



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**
**TERRITOIRES DU NORD-OUEST
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

MEETING GO 56-20-25

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

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**TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2025
EAGLE ROOM, LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
1:30 PM**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer/Reflection
3. Review and Adoption of Agenda
4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest
5. Public Matters
 - a) Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act: briefing from the Honourable Caroline Wawzonek, Minister of Finance
6. In Camera Matters
 - a) Debrief
 - b) Correspondence review
 - i. 2025-04-24 – Gwich'in Tribal Council – Response to Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
 - ii. 2025-06-24 – Honourable David Akeeagok, Minister Responsible for the Workers' Compensation and Safety Commission, Nunavut – Bill 29, First Responders Workers' Compensation Amendment Act
 - iii. 2025-06-26 – Minister of Finance – Confidential
 - iv. 2025-06-26 – Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs – Mandate update on Office of the Fire Marshal activities
 - v. 2025-06-26 – Minister of Education, Culture and Employment – Northwest Territories–Québec agreement for cooperation with respect to the Canadian Francophonie
 - vi. 2025-07-03 – Confidential
 - vii. 2025-07-03 – Workers' Advisor Office NWT and Nunavut – Nunavut Bill 57, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
 - viii. 2025-07-09 – Premier – Guideline on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting: At the Call of the Chair
8. Adjournment



Presentation to Standing Committee on Government Operations: ***Private Members Bill***

July 15, 2025



Overview

1. The Public Service Act and changes coming this Assembly
2. The compensation and benefits for Health Care Workers within the GNWT
3. Next steps



Background

- A comprehensive overall review of the *Public Service Act* has been underway for the last few years.
- This project represents a modernization of the *Public Service Act* and touches on many aspects of the public service including safe disclosure, arbitration, recruitment, staffing appeals, job evaluation and other important issues.
- A Legislative Proposal has been approved, and the Department Finance is actively working with the Legislative Division on a draft Bill to be introduced during the October 2025 sitting.
- In keeping with a commitment made to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, the Department of Finance will begin development of a second Legislative Proposal for amending section 41 and other sections of the *Public Service Act* to address bargaining unit certification issues.



Engagement with Unions on Public Service Act

- Extensive engagement with Union of Northern Workers (UNW) and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) on extensive revisions to the *Public Service Act*.
- Both the current leadership of the UNW and their previous leadership team have put forward perspectives and recommendations covering areas proposed to be included in the Bill.
- In keeping with a commitment made to committee, the Department of Finance will begin development of a separate Legislative Proposal for amendments to the *Public Service Act* to include provisions for certification and decertification of bargaining agents and explore options to establish a labour board.



Current *Public Service Act*

- Section 41 of the *Public Service Act* provides direction on collective agreements and specifically states at subsection (1.5) that “The Union of Northern Workers is the employee’s association for the bargaining units established by paragraph (1.4) (a) employees, other than employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and (b) employees of the Power Corporation.
- Section 41, subsection (6) of the *Public Service Act* states that “A collective agreement made between the Minister and an employees’ association is binding on the Government of the Northwest Territories, the employee’s association and the members of the bargaining unit to which the collective agreement applies.”



Understanding Certification

- Labour relations legislation could be within the existing PSA or another separate piece of legislation (as is normally done) but it will need to address the main elements of certification legislation including:
 - Establishment of a Labour Relations Board
 - Application for Certification processes
 - Board Review process of proposed certification
 - Process for certification of the decision and implementation
 - Effect of Certification and implementation of the decision
 - Processes for revocation or change in certification



Legislated Bargaining Units and Employees Associations

What we need to do

- Developing a solution must involve engagement with existing stakeholders and provide opportunity for input from potentially affected groups
- This work includes choosing an approach that is well-suited for the circumstances present in the Northwest Territories and requires substantial legal analysis, planning, and engagement

What our neighbours are doing

Yukon

- The Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board (the Federal Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board is cross appointed to the Yukon Board)
- *Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Act* includes certification provisions

Nunavut

- Like the NT *Public Service Act*, bargaining units and employee associations are set out in the *Act*.

How We Support Health Care Workers



A dedicated Health Recruitment Unit with focus on the recruitment of health care professionals including nurses.



