

# Union UPDATE



Public Service Alliance of Canada | 233 Gilmour Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0P1 | (613) 560-4200

## PSAC tables wage demands with Treasury Board

**T**hree of our Treasury Board units have advanced negotiations to the stage where they have tabled their wage demands. The Programme and Administrative Services (PA), Operational Services (SV) and Frontière/Border Services (FB) units are proposing a 4.5 per cent general economic increase in each year of a three-year agreement. This demand takes into account wage settlement trends, inflation rates and other economic indicators, as well as the challenge of future recruitment at a time of rising retirements and low unemployment. Before the economic increase is applied, each unit is proposing their own set of adjustments.

The PA team has proposed adjusting salaries to keep them in line with other federal public sector employers, specifically the Canada Revenue Agency. Some special adjustments are being proposed for members in the WP group and two groups of PM-4 positions with enforcement duties. A change in the increment system and increases to various allowances round out the monetary demands package. The PA demand for a special allowance for Compensation Advisors got a boost on May 1 when the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates issued a report calling on the government to take immediate action to improve their pay.

### Fixing low wages

A study produced for PSAC by consulting firm Morneau-Sobeco confirms what the Union has suspected for some time: compensation for our

members at the Canada Border Services Agency is inferior when compared with other law enforcement agencies. Our FB team wants market adjustments to fix this problem. The wage proposal also includes new and improved allowances.

In 2004, wage adjustments were negotiated for classifications in the SV unit, based on a joint



PSAC national executive vice-president Patty Ducharme spoke at a demonstration organized by PSAC members on May 23, telling the Harper government to "get real" with its wage offer to Treasury Board members. The Union rejected the government's proposal of 1.5%, 1.5%, 1.2% and 1.2% increases in a four year agreement retroactive to 2007. Ducharme criticized the offer as "an insult and a joke," pointing out that it is "well below projected inflation rates."

PSAC-Treasury Board pay study.

However, these adjustments only closed about 40 per cent of the pay gap. Now, our SV team wants to close the gap completely through market adjustments and restructuring of pay grids.

Eliminating the regional pay zones remains high on their agenda. Increases to allowances and premiums have also been proposed.

### Compensation study inaccurate

PSAC has expressed disappointment with the results of the recently released compensation study for the TC unit. While the Union is continuing to analyze the data, it is clear the study results don't stand up to close scrutiny. A low rate of response, combined with what appear to be poor job matches, have produced questionable results. For example, in the study, external rates for Senior Fisheries Officers are less than

those for Junior Fisheries Officers. The TC wage demand is still being prepared and will be tabled at a later date.

Our EB team ended up going over old ground at their meetings with the employer in late April after Treasury Board appointed a new lead negotiator.

*(continued on page 4)*



## **Essential Services Agreements another bargaining wrinkle**

It has been a major undertaking to prod the departments into providing the Union with their lists of proposals before the Essential Services Agreements (ESAs) can be finalized. The process started a year ago. Treasury Board has written that they “believe all proposals related to existing positions/organizations will be filed by May 30...” A critical flaw in the legislation covering bargaining is that there are no deadlines for the employer to submit its proposals. Members should be pushing their departments to supply their proposals to PSAC now! Check the PSAC website at [www.psc.com](http://www.psc.com) for more on the progress of the negotiation of the ESAs.

## **Parks employer walks away from bargaining**

After seven days at the bargaining table, the Parks Canada Agency’s negotiators walked away from the table, refusing to consider the Union’s proposals on wages and other major issues. On February 21, the Parks Bargaining Team declared an impasse after the employer refused to discuss the priority issues of the members. This was 10 months after negotiations began. The employer subsequently asked the Bargaining Team back to the table, promising to address the Union’s substantive demands. On May 5, the Bargaining Team returned to negotiations “without prejudice,” meaning that the Union said it would continue to take any actions, including workplace activities, that may be deemed necessary to achieve a collective agreement. PSAC members at Parks Canada have been without a contract since August 2007, and unfortunately the employer’s recent actions haven’t brought the workers any closer to achieving one.

