



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
TERRITOIRES DU NORD-OUEST  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

MEETING GO 60-20-25

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

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**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025**  
**EAGLE ROOM, LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**1:30 PM**

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**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*: public briefing from Josée-Anne Spirito, Public Service Alliance of Canada North
6. In Camera Matters
  - a) Debrief
  - b) Correspondence review: public submissions on and correspondence related to Bill 26, An Act to Amend the *Public Service Act*
7. Public Matters
  - a) Review of 2024–25 statutory officer annual reports: public briefing from Krista Carnogursky, Ombud and Acting Languages Commissioner
8. In Camera Matters
  - a) Debrief
9. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Friday, September 12, 2025 at 9 a.m.
10. Adjournment

# Presentation to *NWT Standing Committee on Government Operations:* Concerns Regarding Bill 26

**Josée-Anne Spirito**

Regional Executive Vice-President, North  
Public Service Alliance of Canada

# Josée-Anne Spirito

Regional Executive Vice-President, North  
Public Service Alliance of Canada



- Elected May 2023
- Member of PSAC's Alliance Executive Committee (AEC) and National Board of Directors (NBoD)
- UNW Local 33 Member - NTHSSA worker in Yellowknife
- Actively practicing Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)



Public Service Alliance of Canada  
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada

- Democratic: Members are the Union
- 240,000 members in every province and territory
- 15 Component Unions
- 7 Regions
- 400 Staff in 8 Branches
- 23 Regional Offices



**PSAC · North**  
Public Service Alliance of Canada

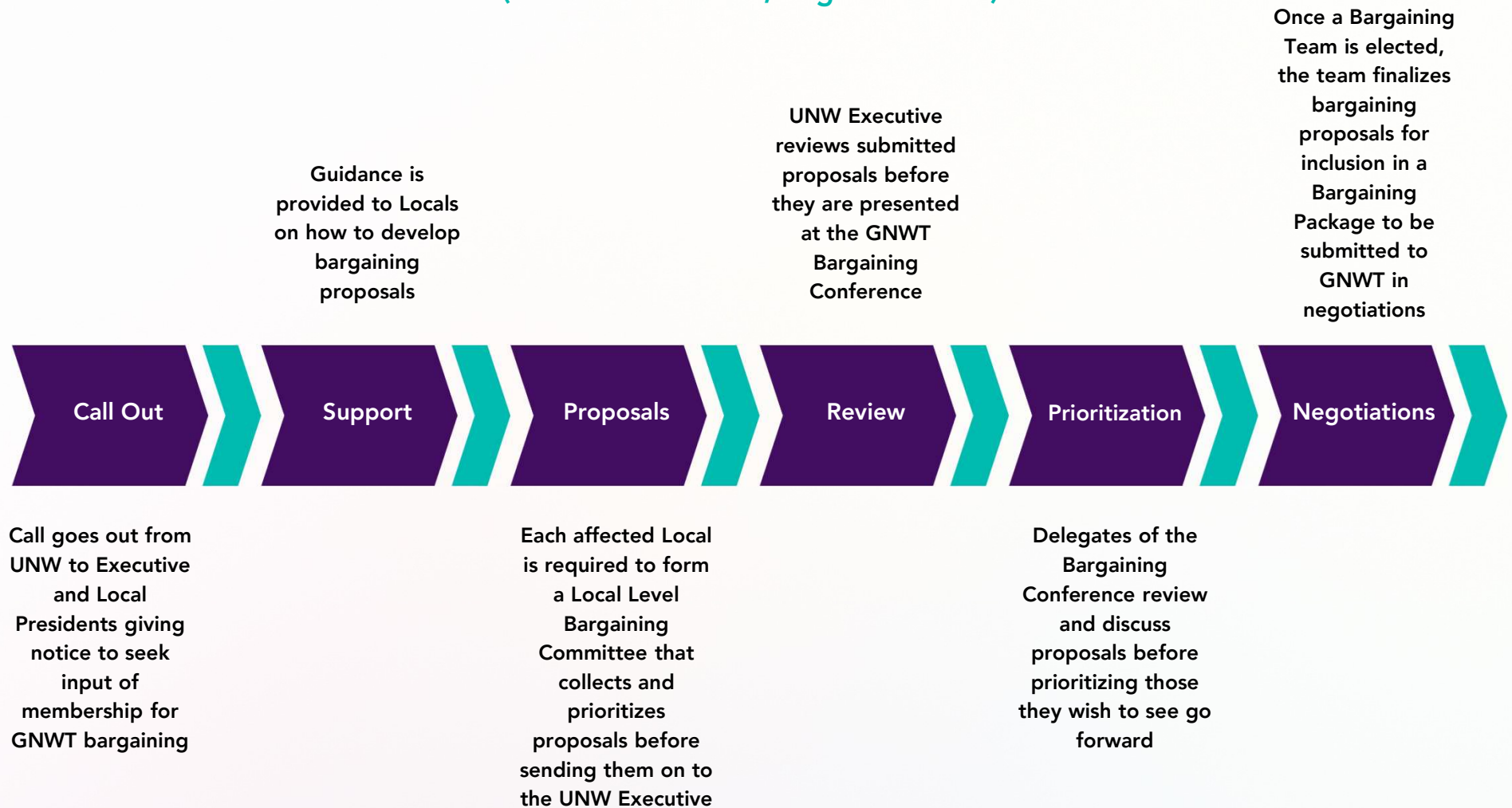
- “Boots on the Ground” Regional Offices in Whitehorse, Yellowknife, and Iqaluit
- Northern staff supporting Northern members
- The Union of the North: 20,000 members in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut

represent which workers  
and which are excluded  
unions and GNWT  
(rights, rights around strikes)

- represent which workers  
and which are excluded  
unions and GNWT  
(rights, rights around strikes)

# How PSAC/UNW Members' Input Drives Bargaining

(PSAC Constitution, Regulation 15B)



## GNWT Bargaining Teams

- Six elected Local members, and alternates
  - Regional Representation
  - Occupational Representation
  - Equity Representation
- UNW President
- PSAC Negotiator and Research Officer



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## Examples - Bringing Issues to the Table for Health Care Workers

- Compensation for employees that must work a scheduled shift after being called back or had to report for work while on stand-by; language to ensure min. of 8 hours rest period between shifts
- Improvements to overtime compensation and carry-over of compensatory time
- Conversion of term employees to indeterminate after 2 years
- Limiting contracting out of work
- Language on harassment, abuse of authority and workplace violence
- PDI (Professional Development Initiative) for health care workers into the collective agreement
- Improved compensation and protections for casual employees
- Reconciliation as a guiding principle



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## When We Fight Together, We Win Together

- An MOU on Joint Working Group reviewed issues related to health and safety for employee rest periods between regularly scheduled shifts
- A review of work alone standards
- A new statutory holiday bank with carry-over provisions
- Improvements to allowances for clothing and laundry
- Improvements to compensatory leave and leave bank for Midwives
- Numerous additional health and social service positions being made eligible for Labour Market Supplements (LMS)
- And LMS in communities now ranging from \$10,000 to \$12,000

## The Truth About Starting from Scratch

### Existing CBA

241 Pages Long

Steady, incremental  
progress

50+ Years in the Making

Improved over several rounds  
of negotiations



### Bill 26

Fight to maintain hard-won gains

Nothing guaranteed,  
everything on the table

Subject to new negotiations

At the mercy of the Employer



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## Certification Processes: Complex for a Reason

If you were going to make changes to the structural, load-bearing beams of a hospital, you would likely want an expert in architecture or construction to make sure nurses and their patients are protected.



Bill 26 proposes to rip key load-bearing beams from the NWT's labour relations framework with little regard for the employers, unions, workers, and members of the public that it should protect.