Salaries for nurses are on par or better than any other Canadian jurisdiction including our Nunavut and Alberta neighbours.



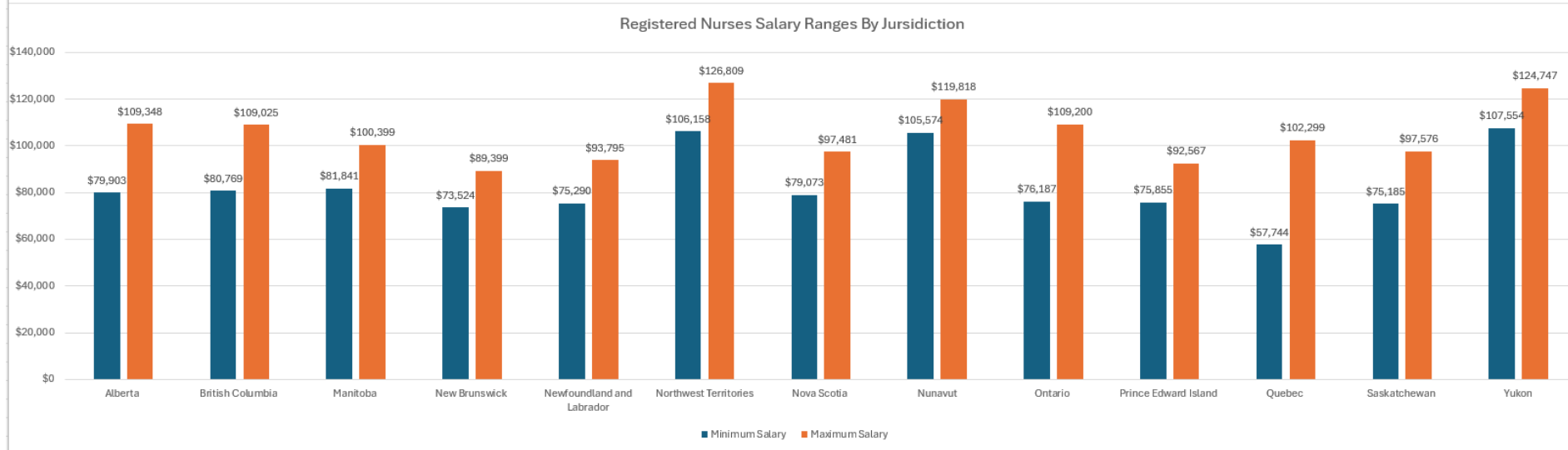
In addition to salaries, the Government of the Northwest Territories provides its employees with a benefits program unlike most in the country along with the best public service pension plan.

Health Workplace Improvements

- Anecdotally, we have heard a number of issues raised by health care workers, and from nurses in particular. These include:
 - scheduling;
 - employee engagement;
 - stress and burnout;
 - workload/too much overtime;
 - inadequate staffing levels;
 - cost of living;
 - remoteness of some communities;
- It is important to note that this is not unique to the NT, there are a number of jurisdictions hearing similar issues. While there continues to be a national shortage of nurses, we have been working to increase supports for our employees through a variety of means.
- This includes: increasing positions in support and care roles, increased funding and professional development opportunities (TASP, PDI, bursaries, transfer assignments, etc.), labour market supplements as a financial incentive to recruitment and retention, high wages, generous leave packages, and allowing movement from full time to part time or relief
- A health workplace improvement task force between the GNWT, UNW and PSAC has been established to address several aspects of workplace quality that can be improved through collaboration outside and beyond the collective agreement.
- A dedicated health recruitment team supporting the recruitment of hard to fill health care professional positions

Nurses' Salary Comparison

Jurisdiction	Minimum Salary	Maximum Salary
Alberta	\$79,903	\$109,348
British Columbia	\$80,769	\$109,025
Manitoba	\$81,841	\$100,399
New Brunswick	\$73,524	\$89,399
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$75,290	\$93,795
Northwest Territories	\$106,158	\$126,809
Nova Scotia	\$79,073	\$97,481
Nunavut	\$105,574	\$119,818
Ontario	\$76,187	\$109,200
Prince Edward Island	\$75,855	\$92,567
Quebec	\$57,744	\$102,299
Saskatchewan	\$75,185	\$97,576
Yukon	\$107,554	\$124,747



