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Senate kills bill that would help disabled Nortel workers



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A campaign to try to get better treatment for about 400 disabled Nortel workers has ended in disappointment.

The Senate voted 47 to 44 Wednesday night to kill a Liberal bill that would have moved disabled workers up to the top of the list of creditors.

The disabled say Nortel took money out of a trust fund that was to pay for their benefits.

In the spring, an Ontario judge approved a plan that will see all benefits come to an end at the end of December.

The disabled say they cannot work, and in many cases they have high medical bills that will push them into poverty.

Tory senators said the proposed bill would not be legal and the court-ordered settlement takes priority.

A small group of dissatisfied disabled workers had pushed the issue.

In a statement after the vote, they said the proposed law would have "ensured that more than 1.1 million Canadians would have safe self-insured long term disability benefits."

They added that up to 23,000 disabled employees in Canada are still "exposed to the grave injustice of employers providing bogus disability insurance."

There is still another bill in the Senate that is aimed at improving the situation for pensioners. It has yet to come to a vote.