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for immediate release

Unions take Government of Saskatchewan to court over LRB

Today the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL), the Saskatchewan Joint Board Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Union (SJBRWDSU), and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) filed a Notice of Motion at the Court of Queen's Bench to quash a recent Order-in-Council of the provincial government. The Notice cites the Attorney-General and the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Order-in-Council 98/2008 terminated the Vice-Chairs and Chair of the Labour Relations Board (LRB) and appointed a new Chair on March 6th.

"The government agrees the firings were without cause. You don't have to look too closely at how this was handled to see that the government's actions were designed to promote business interests, rather than to uphold the purpose of the Trade Union Act, which is to promote union rights. We are alleging that the government in effect is telling the Board to violate its own Act," said Larry Hubich, SFL President.

The unions are arguing that the Order violates the legal administrative principle that quasi-judicial tribunals like the LRB must be free to do their job without government interference and influence.

The unions will also argue that workers' freedom of association under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been violated. "Unions rely on the LRB as an independent tribunal to enforce workers' associational rights. Government interference in the LRB is unacceptable," added Hubich.

The unions are asking the Court to cancel the terminations and the appointment, and reinstate the status quo prior to March 6th. They also ask that any further appointments be made according to proper legal administrative principles and that all outstanding cases be put on hold until this matter is decided.

A hearing is requested for June 12th.

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