

December 4, 2013

**Premier Alison Redford**  
**Office of the Premier**  
307 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Dear Premier Redford:

We are requesting a meeting with you today to discuss the labour movement's concerns about recent labour legislation introduced by your government. We feel strongly that Bills 45 and 46 are unfair, uncalled for, unnecessarily confrontational and likely unconstitutional.

As the unions "next in line" for negotiations in the provincial public sector, we are concerned that these bills will cast a shadow over all current and upcoming bargaining sessions. We are also concerned that, if passed, these bills will lead to a generation of poisoned labour relations in Alberta's public sector.

In an effort to avoid this obviously undesirable outcome, we would like you to consider our proposal to create a Task Force on Public Sector Labour Relations. The Task Force would provide a platform to discuss key issues, including the following:

1. **Workplace arbitration.** Premier Lougheed introduced binding arbitration as the method of resolving disputes between the government and its employees. Without the right-to-strike or an arbitration system that both employees and employers can have confidence in, the constitutional rights of workers to free collective bargaining are fundamentally compromised. We need to find a way to either recommit to fair, impartial arbitration or discuss returning the right-to-strike to public sector workers.
2. **Quality of public services and workplace safety.** Public servants have a duty to speak up on issues related to workplace safety, public safety and the quality of public services. The underlying premise of Bill 45 is to intimidate public servants and discourage them from speaking out. By stifling dissent, the Bill sends a chill over the public service that is not in keeping with advancement of the public interest.
3. **Pensions.** Your government has tabled proposals for changes to public-sector pensions. These proposals were developed without any meaningful input from the people who have a direct stake in the pension plans: employees and employers. Through the Task Force, we can discuss a mechanism for real negotiation on changes to plan design. Our position is that changes need to be negotiated, not imposed.

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4. **Revenue Reform.** Your government is obviously concerned about balancing its books. But the problem is not spending, it's revenue. After years of tax and royalty giveaways, we have a revenue system that is unnecessarily impoverishing public services in an otherwise wealthy province.

This is a very urgent matter. It is not too late to do the right thing. We urge you not to undermine the legacy of former Premier Lougheed by passing these Bills without taking into account the interests of your public employees.

Sincerely,

**Gil McGowan**  
**President**  
**Alberta Federation of Labour**

**Heather Smith**  
**President**  
**United Nurses of Alberta**

**Elisabeth Ballermann**  
**President**  
**Health Sciences Association of Alberta**

**Marle Roberts**  
**President**  
**Canadian Union of Public Employees - Alberta**

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**Cc's: Honorable Doug Horner, Minister of Finance, 423 Legislature Building**  
10800 – 97 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

**Heather Smith, UNA; Elisabeth Ballermann, HSAA; Marle Roberts, CUPE-Alberta**