



MAJOR VICTORY FOR WORKERS

February 27, 2026

CHARTER CHALLENGE SUCCESSFUL

Today, CUPE workers in Nova Scotia workers are celebrating a major victory for workers' rights that will resonate across Canada.

More than a decade after the McNeil Liberal government passed Bill 148, 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.

The Court held that "*Bill 148's elimination of Service Awards and imposition of wage restraint, including a wage freeze, substantially interfered with collective bargaining, contrary to the Charter.*"

The Court agreed with workers on every issue that the unions raised. The Court rejected the Houston government's arguments in defense of Bill 148.

BILL 148 HISTORY

"Workers lost out on wages and benefits that should rightfully be theirs because of Bill 148," said Alan Linkletter, CUPE NS President. "Today, CUPE Nova Scotia members are struggling today to afford even basic needs like rent, and groceries because of McNeil's illegal attack on workers."

"Government used a legislative hammer on us, and it had devastating impacts on all Nova Scotians. We've been clear all along that there's no place for this type of approach to collective bargaining in a democratic society. Today the Court has firmly agreed."

NEXT STEPS

"CUPE members have always been clear on one thing: free and fair collective bargaining is a foundational right for all Canadians. We've carried this fight for more than ten years, and we'll see it through to the end." said Linkletter.

"Tim Houston has the chance to make this right. We'll be standing shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour to make sure that he does."

For Immediate Release

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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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