Latest round of bargaining

During the latest round of bargaining, it was agreed that health and social services employees will receive:

- Nearly double the previous labour market supplements
(from \$5,000, \$6,000 and \$7,000 to \$10,000, \$11,000 & \$12,000)
- An expanded list of eligible positions.
- Laundry allowance increased to \$50 per month.
- Registered Nurses (RN) special clinical preparation allowance increased from \$40 to \$100 per month and Nurse Practitioner's (NP) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) also now qualify for this allowance.
- CHA/CHN course allowances increased from \$25 to \$50 per month and NPs and LPNs also now qualify for this allowance.



Latest round of bargaining cont.

- University Preparation (1 year course) increased from \$100 per month and NPs and LPNs also now qualify for this allowance.
- University Preparation (Baccalaureate or higher) increases allowance to \$150 per month and NPs and LPNs also now qualify.
- One, Two and Three Nurse station allowances have increased from \$9,000 to \$12,000; from \$6,000 to \$9,000; and from \$4,500 to \$6,000 per year.
- A new mentorship and preceptorship allowance has been added – 12% increase to salary for up to 3 months.



Private Members Bill (PMB)

- Private Member's Bill tries to fix how nurses are represented in the public service—but it does so in a way that's too narrow.
- It focuses only on nurses and doesn't look at how the whole system of worker representation should work.
- That kind of one-step-at-a-time approach can cause confusion and unfairness for other workers.
- The bill also doesn't include the basic tools needed to make the change work properly, like a board to manage union changes, clear rules about who's included, or a plan for how to move people into the new system.
- Without the right setup, this bill could end up causing more problems than it solves.



PMB cont.

- Passing this Bill will not lead to the establishment of a new collective agreement for the affected nurses in 2026.
- Collective bargaining is a complex and lengthy process that involves detailed negotiations between the union and the employer to reach a mutually acceptable agreement on various employment terms and conditions.
- Average length of time to establish a brand-new collective agreement is 1 to 2 years.

Timeline for a brand New Agreement



Please note that this is based on the Federal Public Service, which has a Labour Board and Legislation to address this.

Issues with PMB

- The PMB unilaterally imposes a model on nurses without meaningful consultation or consent from the UNW or potentially affected workers.
- The constitutional issue at the heart of the (PMB) relates to Section 2(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees freedom of association.
 - The minimum constitutional elements of the right to collective bargaining include:
 - Meaningful Process
 - Good Faith Engagement
 - Right to Organize
 - Right to Strike
- The PMB proposes to carve out a separate bargaining unit for nurses, which raises risks in relation to these constitutional rights:
 - Lack of Choice for Others
 - No Labour Relations Board
 - Right to Strike
 - Top-Down Restructuring



Issues with PMB cont.

- Furthermore, it creates conditions that could facilitate union raiding, where one labor union attempts to recruit members from another union, typically within the same workplace or industry. It often involves one union trying to displace another as the official bargaining agent for a group of workers.

Key Aspects of Union Raiding:

- Raiding usually occurs when workers are dissatisfied with their current union's representation, or when a rival union sees an opportunity to expand its influence.
- The raiding union may campaign to convince workers to switch allegiance, often by promising better representation, stronger bargaining power, or more aggressive advocacy.



Next Steps:



Work on a separate LP with respect to the Legislated Bargaining Units and Employees Associations is underway



Seek to table and pass a Bill this Assembly



What considerations go into a legislative development

- Beginning this process isn't simply choosing an approach and making it happen; there are questions to be answered about the scope of work are undertaking:
 - Whether the labour board would be empowered to also hear labour disputes?
 - Would it be a labour board of the Northwest Territories, or would we be looking to our sister territories to share the resource load in this undertaking?
 - Or do we follow the lead of the Yukon and turn these responsibilities over to a federal labour board?
- We need to be practical about what approach will allow the GNWT to best meet needs of residents while being fiscally responsible.
- Moving forward involves more than simply scanning what other jurisdictions are doing and then copy/pasting that into this legislation.
- The first steps in this process will be a coordinated legal assessment identifying options and considerations as relate to labour relations and negotiations timelines and processes.
- As this is undertaken and the project is framed out, engagement with stakeholders will begin to ensure that the project meets our needs and the needs of stakeholders.
- These efforts together will form the basis of the legislative initiative addressing charter compliance.

