

Congratulations Grain & General Services Union scholarship & bursary recipients

2016



Trevor
Dubois



Kayla
Friesen



Jordyn
Pelechaty



Jenna
Zimmer

GSU scholarship recipients are chosen based on their essay submission and community involvement.

There is no essay requirement for the GSU First Nations University of Canada bursary. Our recipient is chosen by the First Nations University scholarship board based on credit hours, financial need, leadership, participation and involvement in on-campus and student activities.

GSU's First Nations University of Canada bursary recipient **Trevor Dubois**

Trevor is a second-year student enrolled in the Indigenous Social Work program at the First Nations University of Canada's Northern Campus.



His future plans include being an advocate for those in need and working in the criminal justice system. Trevor's goal is to eventually create a restorative justice program in the community.

Trevor enjoys volunteering with many local organizations and he is currently the president/chief of the NC Student Association.

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2016 Grain & General Services Union scholarship recipient

Kayla Friesen

Kayla is the daughter of GSU member Terry Friesen who works at Viterra's Melville processing plant (GSU Sub-Local 1.4).



Kayla grew up in Melville where she attended Melville Comprehensive School and graduated as an honour roll member this June. This autumn she will attend the University of Regina specializing in their four-year Early Elementary Education program.

Kayla enjoys working with children and believes in giving back to her community. She was a mentor for the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program, a volunteer at St. Henry's Jr. School, a member of MCS Student Council, and a leader at the Melville Park Program.

In a letter of reference, Kayla's Student Representative Government advisor Katherine Koskie says:

"I have nothing but the highest regard and respect for Kayla. Kayla is the type of student that will be an agent of change for society when she leaves our school and enters post-secondary education."

Kayla says:

"Thanks so much for the \$2000 GSU scholarship! It will definitely be a huge help!"

Bill C-377, Canada's Union Opponent

By: Kayla Friesen

On June 30, 2015, Bill C-377 passed Third Reading in the Senate. The bill received Royal Assent by the Governor General David Johnson. Under Bill C-377, all Labour Unions in Canada are required to send in a standard set of financial statements every year. Details regarding the statements have to be posted publically for all Canadians to view. This bill enables Canadians and the Canadian Government to see the financial truthfulness and measure the success of Canadian Unions. This bill targets Labour Unions and is not at all affiliated with law organizations, medical associations or any other associations.

Bill C-377 negatively affects Labour Unions across Canada. First of all, the bill enables private information to be taken and used by large corporations against the labour movement including: collective bargaining or countering organization diversions of the labour unions that may try and create their work force. Bill C-377 also threatens Canadian citizen's rights such as: the right to privacy, the right of association and the right to freedom of speech inside the right of association. In addition to Bill C-377 putting Canadian citizen's rights in jeopardy, Bill C-377 also is strictly about ideology rather than clarity and liability. Bill C-377 directly targeted the labour movement in Canada. Lastly, by making unions report every single thing they do, the amount of time and effort needed to make the reports would take additional resources both financially and physically. Overall, there is enough evidence against Bill C-377 to claim that Bill C-377 is poor for Canada's businesses, industries and economy.

As a daughter of two union members, I have witnessed how Bill C-377 has affected working individuals. Bill C-377 is substandard to union workers because it is designed to weaken unions and cause added stress to them. Unions do not need to be accountable to the government. They are already accountable to their own members. Members are able to receive statements about how their union money is being spent. If the union members feel that the money is being misspent, they can bring that up with their representative, they do not need the government stepping in.

If unions don't comply with this required paperwork, or miss deadlines, the unions can be fined \$1000 per day. This is extremely excessive. This is money that hard working people paid in as union dues. The Canada Revenue Agency estimates that it will collect approximately \$72 million in fines per year. This is unfair. There is a very large amount of paperwork involved in compliance with Bill C-377. This is creating a lot of work and also opening unions up to being unfairly fined.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that Bill C-377 should be revisited by The Canadian Government and eventually abolished due to all of the facts stated above. The Bill is unnecessary and does more harm to Canadian members of the Labour Unions than good. Union members deserve to live without their rights being violated, the government interfering when it is not necessary, private union information publicized rather than shared only to members, and being specifically targeted. Bill C-377 is unfair to Labour Union members.

