



The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau

House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

June 30, 2016

Dear Prime Minister:

**Re: The best way to avert unnecessary postal disruptions
this summer? Fire Canada Post CEO Deepak Chopra!**

I write on behalf of the Alberta Federation of Labour to encourage you to take urgent action to avert an unnecessary lock-out and service disruption at Canada Post this summer.

It is clear to everyone who has been following negotiations at Canada Post that this is a crisis that simply DOES NOT have to happen. Instead, if services at Canada Post are disrupted this summer, it will be because the corporation's senior managers have deliberately engineered a situation that will force Canada Post employees onto picket lines against their will.

As you have observed yourself, the previous federal Conservative government took a destructive approach to labour relations at our postal service. Unfortunately, these tactics towards labour seem to be continuing, despite voters' rejection of this toxic approach.

As recently as Monday, Canada Post management refused a request from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers to extend the "cooling off" period – a move that would have allowed negotiations to continue without service disruptions.

From our perspective, it simply doesn't make sense that a healthy, profitable corporation would be rushing to lock out its workers when those workers are willing to continue bargaining. We can only conclude this means those bargaining on behalf of the corporation are determined to lock workers out rather than bargain in good faith.

It is our belief that the root of the problem is the Conservative-appointed President and CEO of Canada Post, Deepak Chopra -- who seems to be very deliberately engineering conflict and manufacturing crisis.

That is why I am writing to you today: I urge you to oust Deepak Chopra from his position as President and CEO of Canada Post.

Chopra's actions over the past few months demonstrate that he has learned nothing from the recent election – an election in which Canadians voted overwhelming for parties that promised to preserve, protect and even expand Canada's postal services. Unfortunately, Chopra is still running Canada Post as if the Conservatives who appointed him are still in power. As long as Chopra remains in charge, conflict will trump consensus and conservative ideology will take priority over what's best for Canada Post and the millions of Canadian who rely upon it.

Why should you, as Prime Minister, replace Chopra? First and foremost, we think you should take this action in order to fix Canada Post's toxic labour relations environment and avert an unnecessary service disruption this summer. But we also think you should fire Chopra because he has taken intransigent positions on three issues that you pledged to take action on in the recent federal election campaign: pay equity, protection of our postal services and affirmative action for minorities.

Currently, the people who work as Rural-Suburban Mail Carriers (who are primarily female) earn 28% less, on average, than traditional mail carriers (who are primarily male). Rather than addressing this inequity, Chopra and other senior Canada Post managers are trying to force workers into an increasingly unfair and divisive working environment characterized by a two-tier wage and pension structure. Not only would this structure do nothing to address pay equity concerns, it would also set up a situation in which new hires (many of whom will be new immigrants and aboriginal people) will have inferior wages and benefits compared to longer-serving employees. Creating a second-class of workers at Canada Post – many of whom will be from minority communities – is certainly not what you had in mind when you threw your support behind affirmative action initiatives.

In conclusion, I would like to commend you for your decision to launch a review into the future of Canada Post. I would also like to commend you for sending a letter to Deepak Chopra suggesting that he step down. These actions show that you understand that Canada Post has a bright future – as long as it is allowed to evolve with changing times. Your actions also suggest that you understand that Mr. Chopra is not the right person to lead Canada Post at this crucial moment in its history.

However, we think you have not gone far enough. Instead of politely suggesting that Chopra should consider resigning, we think you should actively and quickly relieve him of his duties. This will allow both labour negotiations and the government review of Canada Post to proceed in an orderly and productive fashion. Most Canadians would agree that the review of Canada Post would be most successful if it wasn't conducted under the cloud of an unnecessary and divisive labour disruption. We firmly believe that Mr. Chopra is one of this biggest obstacles standing in the way of creating the kind of 21st century postal service that Canadians desire.

For the sake of Canada's postal service, and the millions of Canadians who rely on it, please fire Deepak Chopra.

Sincerely,



Gil McGowan, President
Alberta Federation of Labour

cc: Hon. Judy Foote, Minister of Public Services and Procurement

Judy.Foote@parl.gc.ca

Mike Palecek, President, National CUPW

mpalecek@cupw-sttp.org

Larry Dionne, President, Edmonton CUPW

union@cupwedm.net

Lisa Polsom, President, Edmonton CUPW

president@cupwcalgary.org