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## Kill the bill, save the culture

Northern News Services

**Education Minister Paul Quassa**  a well-respected leader and negotiator of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement – appears intent on

37, which will cancel any targets to

have Nunavut's high school students

speaking Inuktitut upon graduation,

is opposed in the legislative assem-

As of press time, it appeared to

be dead legislation walking, as bills

need two sittings of the legislature

and three readings to pass. The

funeral can't come soon enough.

Department of Education let it

It's hard to understand how the

It's even harder to understand

why Quassa is staking his career on

must be considering his future after

this bill. As the clock runs down on

this legislative assembly, Quassa

bly and in many other quarters.

throwing his reputation out the window for all the wrong reasons.

His fight to push through Bill

come this far.

THE ISSUE:

THE FIGHT AGAINST BILL 37

**WE SAY:** 

AVOIDING LAWSUIT NOT GOOD ENOUGH REASON TO SAVE IT

the October election.

Even if his constituents support him, it's doubtful that his current stance on Bill 37 will lead him to the premiership - he was up

against Premier **Peter Taptuna for** the job in 2013 - or even to a ministerial appointment under any premier other than perhaps Taptuna, should his premiership survive

the election.

We say that because Taptuna is complicit in this debacle, and the worldview of both leaders - who are showing their disdain for language and culture preservation in their support of this bill - may come back to haunt them when voters cast their ballots in October.

Quassa is pushing the passage of the Bill 37, he says, to protect the government from a lawsuit by Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. He says his history shows he is committed to the preservation of Inuktitut but if that's the case, why is he pushing this solely to avoid a lawsuit?

It's a pretty stinky argument.

Surely he meant to say, "It's the right plan for our children."

As it is, Bill 37 is just as likely to trigger a lawsuit from NTI, as breaking Inuktitut language commitments to Nunavut's children is already cause for inflamed spirits. This government has had four years to present a serious plan to make Inuktitut the first language of Nunavut's schoolchildren but waited until practically the last minute to present a very flawed bill to the legislative assembly.

Minister Quassa, there's only one path you can take to save yourself.

Withdraw the bill and disavow the idea.

Step back into your negotiator shoes. Bring NTI, MLAs, and educators to the table. Discuss a path forward together. Do it in the open. Invite Nunavummiut and journalists to monitor the proceedings. Broadcast it live across Nunavut.

If there is a viable plan, it will come out.

If not, at least the territory can say its leaders tried to work out a solution together, in the open, instead of besieged behind closed doors.