2016 Grain & General Services Union scholarship recipient

Jordyn Pelechaty

Jordyn is the daughter of GSU member Duane Pelechaty who works for CPS in Weyburn (GSU Sub-Local 15.9).



Jordyn grew up in Weyburn, SK and graduated from Weyburn Comprehensive School as an honour roll student with the highest female average in her graduating class.

Jordyn will be attending the University of Alberta working towards a degree in Science, majoring in the Biological Sciences. After completing her degree, she hopes to get into the College of Medicine at the University of Alberta.

In a letter of reference, Jordyn's teacher Kyla Moffat says:

"She is by far one of the most mature students that I have ever worked with. Jordyn is the type of person who looks for the positive in any situation, and tries to support others in living a positive life. I have been touched and impressed by Jordyn's honesty and integrity."

The Effect of Bill 85 in Saskatchewan

Over the past few years, many anti-union laws have been implemented within Canada. One of these laws includes Bill 85, or the Saskatchewan Employment Act, which was passed in Saskatchewan on May 15, 2013. The bill made significant changes to workplace protections and rights. Bill 85 removed workers from unions, and weakened the rights and protections of workers. The bill is also one of the few in Canada that requires unions to provide audited financial statements to their members and disclose the results of all member votes. Many believe that Bill 85 was purely intended to weaken unions. The Saskatchewan Employment Act has had many negative effects on working Canadians.

Workers whose job duties include access to confidential records on labour relations, business planning, policy advice, or budget planning and implementation are no longer legally considered an employee in the Saskatchewan Employment Act. Therefore these workers are not able to belong to a union and receive the benefits of being part of a union. This interferes with employees' right to belong to a union of their choice. Less workers being part of a union not only decreases union membership and funds, it also causes friction between workers and upsets the balance of the organization. Bill 85 has taken away many working Canadians' right to be part of a union.

Bill 85 weakened the rights and protections of workers by changing standards of reasonable hours, overtime pay, meal breaks, and weekends off. Previously, employers had to give one week's notice of schedule changes, limit a worker's hours to no more than 44 in a week, and provide lunch breaks under all but emergency circumstances. Under Bill 85, circumstances that are "unexpected or unusual" will exempt employers from meeting those standards.

Employers can now impose a 10 hour per day, four day work week on employees, whether the employees want it or not, which is unfair to workers. This means long days at work, and more time away from their families. Also, Bill 85 only requires two consecutive days off for certain categories of workers, chosen by the government. This means some workers may not have a weekend, or time to be with their family and friends, which is extremely unfair.

The Saskatchewan Employment Act is also one of the few bills in Canada that requires unions to provide audited financial statements to their members and disclose the results of all member votes, which could cause financial hardship for smaller unions. Another disadvantage of the bill is that any employees with supervisory duties such as assigning or scheduling work, or giving performance feedback can be removed from the same bargaining unit as the people they supervise. This means employers can push many workers out of their current units, potentially costing them years of seniority or other entitlements.

The Saskatchewan Employment act has changed the lives of many Saskatchewan workers. Bill 85 has removed workers from unions by changing the legal definition of an employee. The bill has weakened workers' rights and protections dealing with reasonable hours, overtime pay, meal breaks, and weekends off, leading to longer work days and less family time. Unions are also required to provide financial statements to their members and disclose the results of all member votes, which can be costly. Lastly, supervisors can be taken out of their bargaining units and contracts. Bill 85 has negatively affected workers by diminishing workers' rights and weakening unions.

Bibliography

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2016 Grain & General Services Union scholarship recipient

Jenna Zimmer

Jenna is the daughter of GSU member Barry Zimmer who works for Viterra in Grenfell (GSU Sub-Local 1.8).



Jenna was raised in Wolseley, Saskatchewan. She is a recent graduate from Wolseley High School and was the valedictorian in her class.

This autumn Jenna will be attending the University of Saskatchewan where she is enrolled in the Edwards School of Business Bachelor of Commerce Program with plans to major in Human Resources.

In a letter of reference, Jenna's English teacher Gayle Wheatley says:

"[Jenna] is a hard working student who strives to complete tasks to the best of her ability. She has maintained a strong A+ average of 92% throughout her years at Wolseley High School. She always arrives in class prepared, and goes above and beyond what teachers ask of her."

Jenna says:

"I'd like to thank the Grain & General Services Union for selecting my essay, and for everything the Union does to benefit people in the workplace."

