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## **NS government broke the law with Bill 148, courts find: will Houston fix the problem?**

Halifax, NS – CUPE members are celebrating the news that the four years of wage freezes forced on Nova Scotian workers through Bill 148 has been found unconstitutional. Today, the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia has upheld the constitutional guarantee in Canada’s *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that workers have a right to negotiate the terms of their work through free and fair collective bargaining.

“Workers lost out on wages and benefits that should rightfully be theirs because of Bill 148,” said Alan Linkletter, CUPE NS President.

“Tim Houston said he’d repeal this legislation. Instead, he put more taxpayer money into undermining our Charter rights. It’s disrespectful to the people who keep our province running.”

The bill was initially introduced by then-Premier Stephen McNeil and the Liberals in 2015.

In the most recent budget, Houston, like McNeil before him, has decided to attack workers rather than fix the problems that we’re facing. If Houston moves to appeal, he’ll continue operating under this same legacy.

“You don’t fix the problem by attacking workers, you fix it by investing in communities, and improving the services people rely on every day,” said Steve Joy, President of CUPE’s highway workers local, whose long-service awards were a major target of the bill.

CUPE workers in Nova Scotia are calling on the Premier to respect worker’s rights to free and fair collective bargaining and not waste more taxpayer money on an appeal.

In her decision, Justice Ann E. Smith writes, “The evidence shows, and I find that Bill 148 did not respect the principle of the duty to consult and negotiate in good faith.”

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