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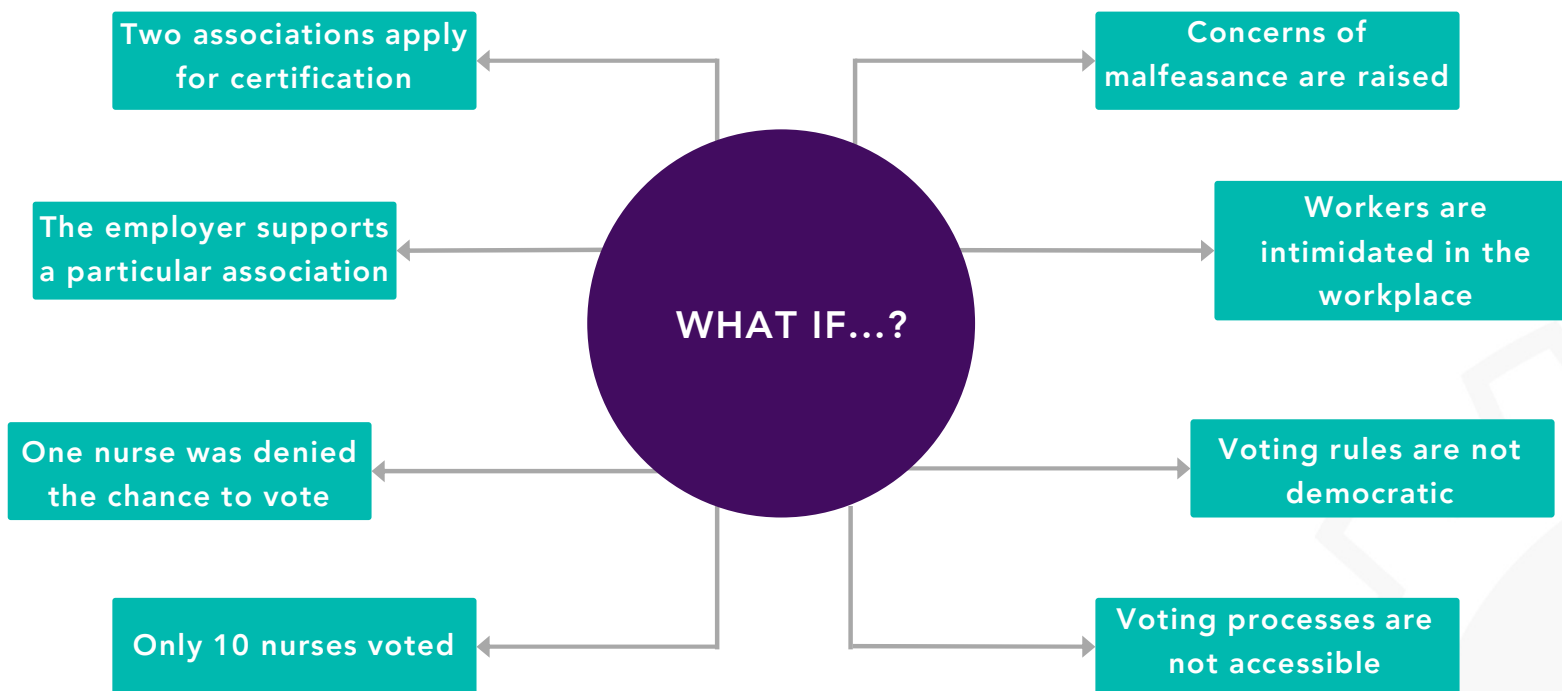
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## Cross-Jurisdictional Certification Landscape

The **bare-bones** certification process outlined in Bill 26 stands in **stark contrast to labour codes across Canada**, which establish substantive and lengthy frameworks, based on decades of experience and precedents, setting out how unions can be certified to represent – or cease to represent – employees in collective bargaining.

Bill 26 isn't written to do things right: **as it's written, it will make things worse.**

Neutral, impartial, expert analysis from arbitrator **Vince Ready** loudly sounds the alarm about Bill 26.



## Consider: Snap Vote

Would it be acceptable if an association held an electronic vote that was open for 10 minutes, so long as all nurses theoretically had a chance to vote in it?



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## Consider: Revolving Door of Representation, Raids, and Decertification

A relentless fight between associations vying to represent nurses would undoubtedly have a negative impact not only on nurses themselves, but also on the public who rely upon nurses for health care.



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# Questions?

## **Josée-Anne Spirito**

Regional Executive Vice-President, North  
Public Service Alliance of Canada

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Northwest Territories  
**Ombud**

*We Speak up for Fairness*

2024/2025 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud

## Ombud Mandate

- Public education on the role of the Ombud and principles of administrative fairness
- Investigating and helping solve complaints about administrative fairness

## Merger with the Office of Languages Commissioner

- Effective January 10, 2025
- Dual appointments, comparison to other jurisdictions
- Ability to use two pieces of legislation to address complaint

# Targeted Approach to Outreach - Sahtu and Beaufort Delta



## Complaint numbers by region – Beaufort Delta and Sahtu

Fiscal year 2023/24

Fiscal year 2024/25

Beaufort Delta Region	Number of Complaints	Beaufort Delta Region	Number of Complaints
Aklavik	4	Aklavik	2
Fort MacPherson	1	Fort MacPherson	7
Inuvik	20	Inuvik	19
Tsiigehtchic	0	Tsiigehtchic	3
Tuktoyaktuk	0	Tuktoyaktuk	2
Sahtu Region	Number of Complaints	Sahtu Region	Number of Complaints
Deline	0	Deline	2
Norman Wells	6	Norman Wells	11
Fort Good Hope	1	Fort Good Hope	16
Colville Lake	0	Colville Lake	0
Tulita	0	Tulita	7
Total	32	Total	69

# Complaints over the past 3 fiscal years

2022/2023

Beaufort Delta	24
Correctional Centres	19
Deh Cho	12
North Slave	6
Sahtu	7
South Slave	40
Yellowknife	68
Outside NWT	10
Unknown	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>188</b>

2023/2024

Beaufort Delta	28
Correctional Centres	19
Deh Cho	9
North Slave	9
Sahtu	7
South Slave	53
Yellowknife	83
Outside NWT	17
Unknown	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>228</b>

