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Heather Anderson: Anchor

A bill that could change construction unions in our Province is getting an unpleasant response from those against it. On Friday, dozens of people took their message to Saskatchewan's Labour Minister. Global's Sheri Clark has more on what the bill is all about.

Sheri Clark: Reporter

More than thirty people rallied outside of Labour Minister Rob Norris' constituency office today, and dropped off a petition with more than twelve hundred signatures to say not to Bill 80, but what exactly is Bill 80? That all depends on who you ask.

Rob Norris: Labour Minister

How we came to this, we wanted to ensure there was greater competition, we wanted to ensure that there was greater choice, especially for working people and which unions they belong to, and we wanted to ensure there was some clarity or certainty regarding the issue of abandonment.

Terry Parker: Saskatchewan Building Trades

This is gonna create two parallel systems to regulate the construction industry in Saskatchewan, and what it will do is lead to lower wages in the construction industry, and we've had seventeen years of labour stability, and we want to keep that.

Sheri Clark:

Essentially, Bill 80 will make amendments to the Construction Industry Labour Relations Act.

Rob Norris:

What we know is the existing Construction Industry Labour Relations Act is outdated, and it offers a monopoly to a few. This is about offering a choice for many.

Sheri Clark:

About six thousand employees in our Province will be affected. Those who say no to Bill 80 say other unions are going to come into our Province, and that will lower wages. The Saskatchewan Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council says they are open for competition, but it has to be fair.

Terry Parker:

You have an employer-based union, or an employer-friendly union I should say, that will go and cut a deal that's lower than our collective agreements, and then we'll have to go in and try to compete with that, and we've said we're willing to work with other unions, but make it on a level playing field. It's as simple as that.

Sheri Clark:

Norris says Bill 80 has already been discussed for a total of about twenty-four hours in the Legislature, and he expects it will pass during the spring sitting sometime in May.