

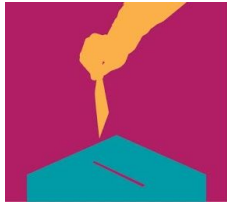
## BE A PUBLIC SERVICE VOTER

### ELECTION 2020 – WORKERS’ RIGHTS

Prior to the 2007 provincial election, then-Sask. Party leader Brad Wall promises to “go to war” with the province’s labour movement. The subsequent Sask. Party government not only delivers on this threat by curtailing the right to strike and making it harder for unions to bargain fair wages and organize new workplaces, but it also depresses wages for non-unionized workers.

The Sask. Party track record:

- The Sask. Party government locks-in the minimum wage far below a living wage with a new indexing formula. Saskatchewan’s minimum wage of \$11.32 per hour (increasing to \$11.45 per hour on Oct. 1, 2020) is the lowest among all provinces and territories. According to Canada Living Wage, Regina’s and Saskatoon’s living wage in 2016 was \$16.95 and \$16.66, respectively.
- In 2008, the Sask. Party government passes *The Public Services Essential Services Act (PSESA)*, which gives employers broad powers to declare public sector workers as “essential.” It effectively removes the right to strike from thousands of public sector workers.
- In the same year, the provincial government passes *The Trade Union Amendment Act, which* ends “automatic certification” of workplaces by requiring a subsequent secret ballot vote even after a majority of workers sign union cards. It also allows employers to communicate “facts and opinions” to employees during organizing drives. These combined measures greatly discourage the unionization of additional workplaces in Saskatchewan.
- In 2008 the Sask. Party government suddenly fires the chair and two vice-chairs of the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board, a quasi-judicial body that rules on union certifications, decertification, unfair labour practices and other labour disputes. Then Minister of Labour Rob Norris admits that these officials were fired without cause. A known Sask. Party supporter is appointed as the new chair of the SLRB the following day.
- In 2014 *The Saskatchewan Employment Act (SEA)* replaces 12 separate pieces of labour statutes. The *SEA* further targets unions by: expanding the list of exclusions for union membership; exempting supervisors from new bargaining units; allowing employers to force a vote by union members on the employer’s “last offer” (even before any job



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action); and imposing further restrictions on the right to strike by requiring a mandatory conciliation process and cooling off period before job action can occur.

- In 2015 the Supreme Court of Canada declares the *PSESA* in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which leads the Sask. Party government to replace the legislation with less draconian legislation that is incorporated into the new *SEA*. Nonetheless, this legislation continues to curtail strike activity in Saskatchewan's public sector, dampening wage increases and other improvements to collective agreements.
- In 2017 the Sask. Party government demands that public sector unions agree to an unprecedented 3.5% reduction in compensation costs followed by three consecutive years of 0% increases to address a \$1.2 billion deficit. No public sector union agrees to this regressive mandate; however, all major provincial public sector agreements ultimately include two or more years of wage freezes.

### What Saskatchewan needs:

- An immediate increase in Saskatchewan's minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour to boost wages for low-income workers.
- Legislating ten paid sick days a year for all workers so no one feels compelled to go to work sick in order to make ends meet.
- A rebalancing of Saskatchewan's labour legislation that encourages free collective bargaining, reduces restrictions on the right to strike and levels the playing field by banning scabs from crossing picket lines.
- Expansion of collective bargaining rights to more Saskatchewan workers through the re-establishment of automatic certification, restrictions on employer communication during organizing drives and other reforms.
- Vigorous enforcement of Saskatchewan occupational health and safety legislation and regulations with enhanced training and inspections.
- Pay equity legislation that ensures equal pay for work of equal value across the public, and private sectors to address the wage disparities women face in the workplace.

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