

In one bill, Liberals push sick leave and crack down on health-care worker harassment

JORDAN PRESS
The Canadian Press

OTTAWA

The federal Liberals have introduced a two-for-one piece of legislation that would provide sick leave to almost 600,000 workers, and bring the law down on anyone harassing doctors, nurses and patients.

The omnibus bill checks off two issues at the top of the government's legislative to-do list when MPs returned to Parliament Hill this week for the first time since the Sept. 20 election.

In one swoop, the government looked to deal with two issues the pandemic showed needed to be addressed, while also upping the political pressure on Conservatives in the House of Commons and their counterparts in provincial legislatures.

First, the bill would provide 10 days of paid sick leave to federally regulated workers, who make up roughly six per cent of the overall Canadian workforce.

By government estimates, 586,000 workers in the federally regulated private sector don't have access to that long a sick leave, creating a gap in the social safety net the Liberals say must be addressed.

"At some point, there will be another pandemic, likely. When that happens, we need to be ready," Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan said Friday.

"It would be irresponsible for us, I think, for the federal government, not to take a leadership position and protect those workers and their families where we can."

The Liberals plan to push provinces and territories to replicate the leave in their labour codes, which cover the remaining 94 per cent of the country's workforce of nearly 20.6 million.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh in a



CP PHOTO ADRIAN WYLD

Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan appears via video conference as Justice Minister and Attorney General of Canada David Lametti responds to a question during a news conference, Friday in Ottawa.

statement criticized the Liberals for not moving on the measure fast enough, saying that front-line workers needed this over a year ago.

Some provinces have also been criticized for moving too slowly, which Unifor president Jerry Dias said has meant some workers have been on the job sick over fear of not being able to pay the bills.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business warned against imposing any new costs on the small companies who are still recovering, saying many businesses could close for good, or slash staffing to manage financially.

At the same time, the bill would create two new offences in the Criminal Code: one for anyone threatening a health-care worker, those who assist them, and anyone trying to access health services, and a second for anyone caught obstructing access to a health-care facility.

It is already illegal to do either, but the Liberals want to up the maximum sentence to 10 years in prison from five, and let judges use a health-care setting or victim as a factor in sentencing.

"This type of behaviour is abhorrent and it's unacceptable, particularly at a time when access to health-care services is more critical than ever," said Justice Minister David Lametti.

Lametti also said provisions of the bill would cover situations at abortion clinics, an issue which the governing party used as a wedge against Erin O'Toole's Conservatives during the recent election.

Dr. Katharine Smart, president of the Canadian Medical Association, asked MPs to quickly consider the bill, saying legislative action is necessary to prevent avoidable altercations that during the pandemic have included anti-vaccination demonstrators protesting outside of hospitals.

Rogers rejects criticism from competitors on Shaw deal, offers some concessions

The Canadian Press

GATINEAU, Que.

Rogers Communications Inc. used the last day of CRTC hearings reviewing its proposed takeover of Shaw Communications Inc. to reject the criticism of its main rivals, while offering some concessions to independent producers and distributors.

Ted Woodhead, senior vice-president of regulatory affairs at Rogers, said Friday that Bell Canada parent BCE Inc. and Telus Corp. were speaking in self interest rather than the public interest when raising concerns about the size Rogers would reach if the deal goes through.

"For decades, these two companies have consistently advocated for the notion of scale for themselves, but have now decided that scale is a bad thing when it comes to Rogers and Shaw."

Woodhead said the combined company would lead to stronger competition in Western Canada, and that there are more regulatory safeguards in place than there were in 2012 when the CRTC forced concessions from Bell before approving its purchase of Astral Media.

He noted Bell was also in talks to buy Shaw's assets, which would have seen BCE reach the same scale Rogers is seeking with the deal.

The two major competitors, along with other speakers during the week of hearings focused on the broadcast side of the merger, raised concerns that the combined Rogers-Shaw would wield too much influence in the market by controlling about 47 per cent of the English-language subscriber base.

Most independent producers and distributors did not outright oppose the deal, but instead asked for concessions and safeguards to maintain the status quo and give them more time to adapt to the rapidly changing broadcast world.

Several raised concerns that the assistance Rogers was offering them to move to the unregulated online space was an effort to push them off existing services, but the company said its funding offers for them to develop apps for internet-based TV was to help them adapt to existing market conditions, as already an estimated 40 to 50 per cent of Canadians have cut their cable subscriptions.

"Many parties to this proceeding would prefer to ignore the reality of the now," said Woodhead.

Pam Dinsmore, vice-president of regulatory at Rogers Cable, said Ethnic Channels Group's request for an effective guarantee that its revenue not go down for five years was "entirely unreasonable," but committed to increasing the minimum number of independent service to 45 from the 40 the company committed to at the start of the week.

