

Federal Public Service Unions React Cautiously to the Government Working Group on Phoenix

Ottawa, April 28, 2017 – A committee of public service unions (including the Canadian Merchant Service Guild) reacted cautiously yesterday to the creation of a government working group to tackle the Phoenix pay system.

The “Working Group of Ministers on Achieving Steady State for the Pay System”, will be chaired by Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and comprises several cabinet ministers, including Finance, Treasury Board and Public Services.

Public Service Alliance of Canada President, Robyn Benson, said that “PSAC welcomes any announcement from the government aimed at fixing Phoenix. We appreciate that the government is finally taking these problems seriously, but we need to see some action.” She added that public service employees need a system that pays them accurately and on time. “We have yet to see a timeline for when that will happen.”

“This announcement is the result of constant lobbying by all public service unions on behalf of their members,” added Debi Daviau, president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada. “In the last federal budget, the government failed to respond to our request to pledge \$75 million to help fix Phoenix. While this is not new money, the \$70 million per year for the next two years that they have now committed to Phoenix is welcome news. The unions will continue to make sure that they spend that money to fix the system.”

Union representatives will work closely with this ministerial working group on Phoenix and will remind the government that it must compensate affected employees for pain and suffering, and compensate them for loss of interest as a result of delayed pay.

According to André Picotte, acting president at the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, “the Phoenix fiasco is the result of a plan that did not take the interests of the public service employees to heart.

For his part, Jason Godin, president of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers – CSN said: “We want to be positive and believe that this new initiative to settle Phoenix will be the right one, but we remain cautious. We still have new cases that pop up every two weeks, so it's hard to be very enthusiastic at the moment”.

Finally, all the public service unions have demanded that the government commit to three things: hire more staff with full access to Phoenix in order to respond to the requests made by employees; hire permanent, not temporary, staff at the call centres who have the training and support to help our members and; keep the satellite pay centres open until all problems with Phoenix have been resolved.

This bulletin has been issued by a committee of the following bargaining agents:

- Association of Canadian Financial Officers
- Association of Justice Counsel
- Canadian Air Traffic Control Association, Unifor Local 5454
- Canadian Association of Professional Employees
- Canadian Federal Pilots Association
- Canadian Merchant Service Guild
- Canadian Military Colleges Faculty Association
- Coast Guard Marine Communications Officers Unifor Local 2182
- Unifor, Local 87-M
- Federal Government Dockyard Chargehands Association
- Federal Government Dockyard Trades and Labour Council (East)
- Federal Government Dockyard Trades and Labour Council (West)
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 2228
- Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers
- Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada
- Public Service Alliance of Canada
- Research Council Employees' Association
- Union of Canadian Correctional Officers - CSN