



News Release

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Unions react to decision on LRB appointments

In his January 14th decision, Court of Queen's Bench justice Ted Zarzeczny ruled that the government acted with proper legislative authority when it appointed a new Chairperson to the Labour Relations Board (LRB) last March.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), and the Saskatchewan Joint Board Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Union (RWDSU) challenged the government's appointment on the grounds that it violated the principles of judicial independence and the purpose of the Trade Union Act.

The SFL was concerned with comments made by the Premier and Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, which it viewed as attempts to influence the new LRB.

"When politicians say they expect the LRB to rule in a way that encourages 'business and investment', we consider that to be interference in the neutrality of the LRB," says Crystal Norbeck, Legal and Legislative Representative for CUPE.

"We are pleased that the Court, for the first time in Canada, recognizes that the principles of judicial independence apply to Labour Relations Boards. We are also very pleased that the Court recognizes the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) as the appropriate representative of workers and unions," says RWDSU General Counsel Larry Kowalchuk.

"Unfortunately, the Court dismissed our challenge of the appointment of the new LRB and we are currently identifying grounds for appeal to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal," adds Kowalchuk.

Larry Kowalchuk is General Counsel for the Saskatchewan Joint Board Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Union (RWDSU), who represent over 6,000 workers in Saskatchewan.

Crystal Norbeck is Legal and Legislative Representative for the Canadian Union of Public Employees in Saskatchewan.

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