

# **NO MORE CUTS**

**Rebuild our public services!**

May 20, 2005

## **Contract offer vote information for OPS locals and members**

*Questions and answers about the upcoming vote by  
OPSEU members in the Ontario Public Service*

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### **1. How will the vote be conducted?**

The law says the vote must be by secret ballot and that those entitled to vote must have “ample opportunity.” The law requires the time and place for voting to be “reasonably convenient.”

### **2. Who can vote?**

By law, all employees in the bargaining unit(s) represented by OPSEU are eligible to vote. That includes all OPSEU members and OPSEU non-members, including part-time, casual, temporary, seasonal employees with recall rights and other non-classified employees. It includes those who have not signed union cards, once a member of their local has verified them. Members on Long Term Income Protection (LTIP), Worker’s Compensation, maternity and other leaves are also entitled to vote.

### **3. When is the vote?**

Voting will take place on May 25, 26 and 27.

### **4. Where will I vote?**

Each Area Coordinating Group (ACG) is responsible for organizing the vote locations. Locals will be grouped together in one central location, as much as possible. The vote will be scheduled to accommodate shift work. The OPSEU Regional Offices will be responsible for making the necessary vote location arrangements.

### **5. When will I know when and where to vote?**

Voting takes place on May 25, 26 and 27. The Regional Offices will inform the Locals on the locations and times of the voting on those dates. The Locals are then responsible for giving

reasonable notification of the date, time and location of the vote meetings. Notices should be posted in all worksites seven days prior to the vote. OPSEU Head Office will prepare a standard notice form to use to advertise the vote.

**6. Have the bargaining units changed?**

No. The bargaining unit remain the same as they did in the previous round of bargaining - two “category” agreements (Corrections and Unified) and one central agreement.

**7. What issues are negotiated at the bargaining unit tables?**

Wages, hours of work, overtime, on-call, standby, shift schedules and training and other issues agreed to by the union and the employer may be negotiated at the two bargaining unit tables (unified bargaining unit and corrections bargaining unit).

**8. What issues are negotiated at the central table?**

Generally, the law requires that issues that cover all employees in the OPS are negotiated at the central table: this includes job security, the grievance procedure, insured benefits and pensions.

**9. What will the ballots say?**

Each ballot will offer a clear choice. Members will be asked to vote either:

Yes, I accept the employer’s offer.

No, I reject the employer’s offer and authorize the bargaining team to call a strike if necessary.

**10. Is it possible to reject the employer’s offer on Central issues, and accept it on Category issues?**

Yes. Any combination of acceptance and rejection votes is possible in the three categories of Central, Unified Bargaining Unit or Corrections.

**11. What happens if I vote YES to the employer’s offer?**

If you vote YES to the employer’s offer, that means you accept the offer and agree to ratify it as your new collective agreement.

**12. What happens if I vote NO to the employer’s offer?**

If you vote NO, you reject the Employer’s offer and authorize your bargaining teams to return to bargaining and, if it becomes necessary, call a strike to obtain a better offer.

**13. If the employer’s offer is rejected in a vote, does that mean there will be a strike?**

Not necessarily. A strong strike vote shows the employer that union members are determined to protect and improve their collective agreement. A strike vote is a bargaining team’s most effective tool to get the employer to change its position. History has shown us that the employer’s offer has always significantly improved after the members reject the employer’s offer and give the bargaining teams a strike mandate.

**14. How will I receive information about the final offer?**

The union has prepared a full analysis of the offer in the May 16 *Table Talk* bargaining bulletin, which is available on the OPSEU web site at [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org). The final offer from the employer is also available on the website. Printed copies of both documents will be made available. Locals are required to distribute *Table Talk* to members in advance of the vote. Also, your Area Co-ordinating groups and your regional OPSEU office organize contract vote information sessions in your area. Please make every effort to attend one of these meetings.

**15. As a Region 5 member, I work in Toronto but live outside the Region. Can I vote closer to where I live?**

Every member will have the opportunity to vote within the Region they work or the Region their local belongs to. All members across the province must vote within their own Local and Region. Region 5 members can vote in any one of three locations set up over a three-day period in the Region 5 Area.

**16. I will be on vacation at the time of the vote. Can I vote now?**

No. Under OPSEU policy, there are no advance polls. Proxy voting is not permitted.

**17. I work in a remote location where it will not be possible attend a balloting location, or for me to attend one elsewhere. How will I vote?**

Every effort will be made to ensure that you and your co-workers in remote locations can vote. Details of these arrangements will be worked out by the ACG in your OPSEU Regional Office. If the ACG determines that it is impossible for you to attend a balloting

location, you will be sent a mail-in ballot. For more information, contact your local or regional office.

**18. I have a disability that will prevent me from attending a balloting location. How will I vote?**

Every effort will be made to make all balloting locations accessible to persons with disabilities. Those employees who cannot be accommodated at the balloting location are to inform their Local, who will in turn let the ACG know, in order that you receive a mail-in ballot. A mail-in ballot request form is to be completed by the ACG, which will in turn be considered and authorized by the President of OPSEU.

**19. How are votes tabulated?**

Votes are province-wide. The vote on issues for each bargaining unit and on central issues will be counted up across the province. A majority of 50 per cent plus one is needed to either accept or reject the offer.

**20. On count day, will anyone from my Local be present?**

Yes. On counting day, all Local Presidents (or their designees) are entitled to attend the counting sessions as scrutineers.

**21. When will be vote results be released?**

All votes will be counted in each Regional Office on the day following the completion of the vote/information meetings. The results from across the province will be tabulated at OPSEU Head Office. They will be communicated first to the Bargaining Teams, then to the Regional Offices and then to Local Presidents, who will ensure that the results are communicated to their members.