2024/2025

Beaufort Delta	36
Correctional Centres	18
Deh Cho	23
North Slave	63
Sahtu	35
South Slave	55
Outside NWT	27
Unknown	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>266</b>





# Public Education & Outreach

- Working Together for Fairness Workshop
- Annual meeting with Canadian Ombuds
- Community events

# Investigation Timelines

We consider investigations complete as of:

- The date we notify the complainant and the authority that we are discontinuing the investigation; or
- The date we provide complainant and the authority with a final report

In 2024/2025 we completed 2 investigations and one systemic early resolution investigation. All took less than a year

# Recommendations from Fiscal Year 2024/25

Additional funding for a new position - Senior Early Resolution and Investigation Officer

Increase the capacity of the Office to take on more investigations and 'own-motion' investigations

Establish an internal career pathway

Demand for Ombud services remains high with an ever-increasing complexity of files



Ability to accept referrals for an external investigation from the Legislative Assembly or Standing Committees (Sec 16-1) *Ombud Act*



# Looking Ahead: 2025/26

## Staff Development

Increase in the complexity of case files

Staff development ensures we continue to build capacity and will reduce burnout for our small team

## Targeted Own Motion Investigations

As of July 1/24 our office began tracking the ethnicity of persons who contact the Ombud's office

We will use that information to help determine targeted "own motion" investigations





# Questions?

*Northwest Territories Ombud*  
*We Speak Up For Fairness*





Languages Commissioner  
of the Northwest Territories

Commissaire aux langues des  
Territoires du Nord-Ouest

# Annual Report

2024/2025

# 2024/25 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT

# Role of the Languages Commissioner

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The Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is an independent office whose mandate is to ensure the rights, status and privileges of each of the Official Languages are respected by government institutions. It also ensures compliance with the Languages Act.

The Northwest Territories has 11 Official Languages which include:

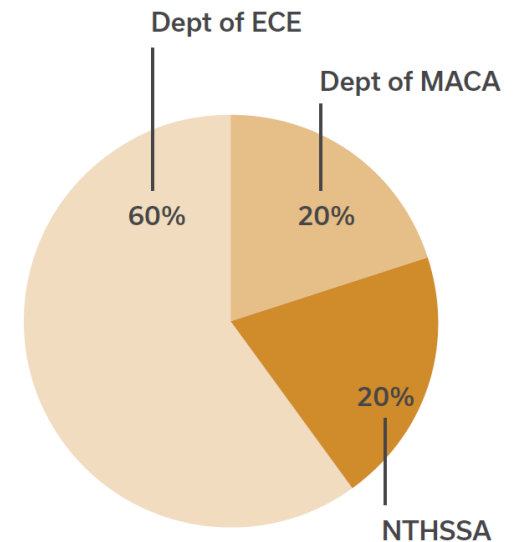
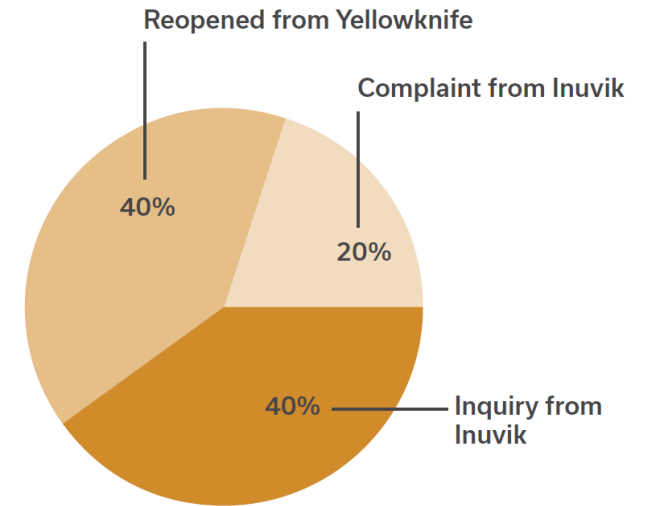
Chipewyan, Cree, English, Gwich'in, French, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey, & Tłıchǫ.

The Languages Commissioner can investigate complaints regarding all GNWT depts, the legislative assembly, courts, corporations, boards, commissioner and agencies.

