



Newsletter

Court fines HEU \$150,000 for Bill 37 protest

A B.C. Supreme Court justice has fined the Hospital Employees' Union \$150,000 for civil contempt of court for its protests against the Campbell Liberals' Bill 37.

It's the largest fine levied against a trade union for contempt of court in B.C. history.

In his reasons for judgment Friday morning, Justice Robert Baumann wrote: "I must choose an amount which is significant, so that it serves the principles of deterrence and denunciation, but which is also restrained, so that the justice of it will be accepted by all."

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says the union accepts Justice Bauman's decision and emphasized that the Bill 37 protests were against the Campbell government – not the court.

"Bill 37 was an unjust law that hurts patients, residents and health care workers – and it still does," says Allnutt. "Members of our union will continue to work with the rest of the labour movement and in our communities to hold this government to account for its actions."

Today's fine follows a May 2 finding of civil contempt against the union for its defiance of government back-to-work legislation that imposed a two-year contract containing 15 per cent wage cuts on 43,000 health care workers.

And the fine is unrelated to the May 2 memorandum reached with government and health employers that contained a "no recrimination" clause against individual workers, unions or union officers for taking part in Bill 37 protests. That memorandum also capped contracting out and established a \$25 million severance fund for workers affected by privatization.

In his judgment, Justice Bauman suspended the fine for a period of 30 days, leaving the option to the union of paying out the fine to six designated hospital foundations instead.

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