



NEWSLETTER

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United Nurses of Alberta

WOLF... ON GARY HEARD.



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MLA Pay Cuts an Admission of Mismanagement

By Cameron Westhead
Local 115 Treasurer, United Nurses of Alberta

Were it not for the Alberta government's failure to plan for an inevitable drop in oil prices, we wouldn't even be having a discussion about MLA pay cuts or looming 9-per-cent budget cuts that will harm Alberta's most vulnerable citizens and public services. These cuts amount to an admission of fiscal mismanagement and poor planning being misrepresented as "leadership" for most of the past 43 years.

Now they expect us to trust them to get us out of the fiscal trap they promised never to fall back into after Ralph Klein's devastating cuts in the Nineties? In health care, we are still recovering from those cuts, and Albertans are too smart to fall for that approach again. Don't fall for it when the people who created the problem tell you they have the solution.

Are there efficiencies to be found to responsibly decrease government spending? Absolutely. But playing politics by implementing insignificant cuts in comfortable MLA salaries in order to squeeze concessions from lower-paid public employees providing essential public services is not leadership. It is a diningenuous, cynical distraction to draw attention away from the fact that they squandered the wealth during the good times and now claim there is no more money. Now they are looking to working families to bail them out for their mistakes. We are being asked to pay more, and get less, through no fault of our own.

Real leadership means setting the right priorities, ensuring our province has diversified, stable revenue sources, and a fair taxation system to honour the government's responsibility to deliver the services Albertans rely on. A true leader like Peter Lougheed would have ensured that we acted like owners and got the most value for our energy resources as possible, saved for a rainy day, and distributed the bounty fairly. We can afford to raise corporate taxes to bring in more revenue, yet remain competitive for businesses. We also need to return to a progressive income tax structure like every other Canadian province has. A progressive tax will not impact low or middle income earners, but will see that those at the top of the income scale pay more of their fair share because they can afford it.

We've heard the government's promise of "new management" but we see the same panicked, scorched earth approach we are all too familiar with. Regardless of the price of oil, in our growing province families still need health care, our kids need schools, and our aging parents need safe places to live. We need to move Alberta forward and get off the oil price rollercoaster. Albertans deserve better.

In Solidarity,

Cameron Westhead

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SPOTLIGHT
ON YOUR UNA CONTRACT**Article 18.03**
UNA Provincial Collective Agreement

Employers cannot just pay out named holidays

An Employee working on a Named Holiday is entitled to an alternate day off at "a mutually agreed time." The "day in lieu" can be added to the Employee's vacation, or the Employee can ask to take it at any time, with the Employer's agreement. The day can also be "paid out" but ONLY if the Employee agrees.

A full-time Employee changing to part-time retains her alternate days off until there is an agreed time off or until she agrees to take payment in lieu of a day off.

**United Nurses of Alberta**

SUPREME COURT OF CANADA RULING ON ESSENTIAL SERVICES & RIGHT TO STRIKE

Saskatchewan Union Of Nurses

Saskatchewan's 10,000 Registered Nurses have good reason to celebrate today's Supreme Court of Canada ruling that the province's Public Sector Essential Services Act (PSESA) is unconstitutional.

"No workers were affected more by this legislation than Saskatchewan's registered nurses, so no union was more committed to this legal battle than SUN," explains Tracy Zambory, President of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. "When we launched our legal challenge to this legislation in September 2008, we committed ourselves to seeing it through to the end. Not only was it the right decision for our members, the Supreme Court told us today that we made the right decision for all working people in Canada ."

The Supreme Court ruled that sections of the PSESA which removed the right to strike from registered nurses and other "essential" workers violate the freedom of association protected by The Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Government of Saskatchewan has been given one year to replace the law with one which does not violate the rights of working people.

Because the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) and several other unions had launched separate legal challenges against the legislation in 2008, Saskatchewan's Chief Justice R.D. Laing ordered in 2010 that the matters be heard together, with the SFL claim becoming "lead" case. SUN's legal team participated in the three-week trial in November 2011, which found that the legislation was unconstitutional, as well as in the three-day appeal hearing at the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal in November 2012, which overturned the trial judge's decision.