We cannot investigate:  
Federal government, Indigenous governments, Municipal governments, private businesses or the RCMP

# Inquires and Complaints: 2024/25

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# Public Education and Outreach

- NWT Association of Communities (March 2025)
- Ontario Legislature Internship Program (February 2025)
- Newcomers Event (February 2025)
- Community meetings in Tuktoyaktuk, Fort McPherson & Tsiigehtchic (December 2024)



# Looking Forward: 2025/26

Deputy Languages Commissioner Position

Increase in “own motion” investigations



# Questions

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Languages Commissioner  
of the Northwest Territories

Commissaire aux langues des  
Territoires du Nord-Ouest

# Annual Report

2024/2025

# **Executive Summary**

## **Report to the Public Service Alliance of Canada (“PSAC”)**

### **Re: Review of Bill 26**

Prepared by: Vince Ready on September 9, 2025

#### **Purpose**

Bill 26 is a private member’s bill proposing amendments to Section 41 of the Northwest Territories (NWT) *Public Service Act* to permit nurses to form a separate bargaining unit. This summary reviews the Bill’s implications, comparative models, and policy options.

#### **Key Issues**

- Bill 26 reflects nurses’ concerns about burnout, staffing pressures, and representation.
- The NWT’s labour relations framework differs from other jurisdictions: Section 41 prescribes bargaining agents, and the territory lacks a Labour Relations Board.
- Section 41 is already under government review; Bill 26 risks duplicating or disrupting that process.

#### **Stakeholder Perspectives**

- Proponents of Bill 26 support enhanced representation and equity for nurses, with interim oversight by the Supreme Court.
- Government of the NWT (GNWT) prefers comprehensive modernization to ensure constitutional compliance and fiscal sustainability.
- Union of Northern Workers (UNW)/PSAC recognizes nurses’ concerns but favours reforms that preserve bargaining strength and protections.

#### **Context**

- Other Jurisdictions: Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia nurses achieved gains through separate representation, though fragmentation created risks and costs.
- Compensation: NWT nurses generally receive higher total compensation than peers elsewhere, largely due to Northern Living Allowances, though retention and workload pressures remain.



## **Analysis**

Bill 26 does not include safeguards common in Canadian labour law, such as:

- Defined open periods for representation challenges
- Minimum support thresholds to trigger votes
- Neutral, third-party oversight of certification
- Secret ballot requirements with participation thresholds
- Clear reversion rules and continuity protections

The absence of these provisions increases the risk of instability, legal disputes, and fiscal uncertainty.

## **Policy Considerations**

- Charter Compliance: Reforms must uphold freedom of association under Section 2(d).
- Equity and Stability: A nurse-specific unit could prompt similar demands from other groups and lead to fragmentation.
- Alternatives: Strengthening nurses' voice within UNW/PSAC (via bargaining tables, councils, or guaranteed representation) may achieve many goals without destabilizing the system.

## **Recommendations**

1. Postpone Passage of Bill 26 until it can be integrated into a comprehensive modernization of the *Public Service Act*.
2. Introduce Safeguards standard in Canadian labour law, including open periods, support thresholds, neutral oversight, secret ballots, and reversion protocols.
3. Legislate Transitional Protections to safeguard employment rights, ensure fiscal modeling, and mandate review after three years.
4. Enhance Nurses' Representation within UNW/PSAC through interim measures such as dedicated bargaining tables, councils, and guaranteed representation.

## **Conclusion**

Reform is warranted, but Bill 26 in its current form lacks essential safeguards and risks unintended consequences. A government-led modernization of the *Public Service Act*, combined with strengthened nurse representation within existing structures, offers a more stable, equitable, and constitutionally sound path forward.

REPORT TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA  
("PSAC")

RE: BILL 26 – *AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT*

Prepared by: Vince Ready, Mediator and Arbitrator

September 9, 2025

## **My Background**

I have been an active figure in Canadian labour relations for nearly six decades. Beginning my career in 1965 as a union negotiator and an area supervisor with the United Steelworkers of America, I later served as both a federal and provincial mediator before establishing a private mediation and arbitration practice in British Columbia in 1982.

Since that time, I have mediated and arbitrated more than 7,000 disputes across Canada, spanning the forestry, mining, construction, transportation, health care, education, and public sectors. I chaired and co-chaired numerous industrial inquiry and conciliation commissions and have been appointed by governments at both the federal and provincial levels to lead reviews and inquiries into matters of significant public importance, including major disputes in health care, education, transportation, and resource industries.

I also have worked extensively with nursing bargaining units in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Prince Edward Island.

I chaired the sub-committee for the Province of British Columbia to recommend changes to the British Columbia Labour Relations Code (see “Recommendations for Labour Law Reform” September 1992, John Baigent, Vince Ready, Tom Roper).

In recognition of my contributions to labour relations in Canada, I was inducted into the National Academy of Arbitrators (USA) in 2011 and am the proud recipient of the Bora Laskin Award and the W.P. Kelly Award for excellence in labour arbitration and dispute resolution. A summary of my professional background is provided in Appendix A for the Committee’s reference.