## **Survey members want better working conditions**

Negotiations began in earnest for Statistical Survey Operations members when our Regional Office (RO) Team met with the employer the week of May 26. The Field Interviewers (FI) Team is in bargaining the week of June 2. Both units exchanged bargaining demands with the employer earlier this year. While the employer has asked for our wage proposals, there is a need to greatly improve working conditions for our SSO members and our teams want to focus the employer’s

attention on these demands before any talks on wages take place.

Rejean Amyotte, Jeanne Elson and Rudy Mehra are the PSAC members on the RO negotiating team. Mary Anne Walker, Geraldine Fortin and Donna Henry are the members of the FI team.

## **Olympic coin production uninterrupted as Mint settles**

PSAC members at the Royal Canadian Mint in Ottawa and Winnipeg have ratified a new three-year agreement that provides 3 per cent increases in each year, retroactive to January 1, 2008. Members will also receive bonuses ranging from 2 per cent to 4 per cent of base pay for achieving corporate plan targets as well as other bonus payments when Mint income exceeds its target. Other improvements include an increase of 20 cents an hour for all shift premiums, a signing bonus of \$500 and a new grievance arbitration process for classification grievances.

## **The show must – and will – go on!**

PSAC has negotiated a renewal agreement for the second group of workers at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Members of Local 70291 working in NAC parking, security and maintenance will receive 2.5 per cent in each year of a three-year agreement, retroactive to January 1, 2008. Some trades positions will receive upward adjustments. Security officers will get an adjustment of 12 per cent before the first economic increase is applied. Special premiums are also being rolled into wages for a number of jobs. The new contract also includes improvements in shift premiums, vacation leave and a signing bonus.

## **REVP elections**

The B.C., Ontario and NCR regions held their conventions in April and May. PSAC members at the conventions focused on the Union’s commitment to defending quality public services through our Think Public campaign.

Delegates to the B.C. Regional Convention in Vancouver re-elected Kay Sinclair as their Regional Executive Vice-President. Kay is particularly active in women’s, LGBT and human rights, as well as on issues involving health and safety and the environment. She has held the REVP position since May 2006 when she replaced now National Executive Vice-President Patty Ducharme, following elections at the PSAC Triennial

Convention. Megan Adam, a member of the current PSAC bargaining team for the Program and Administrative Services unit, was elected alternate REVP.

On May 4, Gerry Halabecki was re-elected by acclamation to his fourth term as Regional Executive Vice-President for Ontario at the PSAC's regional convention in Toronto. Gerry was first elected REVP in 2000. He currently shares responsibility for collective bargaining and is the elected officer assigned to the Technical Services bargaining unit. PSAC National Health and Welfare Union member Sharon DeSousa was elected to her first term as Alternate REVP.

On May 25, delegates at the PSAC National Capital Region Convention elected Maria Fitzpatrick to the position of Regional Executive Vice-President. Maria came from the Union of Solicitor General Employees where she is the president of local 70041. She took part in her first strike in 1989 and has been a union activist ever since. Daniel Charron, who was elected Alternate REVP, is the National Vice-President of the Government Services Union and the President of the Comité Régional d'Action Politique de l'Outaouais.

### **New Treasury Board Travel Directive**

A new federal public service Travel Directive took effect on April 1. The Travel Directive is one of a number of agreements between Treasury Board and federal government unions. It spells out regulations on everything travel-related – from accommodation to currency exchange to incidentals. It also establishes reimbursement rates for meals and the use of personal vehicles. For more information, visit the Treasury Board website at <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca>, and click on “Travel Rates.”

### **PSAC Scholarship deadline July 16**

Do you have a child or dependent attending a post-secondary educational institution? Are you returning to school on a full-time basis next year? You could be eligible for a scholarship of between \$1,000 and \$4,000.

PSAC is once again offering scholarships to children and dependants of Union members and this year three scholarships are available to PSAC members who are



### **Take action for pay equity at psac.com!**

Thirty years after the adoption of the Canadian Human Rights Act, pay equity is still only a dream for most women in Canada. Despite the fact that the Pay Equity Task Force recommended the adoption of a stand-alone proactive pay equity law four years ago, the federal government has done nothing.

