Court Upholds Law Ending 2017 College Academic Staff Strike



In November 2017, Ontario enacted legislation to end a 5-week strike by academic staff at the 24 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology across Ontario affecting approximately 257,000 full-time students, 78,000 part-time students and 1,400 apprentice students. The union sued, claiming that by forcing the sides to resolve their disputes by binding arbitration violated employees' Charter freedoms of association and right to strike. The government claimed the legislation was justified to save the academic year and prevent the turmoil that the year's loss would have caused to college students. The Ontario court agreed, dismissed the lawsuit and ordered the union to pay legal costs of $100,000 [*OPSEU v. Ontario*, 2024 ONSC 3644 (CanLII), July 11, 2024].