

Incredible claim

BY SHAWNA COLPITTS, THE STARPHOENIX OCTOBER 28, 2011

Labour Minister Don Morgan said in a TV interview on Oct. 21 that his government's essential services law was done in a manner respectful of unions and union workers.

Does he really believe that health-care providers felt respected when they waited 27 months for a contract? They were force-fed rollbacks in exchange for a paltry wage increase, only to discover weeks later that some out-of-scope employees and CEOs were lined up for 60 per cent increases?

I don't think workers feel respected when they face unsafe staffing levels daily due to the inability to fill vacancies.

We learned, in this process, that many Saskatchewan Party MLAs refused to meet with constituents who are health care providers. It's safe to say no one is feeling terribly respected.

It's obvious that Morgan hasn't properly considered the decision of the International Labour Organization, which admonished the actions of his government for a lack of meaningful and respectful dialogue with stakeholders.

In Alberta, for example, essential services legislation includes a binding arbitration mechanism to fairly resolve a bargaining impasse. When parties requested this in Saskatchewan, it was denied.

This province's essential services law doesn't work. It does, however, give the government a leg up; it no longer has to be fair to working people.

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