

Bill 17 Explainer

The attack on CUPE Locals 1253, 2745 & NBCNHU

What happened in the legislature?

The Government has introduced a new law impacting three CUPE locals, concerning over 9000 active members and even more retirees. The law breaks signed contracts and promises that were made to those active and past CUPE members. If passed, the law will force three CUPE groups to convert their negotiated pension plans.

How are decisions made about our pensions now?

Our pension plans are in our collective agreements. This means that both sides of the table have longstanding agreements that changes to the pension plans must happen through collective bargaining. On top of this collective agreement language, to end the strike in 2021, CUPE Locals 1253 and 2745 agreed to a process with government where pensions would ultimately be subject to a binding arbitration process. These locals have been engaging in that process in good faith.

What kind of pension plan do we have now?

The three (3) CUPE groups in question (1253, 2745 and NBCNHU) have Defined Benefit (DB) pension plans. This is the type of plan that promises you a specific amount in retirement determined by a formula. This amount is a promise and cannot be reduced.

What does government want?

The Government wants total control over workers' working conditions. Government has introduced a law that breaks these three locals' articles on pensions and dictates current and future benefits without input or collaboration from those impacted and the unions that represent them.

What does this legislation do?

Bill 17 requires that our pension plans be transferred into an existing shared risk plan that have been designed for other unions. This would mean the DB benefits you have already earned (and would have earned in the future), would be converted to the terms and conditions of those existing plans. The Bill presents a smokescreen of a "negotiation" process, but the key decision to move into a shared risk plan is mandated and is therefore the only outcome. Imposing a pension outcome outside of bargaining is a clear breach of our collective bargaining rights. The legislation also overrides pension arbitration and other legal decisions that have benefited CUPE members. Bill 17 is an incredibly heavy-handed legislation that attacks not only your retirement security, but your Charter rights. Government can't just legislate what they haven't achieved at a free and fair bargaining table.

What is CUPE doing?

Rest assured your CUPE Locals are taking this issue very seriously and are evaluating all options in response. Please stay tuned and be ready to stand in solidarity against this attack on your pension and your union rights.