She said Rogers would also subject the satellite relay service business it would acquire through Shaw to the same dispute resolution options available to conventional broadcasting, after some distributors raised concerns during the hearing about the threat of being dropped from the service.

Intervenors during the week also raised concerns about Rogers' plan to divert an estimated \$13 million that Shaw currently pays to Global News toward expanded western coverage for its own CityNews channels.

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- After Hours Special Services..... 403.526.2828

DEVELOPMENT PERMITS APPROVED NOVEMBER 18 TO NOVEMBER 24, 2021 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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3214 DUNMORE ROAD SE (Lot 1, Block 1, Plan 7911452) PLDP20211227. Seven Fascia Signs.

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A person claiming to be affected by a decision of the Development Officer or the Municipal Planning Commission may appeal to the Medicine Hat Subdivision and Development Appeal Board by completing and submitting to the City Clerk Department, the required Notice of Appeal form within twenty one (21) days of this publication. Notice of Appeal forms are available from the City Clerk Department, Third Floor, City Hall or on the City's website at www.medicinehat.ca.

All Development Permits listed are subject to conditions. Further information on any Development Permit may be obtained from the Planning & Development Services Department, Second Floor, City Hall during normal business hours (Telephone 403.529.8374).

ATTENTION: UTILITY CUSTOMERS NOTICE OF PROPOSED RATE CHANGES

On Monday, November 15, 2021 City Council gave first reading to the following:

BYLAW #4685 to amend Bylaw #2379, the Water Service Bylaw by amending certain rates, fees and charges; and

BYLAW #4686 to amend Bylaw #1541, regulating the use of Public and Private Sewers and Drains and the Disposal of Sewage and the Discharge of Waters and Waste into the City's Sewer System; and

BYLAW #4687 to amend Bylaw #1805, the Waste Bylaw by amending rates and charges; and

BYLAW #4688 to amend Bylaw #2244, the Electric Utility Bylaw by adjusting certain non-commodity rates charged for electric energy distribution service to residential, commercial and industrial customers of the City's Electric Utility.

BYLAW #4689 to amend Bylaw #2489, the Gas Utility Bylaw by amending certain rates, fees and charges; and

The proposed Bylaws will come into force on January 1, 2022.

A Non-Statutory Public Hearing in general accordance with the Municipal Government Act and the City's Procedure Bylaw, and consideration of the Second/Third Readings of the proposed Bylaws will be held in the City Hall Council Chambers at the address below on Monday, December 20, 2021 beginning at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Copies of the above Bylaws and related documents may be inspected during normal office hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm) at the City Clerk Department or accessed via the 'Proposed Bylaws' section on the City's website at www.medicinehat.ca.

Any person who claims to be affected by any of the proposed bylaws may make representation to City Council at the Non-Statutory Public Hearings. Oral submissions are limited to five minutes.

Anyone wishing to have a written submission concerning the proposed bylaws placed before the City Council must submit it to the City Clerk Department by 12:00 noon, Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

Dated at the City of Medicine Hat, in the Province of Alberta, this 20th day of November, 2021.

Angela Cruickshank, City Clerk
Phone: 403.529.8234
Fax: 403.529.8324
E-mail: clerk@medicinehat.ca

PROTECT WATER LINES FROM FREEZING

The following actions should be considered to protect your water lines:

- Repair broken windows and ensure windows/vents are closed during the winter.
- Insulate water pipes in unheated areas, including crawl spaces.
- For sinks located against a non-insulated outside wall:
 - Open the vanity door to allow warm air to reach the water pipes.
 - A light bulb placed near the water pipe may generate enough heat to keep the water flowing.
 - Heat tape wrapped around the pipe may keep the pipe from freezing.
- Residents of mobile homes should check the condition of the heat tape on their water service and water meter.
- Protect unheated indoor water meter with an insulated box and water pipes should be wrapped in insulation using heat tape.

- Outside water taps and underground sprinkler systems should have the water supply shut off inside the house at the isolation valve for the tap.
- Sprinkler lines and taps should be drained/blown out.
- A thin stream of water (as thick as a pen) running continuously from at least one tap will help prevent a frozen water service.
- If you plan to be away from home over the winter period, close the main water isolation valve located next to the water meter in your home. You should leave the heat on in your home and have someone check inside your home daily while you're away.

A frozen water service, or a burst water pipe, is an inconvenience and expense that most people would like to avoid. Please take all possible precautions to prevent this happening in your home or business.

For more information, refer to www.medicinehat.ca or contact City Assets Environmental Utilities at 403.529.8176.

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