



NEWS RELEASE

February 28, 2012

**** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ****

Statement from B.C. Federation of Labour Executive Officers on Bill 22

Today the BC Liberal Government has introduced **Bill 22**, imposing 2 years of no wage increases and seeking significant concession from teachers regarding learning conditions and professional development. At the same time, the BC Liberals eliminate teachers' right to job action. After three terms this tired government has not learned anything when it comes to respecting workers' democratic rights.

The BC Liberal government still has the ability to prevent a crisis in our public education system; withdraw **Bill 22** and return to the bargaining table without condition and with the help of a professional mediator. The BC Teachers Federation has already called for the appointment of Stephen Kelleher as a mediator in this dispute. The B.C. Federation of Labour supports this call, and encourages the provincial government to accept this request. School trustees have called for mediation, the employer BC PSEA has agreed to mediation, and the public overwhelmingly supports real mediation.

Today's legislation has nothing to do with improving public education, it's about a provincial government, beyond its expiry date, with no new ideas and no commitment to public education. In fact, **Bill 22** will create larger class sizes and offers no support for students with special needs. Far from restoring teachers' rights to bargain their working conditions, class size and composition, **Bill 22** plans to make those rights obsolete. Teachers deserve better; and most importantly, so do our kids.

The government's actions today extend beyond teachers and impact all provincial public sector negotiations. Imposing a mandate when other public sector workers have only begun bargaining is a serious breach of the principle of free collective bargaining. This legislative hammer comes from a government that has lost a number of Supreme Court challenges resulting from their trampling of labour rights.

If the BC Liberal government was truly interested in mediation, they would use the tools at their disposal via the Labour Relations Board and the **Labour Code**, no other legislation is necessary. Mediation involves an impartial third party able to hear the concerns of both parties. Mediation cannot be limited to only the issues the BC Liberals choose. **Bill 22** is not mediation it's the beginning of an imposed collective agreement.

BC's public and private sector unions and our more than 450,000 members stand in solidarity with BC's teachers and their desire for a fair negotiated deal. Labour leaders will be meeting to discuss how they continue to support BC teachers.

BC Government & Service Employees' Union
BC Teachers' Federation
BC and Yukon Territory Building and Construction Trades Council
Canadian Auto Workers
Canadian Office and Professional Employee's Union
Canadian Union of Public Employees
Communication, Energy & Paperworkers Union of Canada
Federation of Post-Secondary Educators
Health Sciences Association of BC
Hospital Employees' Union
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Picture Operators
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
International Longshore & Warehouse Union
International Union of Operating Engineers
Public Service Alliance of Canada
UNITE HERE!
United Food & Commercial Workers' International Union
United Steelworkers

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