



# Background

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## Climate change in health care bargaining

### CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

The Campbell Liberals' broken promises, contract shredding and health privatization have poisoned labour relations with B.C.'s unionized health care workers and undermined trust and confidence in the collective bargaining process.

Here's what's happened over the last few years to create a toxic bargaining environment:

**December 2000** – B.C. Liberal leader Gordon Campbell pledges to respect collective agreements and tells health workers that they don't have to worry about privatization in an interview published in HEU's *Guardian* magazine

**May 2001** – 62 per cent of health care workers vote in favour of a new, freely-negotiated collective agreement. More than 90 per cent of the HEABC employers also ratify the contract

Three weeks later, health employers submit a wish list to the newly-elected Campbell Liberal government that sets the stage for Bill 29

**January 2002** – Campbell government rams through contract-breaking legislation with the passage of Bill 29, the *Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act*, paving the way for health privatization and the largest mass layoff of women workers in Canadian history

**April 2002** – Leaked documents show that government through its recently restructured health authorities intends to close B.C. hospitals and long-term care facilities and cut and privatize health services

**January 2004** – To date 6,000 health care workers have lost their jobs due to cuts and closures and the contracting out of direct care and support services across the province. Contracting out of laundry, housekeeping and security in the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser health authorities are responsible for the majority of lay-offs.

On the eve of negotiations, the VCHA has announced the contracting out of food services and the Vancouver Island Health Authority has rejected a money-saving proposal from its unionized employees that would retain in-house food services, maintain patient care and keep skilled and experienced workers on the job.

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