Aside from the SFL's lead legal team, SUN was the only Saskatchewan union

permitted to argue its case when it was heard by the Supreme Court in May 2014.

"A lot was at stake for our members, so SUN took a determined, unique and focussed approach from the very beginning. The fact that the Supreme Court wanted to hear it from us in person shows that our approach caught their attention," Zambory says. "Today's decision clearly confirms that we had the desired impact."

SUN had argued that the freedom to strike has existed for hundreds of years, pre-dating labour legislation, and the Supreme Court's decision acknowledged that point, noting that early labour laws "gave workers collective bargaining protection as a trade-off for limitations imposed on the freedom to strike". "The right to strike is not merely derivative of collective bargaining," the Court wrote, "it is an indispensable component of that right."

"In this decision, the Supreme Court has provided helpful guidance to the government on how to draft essential services legislation which does not violate the basic rights of Canadians, and has given the government a year to put appropriate laws in place," Zambory observed. "As always, Saskatchewan registered nurses are committed to working with the government over the coming months to draft and implement essential services legislation which is both effective and legal."



August 2012

SPOTLIGHT
ON YOUR UNA CONTRACT**Article 8: Overtime**
UNA Provincial Collective Agreement

Paying out overtime hours

The Employer must pay out accumulated overtime hours at the end of the fiscal year (which usually falls on March 31) unless there is mutual agreement with the Employee to carry over those hours to the following year. If an Employee formally requests to carry over accumulated overtime hours, the Employer cannot unreasonably deny that request.

Example:

If an Employee can demonstrate that she has attempted to take Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) using overtime hours, but had her request denied, the Employer cannot deny a request to carry over those hours into the next year.

The UNA Provincial Collective Agreement states:

8.01 (c) Overtime may be accumulated and taken in time off at a mutually acceptable time at the applicable premium rate. Time off not taken by March 31 in any given year shall be paid out unless otherwise mutually agreed. Such request to carry over lieu time shall be submitted by the Employee in writing prior to March 31, and shall not be unreasonably denied.

**United Nurses of Alberta**



Message From The Vice-President

By Kathleen Hamnett
Local 115 Vice-President, United Nurses of Alberta

With so much happening in Alberta at the time I write this, it was a challenge to know what topic to select. At the local level the Executive has been busy with the day to day business, sorting of the Portfolio Rep roles, and above all trying to support and meet your needs.

Recent issues include the outbreak of the influenza at FMC, Ebola preparedness, assisting members seeking support with return to work issues, STD, LTD, WCB, payroll and seniority. Employer and member meetings, vacation planners, new rotations and the open benefit enrolment period were just some of the items local 115 Executive navigated along with LRA support of our Labour Relations staff.

The sadness of hearing of Local 115 members loved ones passing or the passing of a Local 115 member, the Local Executive sends their heartfelt condolences.

The joy of a local members sharing family and friends marriages, births of children and grandchildren...truly the circle of life.

It is this circle of life that drives me to be passionate about the work I do as a Local Executive. To work with the Local Executive team to support members as best we can; to provide information and resources available to members. We advocate for safe work places, safe overcapacity spaces at the committee and unit levels. A recent success is related to fire safety and having the metal locked box around the fire extinguisher removed at nursing stations. It was your voice that was the conduit for change by raising of the issue to the Local Executive.

In the community I attended the Calgary Friends of Medicare AGM, which included a panel discussion on the creeping privatization of public health-care. Panel speakers were Sandra Azocar, Dr. David

Swann and Rachel Notley, who provide perspectives of how the public system is being starved of funds intentionally so it will fail. A disappointing concept when you think about it.

Kathleen's Tax Rant (not quite a Rick Mercer rant)!

I WANT MY TAX DOLLARS TO....

Go towards publicly funded and publicly delivered Healthcare.

