

Bill 28 to cost teachers \$15,000 in future earnings



Earlier this year, the provincial government introduced Bill 28 – The Public Services Sustainability Act, more aptly referred to as the “wage freeze bill”.

This bill would impose a two-year wage freeze for all new public sector collective agreements, with minimal increases of 0.75 per cent and one per cent in the subsequent years of a four year agreement.

Bill 28 would also restrict the ability to bargain for increases to other monetary benefits such as premiums, bonuses or allowances. However, the bill does not affect an employee’s entitlement to a pay increase as a result of promotion or reclassification, or to a periodic or performance-based increases within established pay range.

The government claims that the wage freeze is needed to bring the deficit under control, except the “savings” from freezing the wages of the province’s 120,000 public servants is being directed to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund (Rainy day Fund), rather than to reducing the deficit.

Either way, this bill will have a significant impact on future earnings for Manitoba teachers. It is estimated that each full-time public school teacher will lose out on an average of \$15,000 in future earnings.

This amounts to about \$217 million in foregone salary increases by the time the next provincial election comes around (2020).

The Manitoba Teachers’ Society and other public sector unions have deemed this bill unconstitutional as it undermines the process of meaningful, good faith bargaining. The unions have joined together and formed the Partnership to Defend Public Services and filed a statement of claim in the Court of Queen’s Bench which includes a request for an injunction against Bill 28.

A court date has been set for May 29, 2018.

The injunction, if successful, will stop Bill 28 from coming into effect.

As we await the court date, we encourage you to speak out and stand up against this unconstitutional legislation.

Talk to your neighbours, family and friends and consider sending a letter or email to your MLA stating your disappointment with this legislation. Spread the word amongst colleagues and encourage them to do the same.

It’s more important than ever that we work together to raise awareness and to support each other as we fight to safeguard public education and the status of the teaching profession.