Labour unions are put into place as an organization for salaried employees to ensure they receive mutual aid and protection, and also allow them to deal with employers collectively. Through unions, working people have a collective voice at work and strive for equality, fair treatment and economic security. This is why when certain anti-union laws are imposed on working Canadians they must be stopped in order to ensure worker's rights are respected. Bill C-525 was just one of the bills that threatened unions and workers rights. It was a private Member's bill unveiled by Blaine Calkins, a Conservative Member of Parliament. The bill was designed to weaken unions by forcing them to complete unreasonable financial reporting, and by making it more difficult for Canadians in federally-regulated workplaces to join a union. The bill also wanted to amend three parts of labour legislation, the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employee & Staff Relations Act, and the Public Service Labour Relations Act. With the amendment of these acts, workers lost many rights within their workplace. Bill C-525 not only takes away worker's rights to certify a union, but makes it easier to decertify a union and makes it easier for employers to intimidate their employees.

Bill C-525 aims to make it much more difficult for workers in the federally-regulated sector to join a union. It gives employees who don't even bother to vote in a certification application, a say in the outcome. By them not voting, it is considered as a "no" ballot on having a union in their workplace. Essentially they are trying to make sure that the outcomes of these votes are not in favour of a union, causing the union to no longer be certified in each workplace. The loss of unions would cause unionized workers to lose their generous health benefits, their pension plans and their pay standards. They would also lose their secured legislated labour protections and rights, such as safety and health, overtime, and family/medical leave.

While making it more difficult for workers to become unionized, Bill C-525 also made it easier for unions to become decertified. In a vote on whether or not to join a union, those who didn't vote at all counted as a vote against joining the union. The bill is designed to establish a minority-driven process for decertifying a union. It has introduced a new voting process in which the union must receive more than 50% of member's votes of the proposed bargaining unit, rather than 50% of votes cast.

This new process has been implemented by eliminating the card check model. The card check model was required by the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employee & Staff Relations Act, and the Public Service Labour Relations Act, which is why the bill amended these pieces of labour legislation.

The card check model was originally a single-step process in which signing a card counted as a vote in favour of a union. If the majority (50% +1) of the votes were in favour of a union, one would form in the workplace. Bill C-525 has replaced this model with a two-step process in which the card signing would take place, followed by a secret ballot vote. The card check model was practiced because it protected employees from intimidation. Secret-ballot votes in workplaces reduce union certification. The votes also give employers more opportunities to intimidate employees to ensure they avoid voting in favour of a union. Employers do this by holding anti-union meetings and threaten employees with job loss. The secret-ballot votes take a lot longer to process, which is why employers have time to scare their employees if they want the union to be decertified. This then leads to instability in workplace relationships between coworkers and their employers because of the intimidation that can take place

In conclusion, the Liberal party is looking to repeal Bill C-525 because of its undemocratic structure and unreasonable requests it imposes on federally-regulated sectors. It is a flawed bill that was imposed without first consulting unions and employers and caused many problems in the workplace. Unions should be protected by the labour legislation to ensure worker's rights are recognized. Canadians should be worried and be aware of a government that is determined to undermine unions and their ability to properly represent their members. Bill C-525 favours large corporations by stepping on the rights of Canadian employees to fair pay and treatment at work, showing negative results. This is why the bill should be repealed and the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employee & Staff Relations Act, and the Public Service Labour Relations Act should come back into the labour legislation to keep unionized workers protected, to ensure they can certify their union and keep the union running within their workplace.



GSU scholarship

GSU is pleased to offer \$2,000 scholarships to five students who demonstrate an ability and a passion to inspire positive change in their community.

The scholarship competition is open to GSU members, their spouses, and dependent children who have not previously won.

Scholarship applicants must be enrolled in a diploma, degree, or certificate program at a community college, university, trade school, or technical institute as a full-time student in any country.

GSU's First Nations University of Canada bursary

The bursary is open to an Aboriginal student enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours at the First Nations University of Canada.

Applicants must have successfully completed a minimum of 30 credit hours (not including ENGL 90/91 and AMTH 001/002/003 classes) to a maximum of 60 credit hours in any area of study leading to a degree.

Financial need, leadership, participation and involvement in on-campus and student activities will be considered in the selection of recipient.

Information on GSU scholarships and our bursary are available on GSU's web page at www.gsu.ca.