



PSAC-UPCE STRIKE BULLETIN



**Canada Post's offer
makes me SICK!**

PSAC/Canada Post Strike It's about more than money

Who We Are

- UPCE, a component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) represents 2,400 employees of Canada Post Corporation, who do clerical, administrative, technical and professional work. UPCE is the smallest bargaining unit at Canada Post and is a predominantly female group.
- A 25-year pay equity complaint against Canada Post is going to the Supreme Court of Canada.
- As of November 17, we have been on a legal strike. This is the third strike in 7 years by this small, female-dominated bargaining unit. No other union at Canada Post has been on strike in the last decade.
- This is a strike against concessions to our sick leave plan. It is a strike for fairness and dignity. The bargaining unit voted almost 90% in favour of strike action to save their sick leave program.
- **The main issue preventing an agreement is the employer's attempt to impose a new short-term disability management scheme to replace current sick leave entitlements.**
- This strike is an early warning of future problems, namely the Corporation's attempt to achieve the eventual deregulation of our universal and public postal service.

Who is Canada Post

- Canada Post is a Crown Corporation which handles mail and parcels and has the exclusive privilege to collect, transport, and deliver letter-mail to all parts of Canada.
- Canada Post has been profitable for the past 13 years, including a gross profit of \$160 million in 2007. CPC is well on the way to a similar profit margin for this fiscal year.
- Canada Post answers to the Minister of Transport: John Baird.

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Canada Post has offered our members a wage increase of 2.5% per year for the first two years and 2.75 % for the last two years of a 4-year contract. However, this strike is about more than money.

Canada Post is trying to impose a new Short-term Disability plan on our members. This plan would dramatically reduce members' current protections and hand over the control and policing of their health to Manulife and EI. One of the more disturbing aspects of this plan is the offloading of Canada Post's financial obligations to the Employment Insurance plan.

Currently members are entitled to 15 days paid cumulative sick leave per year and 5 days paid family related leave. The employer's new scheme would mean a combined entitlement of 7 days personal leave to cover both casual sick leave and family related leave.

Canadians, workers, and small businesses in particular have reason to be very concerned when a large corporation wants to start having its 77,000 employees covered by EI sick leave benefits. There is already concern that the EI program cannot stand up to the needs of an aging workforce.

Most other companies that have a short term sick leave plan require that employees exhaust their banked sick leave entitlements prior to applying to EI for assistance.

We all know that this was never the intent of EI sick benefits. EI sick benefits are to protect workers that become ill who don't have paid sick leave, or have exhausted their sick leave credits.

Further, while on the one hand they have proposed concessions to working Canadians, Canada Post has also applied for an increase on retail postage rates to take effect in the near future.

The Threat of Deregulation

As you may know, the previous government launched a Strategic Review of Canada Post Corporation. Deregulation is one of the issues being looked at.

One of the major criteria for running a profitable and deregulated private corporation is a reduction in liabilities for the balance sheet. The unused sick leave banked by our members can be viewed as a financial liability to potential purchasers, and that is why we believe that CPC is so anxious to force this program on our members.

Deregulation also includes the removal of Canada Post's exclusive privilege to deliver letter mail. The "exclusive privilege" is a fundamental feature of our post office. Canada Post holds the



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exclusive privilege so that it can finance its universal service obligation – i.e. the obligation to provide affordable service to everyone, no matter where they live.

Removing the exclusive privilege will erode Canada Post's revenue base, and could put the universal service obligation at risk. Rural and remote areas, where it is more expensive to provide postal services, could be at risk.

What you can do to stop Canada Post?

1. Write to the Honourable John Baird, the Minister responsible for overseeing the operations of Canada Post. Please make him aware of your concerns about this proposed abuse of the EI program. Express your concern that the purpose of the EI sick leave program is to protect Canadian workers and small businesses, not to subsidize profitable Crown Corporations like Canada Post.

E-mail: bairdj@parl.gc.ca

2. Contact your MP to express your concerns and ask them to also contact the Honourable John Baird to ask him to put an end to this injustice and to protect the EI program.
3. Join us on the picket line as we fight for a fair collective agreement and dignity.