



February 22, 2018

Dear Ms. Pickering:

Thank you for your letter of February 6, 2018 and for letting me have the opportunity to address some of the issues raised by the SEIU-West and your Political Action Awareness Committee.

We need to respect the collective bargaining process and I understand that these savings will not be attainable in this current year. The Saskatchewan Party respects and values the dedicated service provided by government employees to the people of Saskatchewan. However, compensation is one of the largest expenses in the provincial budget, and due to the precipitous drop in the province's non-renewable resource revenue it is imperative that we monitor these expenses in order to get back to balance.

Premier Scott Moe has made investing in education one of his strongest commitments. \$7.5 million in immediate funding has been provided to Saskatchewan's school divisions in order to assist with the hiring of in-school professionals this school year. Premier Moe has committed to increase the funding to \$30 million dedicated to hiring 400 in-school professionals when the 2018-19 budget is tabled this spring. The President of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, Dr. Shawn Davidson, has praised this funding support. In addition, Patrick Maze, the President of the Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation, commented that the funding was a signal for the government's renewed commitment to education. Since 2007, over \$54.6 million has been invested in Swift Current, including two brand new schools, École Oman and St. Joseph Middle School. We are excited that a record number of students are enrolled in Saskatchewan schools and calling Saskatchewan home.

Healthcare in Saskatchewan is a priority for the Saskatchewan Party that we demonstrate with measurable results rather than a litany of empty words. Since forming government, the Saskatchewan Party government has more than doubled investments in hospitals and healthcare infrastructure. This includes an \$108 million investment in the Meadows Long Term Care Facility which provided 225 new beds and an additional 15 beds for respite and palliative care.

Over the last decade, the Saskatchewan Party government has made significant progress in the quality of healthcare in our province. We have hired 750 more doctors and 3,400 more nurses to work in Saskatchewan while over 173 doctors and 450 nurses were lost between 2001 and 2006. Now Saskatchewan has amongst the shortest surgical wait times in our country, compared to the longest prior to 2007. As well, we have made the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals in rural Saskatchewan a top priority. The government rewards rural physicians who adopt a full scope of practice by providing a 10.5 per cent premium. We have added 40 seats to the College of Medicine and

doubled the number of residency positions, and our physician recruitment agency, SaskDocs, works with health regions and has assisted in the recruitment of more than 200 international doctors, the majority in rural or remote communities.

Saskatchewan is projected to lead the country in economic growth for 2018 and 2019, all while maintaining a comparatively low cost-of-living. The minimum wage is reviewed annually, using an indexation formula based on an equal weighting of the change in Consumer Price Index and Average Hourly Wage for the previous year. Since the Saskatchewan Party formed government, there have been 10 increases, the last of which came into effect October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

The Saskatchewan Party government introduced a made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and without a carbon tax. This strategy will allow Saskatchewan industries to use a variety of methods and means in order to reduce their effects on our environment while still fostering a prosperous economy. A made-in-Saskatchewan strategy ensures continued growth and investment in our province while reducing emissions and combatting climate change.

Last fall, the Saskatchewan Party government took action against interpersonal violence and its effects on survivors. *The Saskatchewan Employment (Interpersonal Violence Leave) Amendment Act, 2017* was passed which provides survivors with 10 days of unpaid leave to access services or relocate. These days can be taken in shorter blocks of a few hours or a few days as needed. Finding long-term solutions for the survivors of interpersonal violence is and will remain a priority of the Saskatchewan Party government.

The 2017-18 budget was difficult, and we understand the hardship that some of the measures taken in this budget have caused. The decisions we made in the budget were made for one reason, we do not believe it is in the best interest of the province to kick the deficit can down the road onto our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the issues of importance to the members of SEIU.

Regards,



Everett Hindley  
Saskatchewan Party Candidate, Swift Current