



PLEASE POST!

5 The President's -MINUTE UPDATE



Michelle Gawronsky

MAJOR LEGAL WIN FOR PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS: JUDGE RULES WAGE FREEZE LEGISLATION UNCONSTITUTIONAL

On June 11, Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench Justice McKelvey ruled that the government's wage freeze law, the Public Services Sustainability Act (Bill 28), and its actions to impede collective bargaining with Manitoba's public sector workers are a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In the ruling, she agreed with the evidence put forward last fall by the Partnership to Defend Public Services -- a coalition of public sector unions of which the MGEU played an active and leading role -- and strongly rejected the government's legal arguments, cautioning them to stop interfering with collective bargaining in the public sector.

We are currently working with our lawyers to determine what this decision means for each group of MGEU members, and to find the best way to use this ruling in fighting for MGEU members. We will keep you updated as this process unfolds.

In the Public Eye

ORIENTATION REQUIRED BEFORE CASINOS RE-OPEN

On June 22, I told the CBC and the Winnipeg Free Press that though most of our 252 members who work at Manitoba's casinos have lots of experience, they were called back at the end of June for orientation regarding the "new normal" before re-opening. It's essential members and the employer are all on the same page when it comes to pandemic-related protocols such as placement of machines and the use of masks by staff and customers.

PALLISTER BACKS OFF OF DRASTIC PUBLIC SERVICE CUTS, STILL FORCES TRADE-OFF OF FIVE UNPAID DAYS FOR NO-LAYOFF CLAUSE

On June 2, I told CTV, CBC, and the Winnipeg Sun we made a very strong argument, from the beginning, that any further cuts to Manitoba's public services are reckless, unfair, and bad for the economy. When forced to choose, most MGEU members told us they preferred no-layoff protection and five unpaid days to significant layoffs. We did provide a proposal that would have reduced the number of unpaid days to three, while still providing the government with its desired cost savings. Unfortunately, the government stubbornly refused to consider these alternatives.

RECENT INCIDENTS HIGHLIGHT GROWING PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE IN SOME WORKPLACES

On June 2, after an inmate at the Agassiz Youth Centre struck a Correctional Officer on the head with a shovel, allowing five inmates to briefly escape, I told the Winnipeg Free Press that our corrections

members are seeing increased violence. This most recent incident underscores the dangers and challenges of working in the corrections field, including youth facilities.

Just a few weeks later, the Free Press reported on another violent attack that left two members at Main Street Project injured.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to our members for a full and quick recovery, while we press these employers to take the necessary steps to mitigate the risks for the future.

AD CAMPAIGN, PUBLIC SERVICES WEEK, AND ON-THE-JOB SELFIE CONTEST HIGHLIGHT SERVICES MEMBERS PROVIDE

Our "People Behind the Public" online ad campaign -- featuring the vital services that simply would not be there without the people deliver them -- wrapped up in June, but as the pandemic continues, we continue to highlight the critical importance of MGEU members.

As part of Public Services Week, we created window signs as a way for MGEU members, family, and supporters to show their thanks to all public workers for bravely continuing to do what they do during the pandemic. You can show your support by downloading and printing a sign or by emailing communications@mgeu.ca to request a copy.

We also had some fun asking all of you working on the front-lines and behind the scenes to send us a selfie in your PPE or a physically distanced group photo that we could share to show the vital services you're providing at this unprecedented time.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to share your pandemic work day with us!

Welcome to the July edition!

Here's what's been happening in and around our union in the last month.

If you have any questions, please get a hold of me through our Resource Centre (204-982-6438 or 1-866-982-6438) or e-mail me at president@mgeu.ca.



At the Leg

EXPANDED RISK RECOGNITION PROGRAM INCLUDES MORE MGEU MEMBERS, WHILE LEAVING OUT FAR TOO MANY OTHERS

Expanded Risk Recognition Program includes more MGEU members, while leaving out far too many others COVID-19 On June 16, the government announced it would be expanding their Risk Recognition Program by increasing the maximum threshold for essential workers.

This means many more MGEU members are eligible to apply, but all along, we have argued against any income threshold at all.

I wrote to the Finance Minister, Scott Fielding, and contacted his office several times to make the case for including all Manitobans who have worked through the pandemic to keep our province going. In the end, however, despite talking a good game about "consultation," the government ultimately did not listen and followed its own agenda.

The Big Picture

ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK CHANCE TO FOCUS ON ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES DURING COVID-19

The Manitoba government once again proclaimed June 14 to 20, 2020 "Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW)," with a focus this year on accessible employment and customer services during COVID-19.



MGEU MEMBERS RESPOND TO FLOODING

As a resident of Vita for the past 40 years, I've never seen spring flooding quite as bad as what we saw in Southeastern Manitoba in June. Unfortunately, mother nature wasn't quite finished with us, as Western and Central Manitoba were also hit with big storms later in the month. Thank you to all of the MGEU members out there working to protect us.

Want to get this by e-mail?

Contact us to get this 5-minute monthly update delivered to your inbox.

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