



Manitoba Federation of Labour Submission to the Manitoba Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development on Bill 12

The Red Tape Reduction and Government Efficiency Act, 2018

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Manitoba Federation of Labour

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Bill 12: The Red Tape Reduction and Government Efficiency Act, 2018

The Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL), Manitoba's central labour body, representing the interests of more than 100,000 unionized workers, opposes the provision of this bill which will make it harder for renters to appeal rental increases imposed on them by their landlords. This bill removes the right of tenants to object to rent increases within a predetermined amount set by government.

As with this government's other attacks on the poor and working families, this change is a solution in search of a problem. We have seen time and time again from this government that it is focused on making access to justice and the political process harder for some of the most vulnerable Manitobans in our province.

Taking away the right to object to rental increases simply because this government has decided that some increases will always be legitimate violates the principle of natural justice. It shifts the balance of power in favour of landlords. As property owners who often have significant resources at their disposal, the balance of power is already in favour of landlords when it comes to the residential tenancies system. It is simply unfair that this government would seek to make it harder for those who rent, including a number of working poor, students, and single parent families, to object to rental increases that they believe are unfair.

But this government has a clear track record of making life harder for vulnerable Manitobans and those with less means to defend themselves. We have seen it with changes to election identification rules that will make it harder to vote for those who do not have government-issued ID. We have seen it with another bill currently before the Legislature that removes the ability of Manitobans to make Charter rights challenges through the Social Services Appeal Board. And we have seen how this government continues to keep Manitoba's minimum wage at poverty levels, trapping tens of

thousands of working people in poverty instead of making our minimum wage a living wage at \$15-an-hour.

But the attacks don't stop there. The Pallister government continues to cut low-income households off the Rent Assist program, denying 150 homes this year alone. Cutting supports meant to assist low-income families afford basic necessities like rent is shameful.

And many renters in this province are students, who are already facing the burden of the massive tuition increases enabled by this government. This past year saw Manitoba students paying the sharpest increases in tuition in the entire country, an increase of 6.5 per cent. Now this government wants to take away the right of students and other renters to appeal rental increases that they think are not warranted.

We continue to see that this government is only interested in helping their wealthy friends, rather than the thousands of working families and vulnerable Manitobans who face challenges to making ends meet. Removing the ability to object to certain increases in rent is yet another example of how the Pallister government has no interest in ensuring fairness for the many, not just the few.

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