## **Disclaimer**

This opinion is based on my professional experience in labour relations and my knowledge of labour legislation across multiple Canadian jurisdictions. It is intended to inform policy discussion and assist the Committee’s consideration of Bill 26. It should not be construed as legal advice, as I do not hold the qualifications to provide a legal opinion.

## **Purpose of the Report**

On June 26, 2025, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) asked me to review and provide an opinion regarding Bill 26 – *An Act to Amend the Public Service Act* – introduced in the Northwest Territories Legislature. While this review was prepared at the request of PSAC, it may also be of assistance to the Legislature and the broader labour relations community in evaluating the bill's provisions and their potential implications.

Bill 26, a private member's bill currently before Committee following second reading, proposes to amend Section 41 of the *Public Service Act* to permit nurses to establish a separate bargaining unit. This review examines the proposed amendments, highlights potential gaps or risks, and offers recommendations for consideration.

The following sections provide further analysis of these matters and recommendations for the Committee's consideration.

## **Issues and Framework**

The central question raised by Bill 26 is how changes in representation for nurses could occur under the proposed amendments to Section 41 of the *Public Service Act*, and whether the framework provides sufficient clarity and safeguards to support fairness, stability, and fiscal accountability.

Matters for consideration include:

1. Open Periods – The bill does not specify when applications to change the nurses' bargaining agent may be made, creating the possibility of frequent challenges.
2. Support Thresholds – The bill does not identify a minimum level of employee support required before a representation vote may be held.
3. Oversight – The bill does not indicate whether representation votes would be overseen by a neutral, independent third party.
4. Quorum – The bill does not establish a minimum participation level for representation votes.
5. Voting Method – The bill does not address whether representation votes would be conducted by secret ballot.
6. Reversion and Continuity – The bill does not clarify whether, if a court grants de-authorization, nurses would return to membership in the general bargaining unit represented by the Union of Northern Workers (UNW). This raises related questions concerning:

- the status of any nurses' collective agreement in force at the time of de-authorization,
- how the GNWT would cost the general unit's agreement without certainty regarding membership, and
- the treatment of nurse-specific provisions not contained in the general unit's agreement.

Framed more broadly, these matters invite consideration of the following policy questions:

- What safeguards should govern when and how bargaining agents can be changed?
- What thresholds of employee support are appropriate to trigger representation votes?
- How should representation votes be administered to ensure fairness and transparency?
- What provisions are necessary to manage transitions, preserve continuity of agreements, and ensure GNWT can effectively cost collective agreements under either a single or dual bargaining structure?

## **Northwest Territories Context**

Unlike most jurisdictions, the NWT *Public Service Act* prescribes bargaining agents directly. Section 41 defines bargaining units, and nearly all unionized public employees, including nurses, are represented by the Union of Northern Workers (UNW). A modernization review of the *Act* is underway, with consultations that may create a Labour Relations Board. Nurses remain within the existing framework until changes are enacted.

## **Perspectives on Bill 26**

### **Bill 26 Proponents**

Supporters of Bill 26, including members of the nursing community and certain legislators, argue it provides nurses with a dedicated bargaining structure, helping address dissatisfaction, inequities, and recruitment and retention challenges. The proposed model allows the Supreme Court to oversee representation until a Labour Relations Board is established. Proponents frame it as a practical response to pressing workforce concerns. Critics, however, note that the bill does not set out safeguards common in Canadian labour law, such as support thresholds, clear certification procedures, or neutral oversight of votes.

### **Nurses' Concerns**

Nurses across the Northwest Territories report high levels of burnout, understaffing, and declining morale, with growing reliance on agency staff driving up health system costs. Many view a territory-wide, nursing-specific

collective agreement as a way to strengthen equity, solidarity, and mobility across regions. Currently, they are represented by the Union of Northern Workers (UNW) and its parent organization, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) under two separate agreements: one with the GNWT represented by the Minister Responsible for the *Public Service Act* and another with the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA). The Premier and Cabinet have committed to completing the integration of the two systems within the current Assembly's term, a step that would bring Hay River nurses into the territorial framework and establish a more unified basis for representation.

### **Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)**

The Minister of Finance & the Public Service has emphasized that reform is both necessary and already underway through a government-led review of Section 41 of the *Public Service Act*. The GNWT argues that a comprehensive, legislated modernization process – incorporating constitutional analysis, fiscal planning, and full consultation – is a more suitable path than piecemeal changes. From this perspective, court-based oversight of representation questions is seen as an unstable mechanism compared to a labour board or statutory framework.

