

NewsRelease



Public Service Alliance of Canada | Representing 160,000 workers

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PSAC tells Harper government to get real

OTTAWA – After a year of bargaining, negotiating teams for the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) are less than impressed with the Harper government's wage offer tabled this week. The government has offered increases of 1.5%, 1.5%, 1.2% and 1.2% in a four year agreement retroactive to 2007.

"The government's proposal is an insult and a joke," says Patty Ducharme, PSAC's national executive vice-president. "The wage offer is below current inflation and well below projected inflation rates. It doesn't even allow our members to stand still."

Gas prices alone have risen by over 25% over the past year and are projected to rise by another 15 to 20% before the summer is over. "A wage offer that reduces our members' real income also has a ripple effect on sectors such as manufacturing and tourism that are already being hard hit by the high Canadian dollar and rising gas prices."

"How does the government think it can recruit and retain workers with this kind of offer," says Ducharme. "Wages may be moderating in the face of an economic downturn but both public and private sector wage settlements were much higher in 2007 than the 1.5% being offered by the Harper government."

"When gas hits a dollar fifty a litre or more, we will have to pay. When food prices rise, as they are around the world, we will have to pay. When our children's tuition fees increase because of government cutbacks, we will have to pay."

According to Ducharme, the Harper government already has a dismal record on the economy and this is just one more example of its failure to protect workers' jobs and incomes.

"Our members provide quality services to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. What we expect is a fair increase that protects our purchasing power and compensates us for increased productivity."

The Treasury Board offer is in stark contrast to a settlement between PSAC and the Canada Revenue Agency reached last fall. The union negotiated a 2.5% increase in each year of a three-year agreement starting in 2007, in addition to another 1.6% average increase resulting from a new classification plan.

"Our members at Treasury Board are continuing to fall behind their counterparts at the CRA, thanks to an out-dated federal classification system," says Ducharme. "This latest offer just compounds the problem. In addition, the offer does not address an ongoing problem in the Operational Services unit. Unlike 93% of the federal public sector, these workers are still paid on a regional basis."

PSAC represents over 100,000 workers in five Treasury Board bargaining units.

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