

NewsRelease



Public Service Alliance of Canada | Representing 160,000 workers

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PSAC says “pay equity” bill threatens women’s rights

Ottawa – The Public Service Alliance of Canada is encouraging opposition members to remove legislation from the budget bill that would prevent women in the federal public sector from demanding equal pay for work of equal value.

The 166,000-member union is concerned that the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* will remove women’s ability to file pay equity complaints, making the process even more difficult than the current complaints-based system.

The “pay equity” bill is part of the omnibus *Budget Implementation Act* (Bill C-10), which was tabled on February 6, 2009. PSAC refutes the notion that this legislation is “proactive,” given that it ignores the recommendations made in the well-respected 2004 report from the federal Task Force on Pay Equity. The union contends that the new scheme would make a bad system much worse, removing pay equity’s status as a human right and opening it up to market forces.

According to PSAC, the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* undermines pay equity in the following ways:

- It transforms pay equity into an “equitable compensation issue” that must be discussed at the bargaining table – even though fundamental human rights should never be negotiable.
- It makes it more difficult to claim pay equity, by changing the definition of a “female predominant” job group to require that women make up 70 per cent of workers in the position.
- It redefines the criteria used to evaluate whether jobs are of “equal” value, leaving pay equity up to the fluctuations of the market.
- It forces individual women to make pay equity claims without any support – in fact it would impose a \$50,000 fine on any union for encouraging or assisting their own members in filing a pay equity complaint.

“Pay equity is a fundamental human right that should not be taken away at a bargaining table where the employer historically holds the balance of power,” said John Gordon, PSAC National President. “The *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* is a regressive piece of legislation that threatens to widen the income gap between women and men in the federal public sector. We urge the opposition parties to unite to remove *the Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* from Bill C-10.”

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