



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - August 31, 2020


Government Board Violates Workers' Privacy Rights
Carpenters Union files complaint with Privacy Commissioner

Paradise – The NL Carpenters Union, Local 579 of the Atlantic Canada Regional Council of Carpenters, Millwrights and Allied Workers has filed a complaint with the NL Privacy Commissioner citing a serious breach of workers' privacy by the Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Relations Board. The complaint was filed with the Privacy Commissioner on Friday, August 28, 2020 seeking an immediate investigation.

In early July 2020, a group of NL workers expressed an interest in being unionized. Local 579, then initiated the statutory process required to represent carpenters and carpenter apprentices at their worksite. An initial part of this certification process requires the workers to indicate, in writing, their interest in being represented by a union (via signed cards) and that this information will be kept in the strictest confidence by the Board and will never be provided to the Employer. This privacy pledge of confidentiality by the Board is the most fundamental part of any effort by workers in Newfoundland and Labrador who seek to be represented by a union:

Labour Relations Board
Effective Date: June 5, 2014
<hr/> INFORMATION BULLETIN APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION-THE STEPS <hr/>
<u>Application for Certification Process (July 2014)</u>
<u>Step 1:</u> Union card signing (cards must be signed 90 days or less prior to the date of filing of an application with the Board).
<u>Step 2:</u> Union files an application with the Board, including the original membership cards/evidence for the review of the Board Officer. The membership evidence supplied is strictly confidential and for the Board's use only.
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On August 13th, 2020, Local 579 submitted its application to represent this group of workers to the Labour Relations Board, as required by law, this application included the confidential signed cards. On August 14th, the Labour Relations Board emailed a copy of the union's application to the Employer, but also unlawfully sent the workers signed cards.



As a further indication of the seriousness of this breach, the Labour Relations Board's sharing of signed cards with the Employer has never happened in the 71 year history of Local 579. It is critical that a quasi-judicial Board of government administer fairness to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The union says the actions of the Board have resulted in workers losing trust and faith in the Labour Relations Board and will have long lasting implications for all workers who are required to follow the procedures and processes of the Labour Relations Board. The consequences of the Board's mere disclosure to the Employer will have broad and far-reaching consequences for workers' rights in this province and place the integrity of the certification process at risk.

Mike Williams, Regional Manager of Atlantic Canada Regional Council of Carpenters, Millwrights and Allied Workers says "this failure and inability of the Labour Relations Board to address this matter is a denial of justice that can not be tolerated and new steps must be put in place to prevent such breaches of privacy in the future."

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