

## **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT To the March 2021 National Executive**

Sisters, brothers and friends,

Already 49 months have passed since I was elected as the National President of CEIU back in February 2017 and now, we are five (5) months until we hold the 2021 CEIU National Triennial Convention in August. Not once have I regretted taking on this role and I am very proud to be the National President of this organization.

The 2021 CEIU Convention will be the first virtual convention for this Union. It will be different, but we will adapt. Our members, our staff and the National Executive has had to adapt since this pandemic hit the world back in March 2020. Who could have imagined that such a pandemic would take on the world and continues to this day!

We have had to fight to survive! Loves ones have left us, the economy has been hit HARD! Numbers of stores and restaurants have gone out of business and number of people have lost their jobs. Some of our members have continue to go in their workplaces while others have been teleworking from home. Everyone has been impacted, with parents working from home and the kids doing their schooling at home. The government was accommodating at first with its 699 leave, but now members are having a much harder time getting the 699-leave approved.

All through this pandemic, and ever since this National Executive took office after the 2017 CEIU Convention, we have fought for our members daily. We have had victories, but the Union has had to fight for these wins. And fought we did! The fight will never be over because that is what CEIU needs to do for our members! We continue to fight to ensure that our members get what they so deserve. It is not an easy feat, but we push through, and we demand respect! Even during the pandemic, we continue.

Removing systemic racism in our world is one big fight that we must fight and win once and for all. Totally unfair is the treatment of Black People and other racialized groups, Indigenous People and LGBTQ2+ groups. I am part

of the LGBTQ2+ equity group and I have lived and do continue to live with unwelcomed remarks and more. We need to end racism. We all need to look at ourselves and reflect on the hurt and the treatment that we may have inflicted on someone from one or all the equity groups. Stopping systemic racism in our world starts with looking at yourself in the mirror and educating ourselves.

The National Executive has approved the hiring of an Equity Coordinator position at CEIU. This person will be a resource at the regional and national levels to provide information, analyses, and recommendations to me as National President and to the NEVP as well as to the National Executive, to the staff and to the National HRRR Committee and regional equity committees for CEIU. This position will also be responsible for employer consultations involving employment equity and of the promotion and coordination of equality issues within our union and within the workplaces of our members. We want someone that has extensive employment equity experience, including a lived experience.

I have attended some Local AGM throughout my cycle and always love the invitation to attend and speak with our members, face to face, or virtual screen to virtual screen as per the last year.

PSAC is holding its National Bargaining Conference next month, and CEIU will have 30 delegates in attendance, as well as observers. These 30 delegates will be representing the interest of our membership in the upcoming bargaining with Treasury Board. The PSAC received over 700 bargaining demands from CEIU members only. We are proud to see our members voice their wants and their concerns.

Now for a bit of information on the different departments we represent, and this is just to mention a few.

### **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)**

IRCC has held bi-weekly meetings with the unions throughout the pandemic to keep us informed and consult on the many changes that have occurred. With the pandemic, telework has been a hot topic of discussion as many branches have created their own telework guidelines, and IRCC has now agreed that there needs to be consistency across the department, and the need for consultation.

The relationship between the locals and management is not always at its best and must be improved. CEIU will not stand by when managers are refusing time to meet with their employees, our members, if it is not covered in their collective agreement.

But I must say that the Joint Union Management Phoenix (JUMP) has been a huge success and the Employer has recognized the contributions made by the unions.

### **Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB)**

IRB has been working on their diversity and inclusion initiatives and has put in place an Advisory Committee, made up of employees with lived experiences. There is much more work that needs to be accomplished when it come to anti-racism, anti-oppression, and unconscious bias not only for IRB but in all 3 departments we represent.

I want to take a moment to wish all the best to one of our IRB local presidents taking his well-deserved retirement. Norm Murray was a strong activist at IRB in his Toronto local for several years and as NVP for IRB for many years in the past. He fought the employer and represented his members well.

### **ESDC**

Phoenix nightmares have not gone away with our members. Despite that the employees affected by Phoenix issues has gone down, ESDC still has over 42% of its employees affected.

With the Benefit Delivery Modernization at ESDC, I continue to express that when changes occur, that they should always look at the changes with an equity lens and what impacts these can have on equity groups.

The CERB to EI transition has affected resources and our members have had to work overtime on many occasions. Some had to change job duties completely to help with the various virtual call centers that were put in place for the various benefits that were implemented during this pandemic. But the real concern is that for the Employer to achieve the CERB to EI transition and other benefit program, it is our members that are paying the price with being exhausted from working all those overtime hours.

ESDC continues to move forward with its Transformation Project, which is intended to improve EI, OAS and CPP. There has been some consultation at the national level, but consultation at both the regional and local levels must also continue.