### **Union of Northern Workers (UNW)/Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)**

The UNW and its parent organization, PSAC, recognize the concerns that have prompted Bill 26 but have expressed reservations about its approach. They caution that creating a separate bargaining unit for nurses could affect existing protections, fragment bargaining strength, and complicate strike-related considerations. UNW/PSAC favour a broader reform process that balances nurses' representation with the protections and solidarity of the larger bargaining unit.

### **Issue Statement**

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is consulting with union representatives and the broader community on potential reforms to Section 41 of the *Public Service Act*. Bill 26, now before Committee, proposes nurse-specific changes intended to address concerns within the profession. However, some stakeholders argue that a broader legislative approach may be necessary to ensure fairness, stability, and compliance with Charter protections, particularly freedom of association. The central question is whether reform should be limited to nurses or designed as part of a more inclusive framework addressing representation and bargaining rights across the public service.

## **Historical Considerations: Bargaining Units for Nurses in Canada**

Across Canada, nurses have formed independent unions to advance working conditions, compensation, and professional recognition, using different strategies with varying outcomes.

Saskatchewan: The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN), established in 1975, led an illegal ten-day strike in 1999 involving 8,000 nurses. Despite the risk of penalties, SUN redirected fines to hospital foundations and secured a 13.7% wage increase, funding for 200 new positions, and broad public support.

Alberta: The United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), formed in 1977, engaged in several strikes, most notably a 19-day illegal strike in 1988 involving 14,000 nurses. Although fined \$426,750, UNA prevented wage rollbacks and preserved key provisions. In 2025, UNA again considered strike action before reaching a new agreement providing a 20% wage increase by 2028, stronger job security, and mentorship supports.

British Columbia: The BC Nurses' Union (BCNU) has relied more on advocacy and public mobilization than strikes. Recent rallies, including a major 2025 demonstration, contributed to outcomes such as annual wage increases up to 6.75%, \$750 million for nurse-patient ratios, \$60 million for mental health supports, and stronger workplace safety measures.

These examples highlight different approaches: direct labour action in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and sustained advocacy in British Columbia – all leading to significant gains for nurses and shaping broader policy discussions.

## **Implications**

The experiences of these provinces inform current discussions in the NWT, where compensation already compares favourably – often exceeding Alberta, BC, and Saskatchewan – when Northern Living Allowances and targeted bonuses are included. This suggests that the existing framework has been effective in securing competitive outcomes. While broader challenges of recruitment and retention remain, evidence indicates that parity or advantage can be achieved within current structures, without requiring a separate bargaining unit.

## **Compensation Comparisons**

NWT nurses often receive higher total compensation than counterparts in other provinces, especially with Northern Living Allowances. This suggests the current framework has been effective, though workplace challenges persist –

particularly around staffing shortages, workload pressures, and retention issues that are common across Canada's health care systems.

### **Analysis of Proposed Changes to Section 41 of the *Public Service Act***

The proposed amendments to Section 41 are framed as expanding employee choice, but they highlight the absence of infrastructure to support such choices in practice. While greater flexibility may be the intent, the lack of safeguards raises concerns about stability, consistency, fiscal predictability, and legal risk.

By comparison, provinces such as Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia have labour relations boards that administer clear rules for certification, representation votes, dispute resolution, and unfair labour practice complaints. These boards provide independent oversight, secret ballot processes, minimum support thresholds, and transparent procedures for certification and decertification.

Key safeguards missing from Bill 26 include:

- Clear eligibility criteria and reversion provisions.
- Oversight mechanisms to ensure fairness and consistency across departments.
- Transparent certification, decertification, and representation processes.
- Minimum support thresholds and defined open periods for challenges.
- Neutral third-party oversight and secret ballots.
- Dispute resolution and appeals mechanisms.
- Protections against liability for both workers and employers.
- Guidelines for performance evaluation under new arrangements.
- Access to independent legal advice.
- Requirement for fiscal impact analysis before implementing dual bargaining streams.

### **Fiscal and Structural Risks**

Without transitional rules and fiscal modeling, the GNWT cannot reliably project the cost of administering two bargaining units (general and nurse-specific). Overlapping collective agreements could create liability, duplicate provisions, or increase expenditures without clarity on budgetary impacts. This uncertainty is particularly acute if nurses revert to the general unit after a de-authorization, as costing models for the broader unit would be undermined.

A more comprehensive framework – similar to the structures used in other jurisdictions – would help ensure that flexibility is implemented in a sustainable, equitable, and fiscally sound manner.