Not have an extra tax by reintroducing a provincial healthcare premiums.

Go to publicly funded and delivered long term care beds and home care services.

Private for-profit agencies skim wages that rightly belong to workers and skimp on care to bolster the business's bottom line. The private care provider makes a profit from public funds which is just wrong. Publicly operated facilities have been shown to be more cost-effective, and provide better care. More LTC facilities will also reduce the overall cost of healthcare by moving seniors out of costly acute care beds into more appropriate, lower cost facilities that meet their needs.

Support a publicly funded national pharmacare program which is universal and not based on income.

Many Canadians do not have a healthcare plan and leave prescriptions unfilled because they can't afford them. Imagine the cost saving if medications were purchased in bulk and a national program existed for all Canadians.

Go to protect Canada's water supply.

Privatization and contamination are the biggest threats, as water is a basic necessity for all and a human right.

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Message From The Vice-President

By Kathleen Hamnett
Local 115 Vice-President, United Nurses of Alberta

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Support public infrastructure projects.

I attended the Cancer Centre rally on Jan 28 at the McDougall Centre where hundreds of citizens rallied to send a message to the government to not delay building a comprehensive cancer centre in Calgary. “Build it now!” was being chanted by all. Powerful stories were shared by cancer survivors, as well as the current challenges they are facing with lack of infrastructure, appropriate capacity support and access to treatment in a timely manner.

Go to a publicly funded national licensed childcare program.

Another common theme I find Nurses talking about is childcare. What is out there that is appropriate and affordable when my mat leave or paternity leave ends? UNA and CFNU have been advocating for a National Childcare program. Quebec has a Provincially licensed childcare program that is regulated and affordable for all. Nurses struggle with early start times, shift work and weekend work. I know many nursing families who work weekends or permanent evenings/nights in order to care for their children. We can't afford not to invest in early childhood education and care.

Fund the public education system.

According to Canada's OECD better life (www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org) education plays a key role in providing persons with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to participate effectively in society and in the economy. Studies show educated people live longer, participate more in politics and in the community where they live, commit fewer crimes and rely less on social assistance.

Provide income and social support programs for persons with disabilities.

I believe this is for the betterment of the person, their caregivers and society in general.

Run publicly owned and regulated utility services.

I believe all Canadians want to be able to have heat, electricity and fresh running water.

Go to infrastructure that provides affordable housing.

We need a national strategy to end homelessness. Canadians need affordable, safe homes to live in.

Support workers' rights to bargain collectively.

I want politicians to stop spending my tax dollars on fighting against workers' rights and human rights.

Increasingly come from those who can afford to pay a little more.

A progressive tax structure sees those at the high end of the income scale paying more of their fair share. Alberta is the only province with a flat income tax that unfairly burdens low and middle income families, and favours the wealthy. Those people with a six car garage and 10,000 square foot mansion can afford to pay more in taxes to help the society they live in, and reduce economic inequality.

In Conclusion

As a spring provincial election looms as the forecast for Alberta, I will be considering the various party platforms and assessing whether their policies coincide with my tax dollars to-do list. I hope you take the time to do the same.

To learn about ways you can make a difference, become engaged, attend a local union meeting.

In Solidarity,

Kathleen Hamnett

Local 115 Vice-President
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UNITED NURSES OF ALBERTA - LOCAL 115

Notice of Monthly Meetings:



March 11 & April 8
4pm to 6pm
FMC Auditorium



Call for UNA Constitutional & Policy Amendments:
Submission Deadline May 6, 2015 @ 16:30
Voting on local resolutions will occur at
the May 13 Local Meeting.

Public Interest Alberta Presents Keynote Speaker Avi Lewis

April 8 at 7pm, John Dutton Theatre, Calgary Public Library, 616 McLeod Trail SE
Tickets \$20, Local 115 Members will be reimbursed for ticket cost upon proof of purchase.

Visit www.pialberta.org to get your ticket!

(403) 670-9960 local115exec@una.ab.ca www.local115.wordpress.com



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