And while the Harper government is in denial about women's inequality, income gaps between men and women persist and are growing.

In the mid '90s women working full-time earned on average 72 cents for every dollar earned by a man. By 2005, that proportion had dropped to 70.5 cents. And the pay gap for immigrant women, many of whom are racialized, is much worse.

Visit [www.psac.com](http://www.psac.com) today, and use the “Email your MP” tool to send a message demanding that the federal government take action on pay equity.

returning to university, college or a recognized institution of higher learning on a full-time basis. PSAC members (as parents of applicants or as applicants) must be in good standing as of March 31 of the current year. The deadline for applications is July 16. Visit [www.psac.com](http://www.psac.com) for the scholarship guidelines, required essay topic and other information.

## **Use them or lose them**

**Members whose collective agreements include volunteer and personal leave days with pay need to use them each year – or lose them! These days are yours to take but do not carry over from year to year.**

# Homophobia is bad for your health!

## *National Day Against Homophobia highlights health care inequity*

**M**ay 17 was the National Day Against Homophobia. The Public Service Alliance of Canada stands in solidarity with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities in opposition to homophobia and transphobia.

This year's Day Against Homophobia focused on the LGBT community and health care. Queer and trans people have spent many years fighting for health care free from discrimination. They have also fought hard to ensure that public health care remains free and accessible to all Canadians – especially those from traditionally marginalized communities.

The PSAC supports the call for health services that are free from discrimination. We also join with the Canadian Labour Congress in asserting that the best way to ensure equity in health care is to support Canada's public medicare system and fight any privatization of Canadian health care.

Here is why we need to keep fighting for public health care and against privatization of health care services in Canada:

**Private health care is unaccountable.** LGBT people historically have faced discrimination in access to and in the provision of health care services. Activists from LGBT communities and unionized health care workers continue to challenge health care institutions to change their policies and practices and to provide care free from prejudice and discrimination. Private institutions are accountable to shareholders and not to the public.

**Private health insurance leaves people behind.** In the United States, private health insurance companies charge expensive premiums to people with pre-existing health conditions – if they are lucky enough to qualify for coverage. More than 40 million people in the U.S. have no health coverage whatsoever, and those who do must fight private HMOs to access the care they need and deserve. In Canada, the lack of a national pharmacare program means that LGBT people with HIV/AIDS or other serious medical conditions must rely on private insurance to pay for their medications – if their employer provides them with a benefit plan.

**Health care is a human right.** No one should have to go shopping for health care services to find places where they feel safe. Everyone has the right to respectful care in our community, no matter how ill

they are or how much money they make. Public control of health care services helps ensure access to health care for the LGBT community and other equity-seeking groups. Public institutions have an obligation to respect and promote the human rights of patients, and must take positive measures to do so. While private health care must also respect provincial human rights legislation, the onus is on the individual to file a complaint, leaving patients vulnerable to human rights abuses.

Many transsexual and transgender people continue to face discrimination and a lack of access to medically necessary services, including sex reassignment surgery and hormone therapy. People living with HIV/AIDS must access private insurance or pay out-of-pocket for the medications they need to take to stay alive. It shouldn't be this way.

### **Think public – fight homophobia and transphobia**

PSAC is building a movement to fight back and defend Canada's valuable public services. We believe that the needs of people come first – that the role of government is to protect and promote the social, economic and safety needs of the public, rather than promote profits at any cost.

On May 17, PSAC members marked the International Day Against Homophobia by committing to defend a strong public health care system for all Canadians.

– *With information from the Canadian Labour Congress*

*(continued from page 1)*

## **PSAC tables wage demands**

Some counterproposals were tabled. This team is working on its wage proposals but will not table them until the Union receives the results of a pay study on compensation for 12-month teachers expected later this summer.

Overall, while there is some movement at the table, progress remains slow. Members can send the employer a message to start responding positively to our demands by participating in activities planned in their region.

**More information about each bargaining session and full details of our wage proposals can be found at [www.pfac.com](http://www.pfac.com).**