



Autos | Careers | Classifieds | Homes

SEARCH

**EARN MILES FASTER**  **CIBC AEROGOLD VISA INFINITE** Receive a Welcome Bonus of **15,000** Aeroplan Miles. **APPLY TODAY**   Conditions apply. Ask for details.

www.cibccards.com Ads by Google

## Time running out for Nortel disabled: Senator

By SCOTT TAYLOR, OTTAWA SUN

Last Updated: June 14, 2010 9:54pm

Disabled Nortel workers facing a future without benefits and affordable medication have a champion hoping to help them.

Senator Art Eggleton is working to have a bill adopted that would leapfrog disabled employees past common creditors when companies that are self-insured go bankrupt.

If it fails, some employees say they will simply not be able to survive.

While Eggleton said he's received no strong opposition to Bill S-216, neither has it received the attention it needs to be passed before Nortel goes bankrupt late this year.

"It's at second reading in the Senate and it's been sitting there for over two months and the government has not allowed it to move yet," Eggleton fumed Monday.

"There are some very desperate people that need their long-term disability benefits to survive and to pay for their medications. A lot of them have medications that are well above what's covered by our medicare plan."

Eggleton argued that Nortel should live up to its responsibilities.

"If they don't, then it falls back on the taxpayer. They would be in effect downloading their responsibility to the taxpayer and I think that's wrong. There's enough assets there that if (the employees) move up the list they would be covered."

Nortel aside, Eggleton said the bill is designed to cover about a million people working for companies that are self-insured. He's hoping federal Industry Minister Tony Clement will soon agree that these employees need to be helped.

"Time is of the essence here and it's just dragging out too long. It's not resistance, nobody has said a negative thing about this, but I'm not getting an answer. I've gone to see Tony Clement about it and he seemed to be receptive and understanding, but there's still no commitment and time is running out."

A call to Tony Clement's office was not immediately returned.

scott.taylor@sunmedia.ca

Copyright © 2010 Ottawa Sun All Rights Reserved

