

Committee Reports

Political Action & Awareness Committee

The purpose of the Political Action & Awareness Committee (PAAC) is to

Well, that was quite the year! The PAAC were committed to make 2020 a year of positive change for our membership but instead, it became the year that we encountered a global pandemic that none of us were prepared for.

Before things got crazy, we sent two (2) of our members to SARM, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. We were happy to hear that rural health care was an issue for the attendees.

We wanted to remind our members and the public that there was a provincial election coming up and that our government has failed to address chronic short staffing issues in health care; they have ignored ballooning classroom sizes in our schools and they have avoided the commitment to multi-year, stable funding for community-based organizations (CBOs). Given that the pandemic limited face-to-face conversations, we sponsored and wrote the scripts for several videos on health care, education and CBOs with the tag line "Our government is letting us down." They were boosted on social media and shared widely with both our members and the public through the election period.

We wrote letters to the editor regarding inadequate personal protective equipment at the start of the pandemic, as well as a lack of clear direction from the SHA and government.

We also corresponded with the Premier regarding the lack of personal protective equipment and the inequity associated with the temporary wage supplement. We encouraged our co-workers to do the same.

We also called through the Sask Party MLAs in ridings where our members worked and lived to have a conversation about how the Sask temporary wage supplement was only offered to select workers; hospital workers and many who worked in CBOs were missed entirely. We asked each of the MLAs to discuss this problem with their government based on the need to be fair. Several had discussions with us while others requested an email to forward to the finance minister. The Finance Minister responded to us with a letter indicating that the decision was based on visitor restrictions. Of course, we pointed out that there are visitor restrictions in hospitals and CBOs but she chose not to reply to that. There were a couple of sympathetic MLAs and many who indicated that they were unaware of

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this issue.

Our committee attended the SEIU Canadian Summit on February 18th of 2021 with the goal to build our critical analysis and understanding of the unions program to drive an anti-racist agenda and actions. To win breakthroughs on union for all. To fight the rise of conservatism across Canada. To ensure every member is connected and member leader rich.

Recently, we had several letters to newspapers published regarding the randomness of which the government has prioritized health care workers get the vaccine.

We sent one of our members to the Broadbent Summit.

We committed to a Banner Drop in our three urban centres–Saskatoon, Moose Jaw & Swift Current–on May 1st (May Day) to demonstrate our ongoing frustration with provincial government decision-making as it relates to front line essential workers from our sectors. The Banners read: #RespectUsProtectUsPayUs.

We have done an election analysis on target ridings that we can begin to work on after SEIU-West Convention is concluded and the PAAC is reconstituted. We are eager to begin our future work – as we move forward we will assign SP MLAs to PAAC members and do a reach out to SEIU-West members in the targeted ridings to let them know how they are being represented.

We will continue to learn, share, and agitate on your behalf.

