

Postal Workers Won't Wait for Trudeau, They're Acting Now on Pay Equity

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Postal workers are welcoming the return of proactive pay equity legislation recommended by the Special Committee on Pay Equity report *It's Time to Act*. However, they say Canada Post should be acting right now at the bargaining table to address the glaring discrepancy between its urban and rural mail carriers.

“We are currently struggling to negotiate equal pay for the work of equal value done by our female-dominated rural and suburban mail carrier members. These workers meet the Committee’s definition of a female-dominated group. 70% of rural mail carriers are women and they are getting a worse deal than the majority male urban letter carriers, even though their skills, efforts, responsibilities and working conditions are similar,” said Mike Palecek, national president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Canada Post is mentioned disapprovingly in the Committee’s report as an employer that has used the current complaints-based process to fight pay equity all the way to the Supreme Court. Although the Crown Corporation eventually lost, those affected by wage discrimination had to wait 30 years for their pay equity settlement.

“Proactive pay equity legislation should make establishing this basic human right much less arduous, expensive and painful for all involved,” said Palecek.

However, the union is determined to keep pay equity for its rural and suburban carriers on the bargaining table while the government ponders the Committee’s recommendations. It says the recommendation to table legislation within 18 months is too long to wait and that the government should act immediately to address wage discrimination. The union has already written to Justin Trudeau twice on the issue and has yet to receive a response.

“Several witnesses in that report say that ‘justice delayed is justice denied.’ That’s why we have to fight for justice for these workers now,” said Palecek.

In the past, CUPW has broken ground for progressive gender-based policies, including the right for federal employees to paid maternity leave, for which postal workers walked picket lines in 1981. It has also negotiated employer-funded childcare programs for its members, including members with children with special needs.

For the report of the Special Committee on Pay Equity, visit

http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/421/ESPE/Reports/RP8320461/421_ESPE_Rpt01_PDF/421_ESPE_Rpt01-e.pdf

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