



PLEASE POST!

# 5 The President's -MINUTE UPDATE



Michelle Gawronsky

## At the Leg

### Speaking out on Bills that will impact you, me, and all Manitobans

Over the past few weeks, I presented to five different Legislative Committees, making sure the government, the media, and Manitobans know what we believe is best for our members and our province.

#### The Public Services Sustainability Act (Bill 28)

Joined by dozens of fellow members, labour leaders, and concerned Manitobans, I told the government that MGEU members have already shown they are ready to be part of the solution, accepting two years of wage freezes in our last round of bargaining. By refusing to negotiate with us this time, and legislating freezes instead, they are going down a road that is unfair and unconstitutional.

I made it clear that there is an alternative to Bill 28. We could take a balanced approach, tackling the deficit slowly and steadily together, while respecting public employees' right to bargain a fair contract.



Members join President Gawronsky to speak out against Bill 28 during Legislative hearings held on Monday, May 8.

## At the Bargaining Table

### LEGISLATION TO IMPACT HCSS BARGAINING

If the government remains determined to push through Bill 29 in the coming weeks, thousands of members whose agreements are set to be negotiated at the Health Care Support Services (HCSS) Central Table will feel the impact.

The legislation, aimed at restructuring how different health care groups bargain with the Regional Health Authorities, will require all health care workers in each health region to cast a vote for which union they want to represent them.

At this point, the MGEU continues to voice its opposition to the Bill and prepare for

#### The Health Sector Bargaining Review Act (Bill 29)

On May 8, I joined other unions with members in health care to oppose Bill 29's needless reshuffling of health bargaining units. I made it clear there are bargaining models similar to the one we have now that would meet the government's goals while avoiding such a costly and disruptive process.

#### The Legislative Security Act (Bill 18)

On May 16, I argued that if Protective Services Officers (PSOs) at the Legislature are to be given Peace Officer status, the government must also address: ongoing casual status issues, adequate tools and training, and the need for Peace Officers in all government buildings.

#### The Cannabis Harm Prevention Act (Bill 25)

As the government prepares for how it will manage legalized marijuana in Manitoba, I took the opportunity to explain and forward our recommendation — which has the support of *Mothers Against Drunk Driving* and the *Centre for Addiction and Mental Health* — for a publicly owned and operated system of sales and distribution.

#### The Minimum Wage Indexation Act (Bill 33)

On May 23, I spoke out strongly against the government's race to move ahead with Bill 33, which would lock minimum wage earners — nearly half of whom work full-time and most of whom are women — into a poverty wage.

bargaining as usual. We've also begun strategizing with affected members and preparing for the increasing likelihood of province-wide representation votes.

#### WESTMAN LAB MEMBERS TO VOTE ON FINAL OFFER

After over three years without a new contract, members of **Westman Lab - Local 351**, who held a rally for wage fairness last month in Brandon, will be voting on a final offer from the employer on June 6, 2017.

#### RATIFICATION REVIEW

Members of **Winnipeg Art Gallery - Local 150** and **Impark** (who negotiated this round as a newly combined **Local 434** including the maintenance, patrol and meter departments) both ratified new agreements this month.

#### MGEU GOES NATIONAL AT CLC

Along with other MGEU leaders, I headed to the *Canadian Labour Congress* in May, shoring up national solidarity for struggles like our fight against Bill 28, and discussing issues like the rise of precarious or casual jobs and the fight for a \$15 minimum wage.



Derek Pearase, Bob Smith, and Ed Miller at the CLC in Toronto.

## The Big Picture

### WELCOME NEW MGEU LOCALS!

Despite the government recently making it more difficult to join a union, four new MGEU Locals have formed in the past two months!

In May, we welcomed **The Pas Regional Library - Local 440**, and **Les Tournesols de Saint-Vital - Local 441**, whose members provide Francophone child care in Winnipeg.

## Welcome to the June 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](mailto:president@mgeu.ca).

## In the Public Eye

### LOUD AND CLEAR — CUTS AT VIC WILL HURT

On Thursday, May 18, we teamed up with the *Manitoba Nurses' Union* for a rally to protest cuts at Winnipeg's Victoria General Hospital.

With over 400 MGEU members at the Vic — from health care assistant and house-keeping attendants to records clerks and trades people — we stood together to remind Manitobans that patient care is at risk.



The MGEU, MNU and MFL led the call to stop the cuts.

### MEDIA ROUND-UP

On May 6, I argued in the **Brandon Sun** that *wage inequities and staff shortages at Westman Lab* are hurting regional diagnostic services and must be addressed now.

A few days later, I called for *alternatives to wage freeze legislation* in the **Winnipeg Sun**, **CBC** and **Winnipeg Free Press**.

On May 17, I talked to the **Winnipeg Free Press** about the MGEU's recommended *public model for the safe sale of marijuana* in Manitoba, and on May 24, I spoke out along with other labour leaders about the *need for a minimum wage that lifts families out of poverty*.

## In Your Workplace

### PAVING ROAD TO SELF-REGULATION

I met with our Paramedics union leadership this month to discuss the government's recently-released self-regulation report. We'll be working closely with them over the coming weeks to help make paramedicine in Manitoba a self-regulating profession as soon as possible.

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