



News Release

Canadian Union of Public Employees

For immediate release

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CUPE Calls on Government to Table Budget That Puts Manitoba Jobs First, Strengthen the Care Economy

WINNIPEG, TREATY 1 – Manitoba’s largest labour union has released five key budget priorities it hopes to see reflected in this week’s provincial budget.

“CUPE represents public-sector workers across Manitoba,” said Gina McKay, President of CUPE Manitoba. “Our members depend on provincial budgets for funding, and it’s important that we outline what they hope to see.”

The first priority focuses on increased collaboration within the health care system.

“We have seen the health care system moving forward, but not always in consultation with support staff,” said Margaret Schroeder, President of CUPE 204. “We need progress on reducing mandatory overtime, reducing reliance on agency staffing and improving staffing ratios for support staff. If we don’t see meaningful movement toward 4.1 hours of care in personal care homes, this budget will be disappointing to a lot of CUPE health care workers.”

The second priority is increased provincial support for municipalities.

“Mayor Gillingham has outlined several key promises we think would improve public safety,” said Gord Delbridge, President of CUPE 500. “We would love to see support for the fourth branch of 911 included in this budget. Support for the wastewater treatment facility would also be something CUPE is looking for.”

The third priority is addressing inequality for education support staff.

“Most education support staff do not have a defined benefit pension plan,” said McKay. “They are the only support staff in Canada without a real pension, and we are definitely hoping to see movement on this issue in this budget.”

One area of concern is the plan to privatize province-wide recycling held over from the previous PC government.

“We are really hoping this NDP government doesn’t proceed with the ideological approach taken by the PCs,” said Delbridge. “I know Premier Kinew has positioned himself as an ‘elbows up’ premier, and I don’t believe he is going to want to see a number of high value contracts going to American firms instead of public services. That would be really disappointing.”

Finally, in the wake of the Manitoba Teachers’ Society wage standardization agreement, CUPE is calling for wage standardization in the education sector. “For too long rural school divisions have paid

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staff up to 30 per cent less than urban divisions,” said McKay. “With teacher salaries now standardized, it’s time for that inequity to end for support staff as well.”

The Canadian Union of Public Employees is Canada’s largest union representing more than 800,000 members. In Manitoba, CUPE represents approximately 40,000 members working in health care facilities, personal care homes, home care, school divisions, municipal services, social services, disability support services, child care centres, public utilities, libraries, and family emergency services.

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