## Legal and Policy Considerations

- Section 2(d) of the Charter protects freedom of association. Legislative measures that restructure union governance must avoid infringing on this right. Mechanisms that expand, rather than restrict, choice will strengthen constitutional compliance.
- Creating a nurse-specific pathway could prompt other professions to seek similar treatment, producing a two-tier bargaining system.
- Multiple bargaining units may complicate negotiations, increase administrative burden, and reduce efficiency and increase the risk of fragmented labour relations.
- Without a mandatory costing requirement, GNWT risks exposure to financial obligations it cannot accurately project.
- Consider options such as a dedicated nurses' bargaining table, a nurses' council within UNW, or guaranteed nurse representation on bargaining teams may balance nurses' interests with system-wide stability.

## Recommendations

### 1. Postpone Passage of Bill 26

Defer adoption until reforms can be integrated into a broader modernization of the *Public Service Act*, ensuring coherence and fiscal oversight.

### 2. Introduce Standard Safeguards

Incorporate:

- Clear thresholds and open periods.
- Neutral oversight and secret ballots.
- Reversion rules for continuity of agreements.
- Mandatory fiscal impact analysis prior to authorizing dual bargaining structures.

### 3. Legislate Transitional and Review Mechanisms

- Protect continuity of employment, benefits, and grievance rights.
- Require GNWT to cost agreements under both single and dual-stream bargaining models.
- Include a mandatory review clause tied to fiscal and administrative reporting after three years.

4. Strengthen Nurses' Voice Within UNW/PSAC (Interim Measure)
- Establish a dedicated bargaining table, nurses' council, and guaranteed representation.
  - Complement these measures with workplace reforms such as safe staffing standards, retention supports, and joint labour-management committees.

## **Conclusion**

Reform of Section 41 is both necessary and timely. However, Bill 26, in its current form, lacks the procedural safeguards required to ensure fairness, stability, and constitutional compliance. A broader modernization of the *Public Service Act* would more effectively enhance nurses' representation while preserving the integrity of labour relations and protecting the public interest.

The issue before the Committee is not merely procedural – it strikes at the core of our labour relations framework and the constitutional principles that support it. As the Committee considers this matter, it is essential to proceed with deliberation, clarity, and a commitment to evidence-based reform.

While Bill 26 responds to legitimate concerns regarding nurses' representation, its implementation risks unintended consequences, including destabilization of the Northwest Territories' labour relations system. Jurisdictions such as Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia offer cautionary examples: although separate unions eventually achieved gains, these transitions were often marked by significant unrest and disruption.

At present, nurses in the NWT benefit from strong compensation outcomes within the existing framework. Any reform should build on these strengths, not compromise them.

I thank the Committee for its thoughtful consideration and continued dedication to principled governance in the Northwest Territories.

Respectfully submitted,



Vince Ready

## **Appendix A: Professional Background**

### **Vince Ready – Arbitrator & Mediator**

#### **Overview**

Since 1982, Vince Ready has maintained a private arbitration and mediation practice. He is active in every province and territory of Canada and is named as an Arbitrator/Mediator in over 600 collective agreements. Over his career, he has arbitrated or mediated more than 7,000 labour and commercial disputes across multiple sectors, including health care, forestry, transportation, education, and public service.

#### **Selected Experience**

- Mediated and arbitrated disputes across diverse sectors, including forestry, heavy construction, grain handling, airlines, railways, pulp and paper, mining, food processing, hotels, firefighting, police, health care, and education.
- Appointed Industrial Inquiry Commissioner for the Province of British Columbia in multiple high-profile disputes, including:
  - Province-wide health care bargaining dispute (1996, 86,000 workers)
  - BC Ferry Corporation dispute
  - Ambulance Service disputes
  - K-12 education sector
- Appointed Commissioner of Inquiry for Prince Edward Island on health reform.
- Appointed to the Construction Industry Review Panel (BC).
- Appointed Co-Chair, Section 3 Labour Relations Code Review Panel (BC).
- Special Mediator in transit disputes, including BC Rapid Transit (Skytrain) and Coast Mountain Bus Co. (Translink).
- Conciliation Commissioner under the Canada Labour Code (Grain industry, Vancouver).
- Internal union arbitrator/mediator for Hospital Employees' Union and Steelworkers/UFCW.

#### **Policy & Reform Work**

- Chaired the BC Labour Relations Code Sub-Committee, issuing *Recommendations for Labour Law Reform* (1992).
- Facilitated new workplace relationships in mining, forestry, food processing, and health care sectors.

## **Academic & Professional Recognition**

- Guest lecturer on mediation, arbitration, and dispute resolution at conferences and educational institutions.
- Inducted into the National Academy of Arbitrators (2011).
- Recipient of the Bora Laskin Award and the W.P. Kelly Award for contributions to labour relations.

## **Memberships & Affiliations**

- Arbitrators Association of British Columbia
- National Academy of Arbitrators
- Register of Arbitrators under the British Columbia *Labour Relations Code*