



News Release

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SFL Requests Referral from the Premier on Bills 5 and 6

Yesterday the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) asked Premier Brad Wall to refer Bills 5 and 6 to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal for a determination as to the constitutionality of the Bills. The request was made pursuant to *The Constitutional Questions Act* of Saskatchewan.

If the government agrees to refer these Bills, the Court would be asked to determine whether or not the Bills violate workers' rights under the freedom of association and the freedom of expression provisions of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Bill 5 is titled *An Act respecting Essential Public Services* and Bill 6 is *An Act to amend The Trade Union Act*.

"In our view, these Bills were hastily drafted and then rushed through the first sitting of the Legislature. The intent of Bills 5 and 6 appears to be to roll back workers' rights to form unions, to collectively bargain and to strike. Several aspects of the Bills may infringe on workers' rights under the freedom of association and freedom of expression provisions of the *Charter*. We are asking the Courts to take a sober second look at these pieces of legislation with respect to their constitutionality," said SFL President Larry Hubich.

"Several recent decisions from courts across the country, including the Supreme Court of Canada, support the fundamental principles that collective bargaining is a protected right and that union members have the right to participate in democratic organizations free from employer interference. We are asking the government to refer these Bills to the Court so they don't run afoul of these principles," added Hubich.

"By taking this step, we are also raising a broader concern, that these Bills are bad public policy. They do not contribute to a co-operative environment and harmonious labour relations climate. In this time of labour and skills shortages, unions, employers, and governments need to work together to find solutions to issues of training, recruitment and retention. Instead we are faced with two pieces of legislation that amount to union-busting, plain and simple," said Hubich.

The SFL represents nearly 95,000 unionized workers from 37 affiliated unions in Saskatchewan.

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