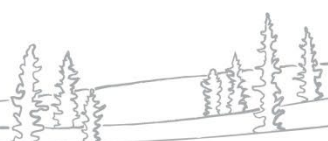
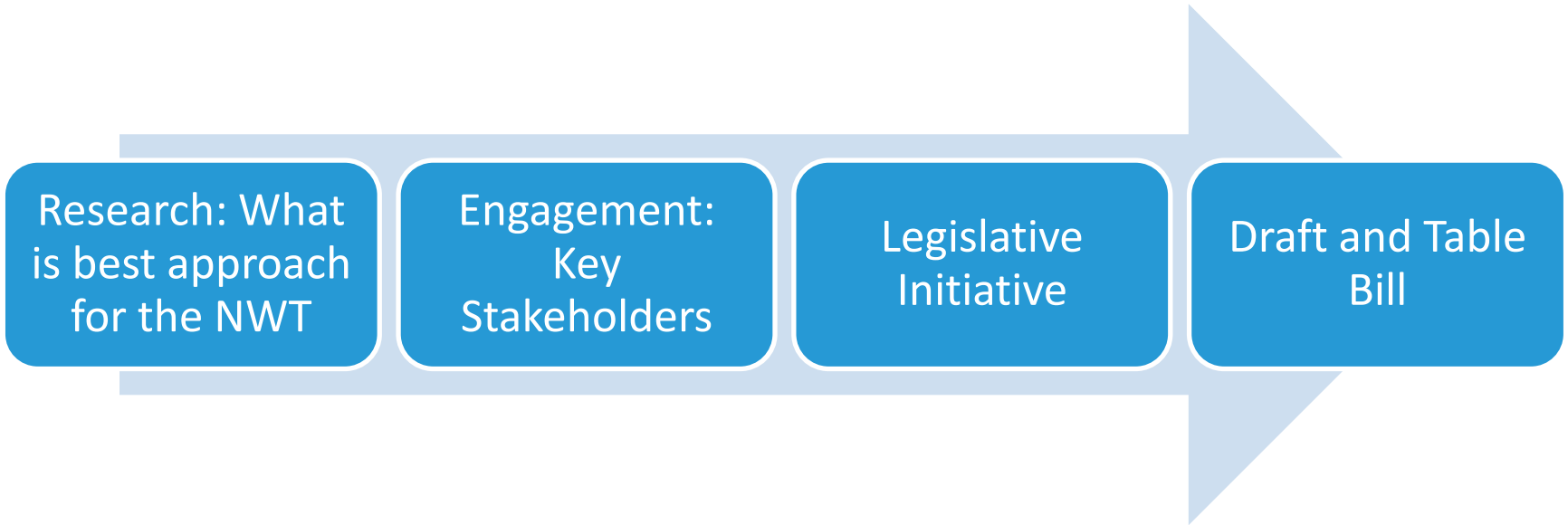


Notice to Bargain

- PSA ss. 41.04, (the statutory freeze provision), prevents the GNWT from changing terms and conditions of employment without the UNW's consent while bargaining is ongoing, however, it does not prevent the GNWT from continuing work on the PSA, including the drafting of a new bill.
- A commitment to Committee has been made respecting additional changes to the PSA to incorporate a certification and decertification process.
- The project timeline has been communicated to the UNW and they have agreed to engagement with the UNW and others will begin this fall.



Moving Forward: Legislated Bargaining Units and Employees Associations



PSA Amendment Timelines

Timeline	PSA Amendments	2nd LP on Union Certification
May 2025	Drafting instructions/Drafting of Bill	Research on LP
October 2025	Introduction of Bill – first and second reading	Consultation with UNW and others
February 2026 – May 2026	Committee Review of Bill	Drafting LP, Cabinet review/approval of LP, Share LP with Committee
May 2026	Third Reading of Bill and Commissioner assent	Drafting instructions/drafting of Bill
October 2026		Introduction of Bill – first and second reading
October 2026 – February 2027		Committee review
February 2027		Third reading of Bill and Commissioner assent



Questions

