



Newsletter

Victory – HEU actions marking B.C. Liberals' Bill 29 deemed a political protest strike

*Freedom of expression is “a vitally important element of the
British Columbia labour relations system” – LRB ruling*

MEMBERS OF THE Hospital Employees' Union have been handed a substantial victory by the B.C. Labour Relations Board in a ruling that's found the union's January 28, 2003 political protest strike a legitimate form of political expression constitutionally protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In her February 24 decision, LRB vice-chair Jan O'Brien writes that “a ban on the type of political protest work stoppage that HEU members took part in on January 28, 2003 cannot be reasonably justified in a free and democratic society...A prohibition on the single day of political protest work stoppage...impairs the freedom of expression of HEU members...”

“This is an important win for HEU members and the labour movement at large,” says the union's secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. “When our constitutional rights and freedoms are threatened, we must pursue every avenue to ensure that they are upheld and protected.”

O'Brien's decision “vacates” or cancels an interim cease and desist order granted to the Health Employers Association of B.C. by the Board late in the day on January 28, 2003 in regard to political protest action undertaken by HEU members against Bill 29 and the policies of the Campbell government.

Read the ruling on the Labour Relations Board website at www.lrb.bc.ca/decisions. Follow the instructions on the web page to find the decision – BCLRB No. B64/2004 – which should be posted by Wednesday, March 3.

February 25, 2004

