



# Background

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## **Bill 29, the Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act**

On January 28, 2002 the Campbell Liberals rammed through a law that ripped up legally negotiated contracts, clearing the way for hospital closures, service cuts and health care privatization. A law that targeted freely negotiated provisions that had been part of contracts for 30 years, Bill 29 was introduced with no notice, no consultation and passed with only a few hours of debate in the middle of the night while most British Columbians were asleep.

### **What contract provisions did Bill 29 eliminate or impose?**

Bill 29 robbed health care workers of basic negotiated protections, including:

- 20-year old contracting out provisions that safeguarded health services from privatization;
- basic bumping protections that had existed for more than 30 years. With Bill 29, health care workers with years of dedicated service have been laid off and their valuable skills and experience lost; and
- labour force adjustment provisions like the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency and employment security programs such as retraining and job placement that were used in the past as key elements of a progressive approach to change in the delivery of health services.

### **The impact of Bill 29 on health care delivery**

The result of this draconian law for health care has been catastrophic:

- hospitals and long-term care facilities across B.C. have been closed;
- health services have been cut, reduced or transferred, leaving British Columbians without critical resources when and where they need them. The negative impact of Bill 29 has been felt most severely by those living outside the Lower Mainland and Victoria; and
- the voices of front-line workers have been silenced on decisions that affect the services they deliver.

**January 9, 2004**

