

Talking Points: TEMPLATE

I know our government has tried to mandate a wage rollback of 3.5% on all public sector workers who provide invaluable services like health care and education. Due to our community's support and the unacceptable nature of this mandate, it seems those rollbacks are justly becoming a policy of the past – however, there is still pressure for many public sector workers, like health care providers, to accept smaller rollbacks when what is needed is a fair pay raise.

Examples of why public service workers should not pay for financial mistakes of our government are many, but here is just one: since April 1, 2016, health care provider wages have not changed – yet the cost of living has gone up 3.5%. The Saskatchewan government itself expects the cost of living to go up 2.3% this year and 1.8-1.9% over each of the next 4 years! A rollback on health care providers and all public sector workers will seriously damage our ability to attract and retain workers in too many areas that are already severely understaffed. As my representative, I implore you to reverse any pressure for public service workers to accept anything less than what they are worth – and that means a fair raise.

As you are likely to know, an attack on any wage is an attack on local communities. By reducing workers' ability to make ends meet, we will not be able to spend our earnings in local businesses and services. By reducing wages, you're actually undermining our combined interests, as fewer tax revenues means fewer dollars to fund our government programs, such as health care and education. Rural communities will be hit hard by any rollback as goods and services are more expensive in smaller communities and often, the local health centre or school acts as a base for good jobs to ensure the survival of rural communities.

We must not have Saskatchewan people in a race to the bottom – we need to ensure living wage jobs stay in our community, and offer opportunities for people to make ends meet.

It is important for you to remember that your MLA salary – a base salary for an MLA is nearly \$100,000 – in no way compares that to a Continuing Care Aide (CCA), Educational Assistant (EA) or Direct Care Worker (DCW). The impact a wage rollback on a CCA, DCW or EA will drastically affect our ability to make ends meet – an MLA? Not so much. And just this year, MLAs have now had their 3.5% rollback reversed. At the same time, government has approved 10 MLAs receiving a \$3000 bonus, which was not made public initially and the \$3000 almost equals the 3.5% wage cut that you previously indicated was accepted- this does not sound like MLAs have been forced to tighten their belts at all. What is more, we've seen more MLAs added to our legislative assembly – we were told this was because of the many meetings constituents want to have with their MLAs – in other words, it was to address workload for MLAs.

In health care, education, community-based organizations and many other public services, we too have seen skyrocketing workloads – and there's not enough staff to meet these increased demands. As a MLA, I would ask that you not only address your own workload needs, but also the people you represent.

Public health care, education, and community services are a source of pride for the people of Saskatchewan and yet these sectors are constantly underfunded, as demonstrated by short staffing and recruitment issues. By adding more pressures, such as concessions and rollbacks, you are chasing people away from the valuable work that health care, education, and community workers provide. How many

of us will be able to afford working in these sectors? Working in health care, community-based organizations, and education is stressful and demanding – many of us are getting burnt out due to short staffing and often, our ability to access vacation is affected as a result of staffing levels. By adding more pressures, you are putting our public health care, community, and education system and those that staff it at risk.

As my MLA, I am asking you to ensure public sector workers are not faced with any wage rollback. Please retract the pressure given to public sector employers that they must reduce costs by taking away from the workforce - I cannot buy into the fiction that there's no money to fund education and health care. If the Saskatchewan Government can afford to offer the highest corporate tax breaks in the country and payout failed P3 bids, it's clear this government favours big corporations over our local communities. So instead, I ask that you move towards fair taxation so we can ensure the schools, hospitals, and jobs in our local communities are supported.

Can I count on you to do what's right?

I look forward to your response.