

COMMUNIQUE

Canadian Union of Postal Workers
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Canada Post's Underclass of Women Workers

OTTAWA - On International Women's Day, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is drawing attention to the situation of its rural mail carriers, 70% of which are women. Compared to their mostly male letter carrier counterparts in urban areas, rural and suburban mail carriers earn 20% less for doing the same work

"We're working hard to convince Canada Post it has to stop paying its women workers less," said Mike Palecek, CUPW national president.

Like other gendered feminine occupations, rural and suburban mail delivery was historically regarded as supplemental income to a main or "breadwinner" wage and therefore paid on a contract basis and at a lower rate. Since joining CUPW in 2004, the mostly female workforce has seen wages and benefits improve dramatically but a rural mail carrier still has a long way to go before she can catch up to the urban letter carrier's take-home pay.

Canada Post has had other issues with paying women workers fairly. In 2011, it was forced to pay its clerical workers a settlement amounting to \$150 million after fighting them all the way to the Supreme Court in the country's longest-running pay equity dispute.

CUPW says it will not give up on equality for its rural and suburban members. "We've fought for groundbreaking programs that advance women's equality and improve work-life balance," said Palecek, citing the union's child care fund and programs for members with children and adult sons and daughters with special needs as well as its achievement of gender parity in its apprenticeship program, bringing more women into the trades.

"We won't let women's rights be rolled back."

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