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Disabled Nortel workers in Canada want to top creditor list



Nortel

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OTTAWA — The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reports that Nortel employees on long-term disability are pleading for support from all Canadian federal political parties for a Senate bill they say will spare them from further suffering and "financial abuse."

Arlene Borenstein, a Nortel employee on disability, urged politicians Monday to set aside their political differences and support a bill brought forward by Sen. Art Eggleton in March to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the CBC report said.

The bill, which had its second reading on March 30, would bring employees on long-term disability to the top of the list of creditors to be paid if a company goes bankrupt.

Their payments would then be far more likely to continue until age 65, when they would be eligible for retirement benefits.

Under Nortel's most recent agreement with employees, pensioners and former employees, long-term disability benefits will only continue until the end of the year. In addition, the agreement approved by the Ontario Superior Court on March 31 specifies that the employees give up their right to sue for more money.

"While our lawyers tell us we have a legal basis to appeal the March 31 settlement, I have to say we're getting sicker and sicker by the day as we get dragged through these complex court procedures," Borenstein said.

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