

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**BC FED and CROWN PROSECUTORS SUPPORT GOVERNMENT'S IN-HOUSE LAWYERS  
OVER UNFAIR LEGISLATION THAT DENIES THEM THE CHANCE TO UNIONIZE**

**Victoria, B.C. (February 14, 2023):** With members of the BC Government Lawyers Association (BCGLA) voting 97.1 per cent in favour of job action last weekend, additional support has arrived from the BC Federation of Labour, as the government's civil lawyers challenge Bill 5 introduced by the government last week.

In a [statement](#) posted on its website, the BC Fed is backing the BCGLA and its right to choose which union it wants to represent its members.

In the message, BC Fed president Sussanne Skidmore and Secretary-Treasurer Hermender Singh Kailley state, "The BC Federation of Labour is disappointed that government has chosen this path instead of letting the Labour Relation Board complete its work. It is important to protect the rights of working people to join or form a union of their choosing."

Bill 5 introduced by the NDP government essentially negates an ongoing Labour Relations Board hearing in which the LRB was to rule on whether the BCGLA can form a union to represent its members who work for the provincial government. However, the government legislation to be debated this week directs the BCGLA members to join the Professional Employees Association (PEA).

In addition, the BC Crown Counsel Association (BCCCA) has issued a statement of support. It represents crown prosecutors – the other large group of government-employed lawyers in B.C.

"No employer should have the right to assign any group of employees to a union that it selects. There's no independence in that," states BCGLA Vice President Adam Dalrymple. "All lawyers working for the government need someone who will have their backs when it comes to contract bargaining and someone who will ensure an independent process for resolving disagreements with the government as employer. The issues they face are unique and cannot be adequately managed by a union representing employees of several different disciplines and job categories."

(more)

The support from the BC Fed and BCCCA comes in addition to [previous support](#) expressed in January by colleagues in other government unions - the BCGEU and the Professional Employees Association.

“The importance of support from other labour leaders cannot be overstated,” said Gareth Morley, President of the BC Government Lawyers Association. “We’re not just fighting legislation which forces us to join a union none of us has voted to join. This is also about a government that has decided to change the rules of the game and impose legislation that denies a group of government employees their chance to have their case heard, and decided upon, by the Labour Relations Board. It’s something that’s never been done before in Canada, and we appreciate the solidarity of all those in the labour movement so far who have joined our fight against this unfair approach by the employer.”

“The LRB process ensures certification applications are determined independently and fairly,” added Margo Foster, Secretary of BCGLA. “Bill 5 not only breaks a promise made to us in 2018 by the John Horgan government that no legislation affecting us would be introduced without consultation — it effectively takes away our chance to have our application heard before a fair and independent decision maker. By overriding the hearing and forcing us into a union we never voted to join, our right to seek bargaining status for ourselves has been circumvented. No other employer could do this.”

### **About the BCGLA**

The BC Government Lawyers Association advocates for 350 government civil lawyers in matters of remuneration, benefits, conditions of employment and matters of professional interest relating to employment.

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