educating your children and grandchildren. We saw this when they voted 96% in favour of strike. 96%! We saw this in December, when you closed schools citing "safety issues" so you could try to force through a bill to see a contract legislated, and we rallied. We see this, this week when our membership and other unions spent countless hours over for the last two days at the legislature. We see this in the number of people wishing to speak before Law Amendments and the countless emails you will receive. WE ARE UNITED! This won't stop if a contract is legislated upon our teachers.

We are setting our children up for disappointment and failure. I work for NSCC and students can fail – and some are SHOCKED when it happens to them. They have been pushed through our system to come in to post-secondary and have no idea how to cope with failure, because they've have never been allowed to fail. How are these future employees supposed to cope in the workforce? Employers aren't going to tolerate them showing up late – if they even show up! – do work when they feel like it, or ignore deadlines. It's not going to happen – and, again, we've set our children up for failure by not teaching them early in life that lack of work ethic, lack of respect for authority and lack of action will result in failure. You, Mr. Premier, and the rest of your Liberal MLAs, had the opportunity to help fix this, and you didn't.

If this bill passes, when each teacher has his or her own choice with what to continue to do and what not to do, I hope they choose not to go back to the way things were. There is no "back to normal", Mr. McNeil. There never will be. You have disrespected the most valuable profession we have. I, and I'm only one of many, will not forget that and we will continue to fight on their behalf until they finally receive the respect that they deserve.

If this bill passes, and this unconstitutional contract is legislated upon the teachers, when the Supreme Court shuts you down, I will hold every one of the Liberal caucus personally responsible. And, rest assured, I will work against the Liberal party in any future election.

We live in, what I believed to be, a democracy. What the Liberal government is showing its voters, as well as the many future voters who have supported their teachers, is that you are nothing but a dictatorship. I'm ashamed of our provincial political system.

Three tentative agreements were voted down.... Three Let that sink in for a minute. You went after the teachers thinking they'd be the easy group. Well guess what – you picked the wrong group to mess with.

Forever in solidarity with all my brothers and sisters.

Seana Blanchard
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia