



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

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Clark government moves to restructure largest bargaining unit in public sector

Union says province treading in dangerous constitutional waters by redefining bargaining units without proper consultation

A move by the B.C. Liberal government to fundamentally change the way that workers are represented in the health sector was done without prior consultation, says the Hospital Employees' Union.

Bill 18 – the *Health Authorities Amendment Act* – would transfer approximately 8,200 licensed practical nurses from the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association to another bargaining unit.

HEU is the lead union in the FBA, representing the majority of workers in the 46,000-member bargaining unit including 1,200 LPNs.

HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson says that by failing to consult with the union prior to introducing the bill today, the B.C. Liberals are repeating a mistake that they committed in 2002 when they introduced legislation ripping up health care collective agreements.

In 2007, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled several provisions of the legislation to be unconstitutional and noted the Campbell government's lack of consultation with affected unions as a major factor in their decision.

“This government had every opportunity to consult before introducing this last minute legislation and they have failed to do so,” says Pearson.

“And with just a few days left in the session to jam through this legislation, there will be no meaningful consultation on this legislation.”

Pearson says that if LPNs are transferred into another bargaining unit as a result of the legislation becoming law, HEU will assert its rights to continue to represent its members.

Prior to the last major restructuring of health bargaining units, government struck two major inquiries to consult with stakeholders before implementing the current structure in the late 1990s.

Today's legislation also would transfer community-based LPNs out of the Community Bargaining Association.

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