



March 2, 2026

Hon. Scott Armstrong and Members of the Public Bills Committee

c/o Legc.office@novascotia.ca

Re: Please Do Not Proceed with Bill 201

Introduction:

I am writing as a member of the Advocates for the Care of the Elderly (the ACE Team). The ACE Team was started by our Chair, Gary MacLeod. Our members have all had loved ones living in long-term care. We are seeking systemic change in how Long-term Care and home care operate.

I am writing about Bill 201 for two main reasons. One is to support the effectiveness and efficiency of Social Work through the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers. The other is to clarify how our strongly worded complaint with the College will be resolved.

Working with the College of Social Workers:

On my first point, my mother was a social worker and also worked as a Field Instructor with the Nova Scotia School of Social Work. I also worked for nine years as a Social Development Worker with the former Social Planning Department of the City of Halifax. I was not a registered social worker, but I worked closely with them across our Department.

I do not understand why your government has not given notice to or consulted with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers before introducing this Bill. I fail to understand why the government would want to proceed with this Bill without working with the main body representing these workers. Ideally, they should be represented first of all in the hearing on this Bill. They should not be left aside as marginal players.

I wonder why the government has proceeded in such a fashion. Government legislation should always involve the major players, such as the College of Social Workers. Assurances by the Minister

Responsible for the Opportunities and Social Development and the Minister of Health that social workers are important means little if their main organization is not notified or consulted beforehand.

Handling our Complaint through the College:

On the second point, our ACE Team complaint was submitted on Dec. 8, 2025 for which we received an acknowledgement. The action we were hoping for is that Robert Lafferty (Director of Protection for Persons in Care), as a licensed social worker, would be sanctioned for multiple failures as outlined in our complaint. This action would clarify that protecting vulnerable long-term care residents isn't optional.

Sections 27 to 54 of the College of Social Workers Act outline fairly extensive provisions for complaints and their resolution. We checked further on February 18, 2026, and were told that we'd be advised once they had information.

However, we are quite concerned about what will happen with our complaint if the College of Social Workers becomes part of the Regulated Health Professions Act, which became law in November 2023. During Second Reading, the Minister of Health said there are currently 21 regulated health professions under this Act.

From my understanding of legislation across the country, most provinces have provincially regulated social work legislation. No one else has suggested using health professions legislation to regulate social workers.

Conclusion:

I therefore respectfully request that this Bill be placed on hold and that the College and the broader social work community be meaningfully involved in further developing the legislation before it proceeds. I also request that the current complaint process be completed under the existing legislative framework with respect to our complaint against Mr. Lafferty.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Johnson,

ACE Team Researcher, Advocates for the Care of the Elderly, The ACE Team