## **NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

CEIU is proud to have members part of our National Advisory Committees. These committees are made up of activists from across the regions, and the member's participation and feedback at these committee meetings are a must for CEIU.

With the three-year cycle now coming to an end in August – a bit longer than 3 years this time around because of the pandemic, I want to thank each and everyone of the representatives and their alternates on each of these committees for their dedication. There are only a few meetings of these committees during a three-year cycle, however, CEIU counts on these members to continue advocating, daily, in their local and in their region, the work that each of these committee is doing. This work is being done for the membership to move forward and stronger, year after year.

These leaders play an active role in their Committee. They speak up, they listen, and they do act. They represent, not only their regions, but all the members who they represent.

I want to take this time to say:

- Thank you to the members of the National IRCC Advisory Committee.
- Thank you to the members of the National IRB Advisory Committee
- Thank you to the members of the National Call Centre Committee
- Thank you to the members of the National Women's Committee
- Thank you to the members of the National Human Rights / Race Relations Committee
- Thank you to the members of the National Young Workers Committee

- And thank you to those who participated in the various ad-hoc meetings that were held throughout this mandate.

### **Local Executives**

Your work does not go unnoticed. It starts from the ground up, and each local member is counting on their Local Executives to ensure their local is functioning well. They count on all of you to represent them when issues arise with the Employer. Knowing they have someone by their sides every day is important to the members,

On behalf of the National Executive, please pat yourselves on the shoulder. You do a great job and for that, I thank you. Please continue to do the work that is so desperately needed at the local level.

I want you to know how much I have appreciated your support over this mandate, and I want to thank you for your collaboration, your leadership and your solidarity.

### **National Executive**

We are either acclaimed or elected in our roles on the National Executive, be it for the region or for a portfolio, but we all work together for the same goals.

We represent, not just our respective regions, portfolio, or departments (IRCC, IRB or ESDC), but the whole CEIU membership. Our decisions have an impact on each of the 26,000 members that we represent.

Doing this work requires, to name a few: dedication, compassion, a lot of nerves sometime, and a lot of your time away from your loved ones. Each of you have given all of yourselves around this table, and on behalf of our membership, I want to thank you all.

We do not always agree, but we do end up deciding as one, and those decisions are not always easy ones, but they are with the best interest of our members at heart.

We need to realize that we, on this National Executive are the ones that have put CEIU back on the map when the trusteeship ended in 2017. We have worked hard and continue to work hard. We dedicate ourselves not only during our tenure but throughout our careers in the public service. We are true union activists! We fight for what we believe is right and we fight hard! We can never be silenced!

My role as National President is nothing without all of you working side by side with me and Sister Warner. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Crystal, as my sidekick and NEVP for this union, you and I have had many discussions throughout our term. They have sometimes been hard discussions and that can take a toll. But together, we kept afloat and did what was needed for our members. We continue to lead this union in the right direction with the National Executive, and I hope that you and I can continue in our leadership roles representing CEIU members after the 2021 CEIU Convention, because I know that the members can always count on us to fight for them. I truly learned a lot with you by my side during this mandate and I want to thank you for always being a strong voice for CEIU members and all the excellent work that you do.

### **CEIU Staff**

My last report before Convention could not be written without thanking the staff, both at the National Office and in the regions for the work that they do daily for CEIU.

Members do not always get to see what happens behind 'closed doors', but I can see it, AND I do see all that you DO! Without your support, CEIU would not exist. Each of you dedicate a big chunk of your time and knowledge to CEIU. Yes, you all get a salary for your work, but NEVER enough THANK YOUs!

So, let me say thanks to each of you, not only on behalf of the members and the National Executive, but from me personally. You are the experts and the ones that CEIU can count on, always!

## **CEIU Members**

To CEIU members, I am honoured to have represented you all from coast to coast to coast in the three (3) departments that CEIU represents: IRB, IRCC and ESDC.

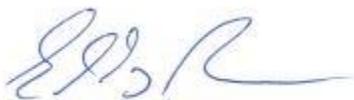
As I stated in my 1<sup>st</sup> Report, my platform at the 2017 convention was to rebuild from the grass roots and make sure more training was available for all members.

Well, in this Report, my last Report before the 2021 Convention, I am happy to report that we have rebuilt and made CEIU strong again and more money has been set aside for more training for our members, which I encourage you to take.

Working remotely and not being able to interact with your colleagues and with your union representatives in person is not always easy. And this isolation is having major impact on one's mental health. So please take the time to look after yourselves and your family.

CEIU is as strong as its members! We need you! And you need us! Together we will continue to demand respect!

In Solidarity always,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Bourque', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eddy Bourque  
CEIU National President