

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR ALL OPSEU MEMBERS FIGHTING DESTRUCTIVE CUTS TO THE ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

BUDGET TIMELINE

Prior to 2008

- In 2003, the newly-elected McGuinty government inherited a \$5.6 billion deficit from the previous Conservative government.
- The government balanced the budget (i.e. there were no deficits) in 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08.

2008 Financial Crisis and Global Recession

- Over the course of 2008, global stock markets plunged nearly 50 per cent, wiping out about \$35 trillion in financial assets.
- The world was thrown into recession.
- Tens of millions of people were thrown out of work and millions lost their homes.
- Unemployment in Ontario rose from 6.4 to 9.4 per cent. The province lost 249,000 jobs during the recession.
- The recession lasted in Ontario from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. A recession is defined as two quarters of negative growth. Ontario had four quarters of negative growth.

- All told, governments in the world's largest economies spent around \$20 trillion on stimulus for their economies.

2009 Ontario Budget

- The government projected a \$3.9 billion deficit for 2008-09 and a \$14.1 billion deficit for 2009-10.
- In response to the recession, the government allocated \$32.5 billion on infrastructure over the next two years, supporting the creation of thousands of jobs. The government also allocated \$750 million to job creation and skills training.
- Announced it was reducing the size of the OPS by five per cent, approximately 3,400 employees, over three years *“through attrition and other measures”*. Noted that the government had frozen the size of the OPS in the fall of 2008 at 68,645 full-time equivalent positions.
- Announced that as of July 1, 2010, there will be a “harmonized” sales tax, by combining the provincial sales tax with the federal Goods and Services Tax, threatening the jobs of an estimated 1,200 OPSEU members in the Ministry of Revenue.
- Announced it was cutting the general Corporate Income Tax rate from 14 per cent to 12 per cent and then to 10 per cent over three years. This will ultimately drain the provincial treasury of \$2.4 billion a year. Claimed this would *“increase investment and productivity leading to new job creation.”*

2010 Ontario Budget

- Projected a \$21.3 billion deficit for 2009-10.
- The deficit is a result of the global recession that the financial crisis of 2008 forced us into, **not** Ontario government spending.

- Government said it will hold growth in program spending to 1.9 per cent through to 2017-18 in order to eliminate the deficit.
- Noted that since 2003-04, Ontario's spending per capita on general government services, i.e. the OPS, *"has consistently remained in the bottom three of all provinces."* Further noted that in 2008-09, per capita spending on general government services was 28 per cent below the national average and the second-lowest among the provinces.
- Noted it froze the OPS at 68,645 full-time equivalents and begun to reduce the size of the OPS by five per cent by March 31, 2012, *"through attrition and other measures."*
- Claimed it was committed to *"maintaining the gains in improving the public services Ontarians value so highly while addressing the fiscal challenges."* Claimed *"central to meeting this commitment is management of public-sector compensation costs."*
- Announced it would introduce legislation to freeze compensation for two years for all non-union employees in the OPS and the Broader Public Sector.
- Announced it would provide no funding for compensation increases for future collective agreements. *"As agreements are renegotiated, the government will work with transfer payment partners and bargaining agents to reach agreements of at least two years' duration. These agreements should ... provide no net increase in compensation."*
- OPS senior managers and excluded staff continued to receive their "performance bonuses."
- Noted the government is *"committed to transforming and modernizing the services it delivers to Ontarians"* and cites ServiceOntario as a success.

- July 1, 2010, the harmonized sales tax took effect.
- July 1, 2010, the corporate income tax rate of 12 per cent took effect, down from 14 per cent.

2011 Ontario Budget

“Just because a particular government department delivers a program today does not mean it should deliver it tomorrow.”
(2011 Ontario Budget: Budget Papers, page 69)

- Projected a deficit of \$16.3 billion in 2011.
- Announced its intention to fundamentally change how public services are delivered in Ontario.
- *“Eliminating the deficit by 2017-18 will require fundamental reforms to the way government does business.”*
- The budget included quotes from pro-business economists and academics, such as the TD Bank’s chief economist Don Drummond, and the Mowat Centre’s Mathew Mendelsohn, who advocate for:
 - cuts to government spending;
 - the private, for-profit sector delivering public services;
 - shrinking the size of the public service; and
 - slashing the salaries, benefits and pensions of public sector employees.
- Noted that Ontario **spends less on public services** as a share of the economy than any other province except Alberta and Saskatchewan.
- Noted that in 2008-09, Ontario’s spending per capita on general government services, i.e. the OPS, **was the second-lowest** among the provinces.

- Claimed the only way to eliminate the deficit while protecting health care and education is by making cuts to other programs and through privatization.
- In budget-speak, cuts are “*finding efficiencies*”, “*consolidation*”, “*streamlining programs*” and “*achieving better value for money.*”
- Privatization is “*pursuing new models of service delivery*”.
- Public-private partnerships is “*unlocking value through new partnerships.*”
- In terms of cuts, said the government will find \$1.5 billion in savings over three years “*through operational efficiencies and consolidation, streamlining of programs and further efficiencies in health care.*”
- Limited increases in program spending to 1.4 per cent.
- Noted the government was on track with its 2009 target to reduce the OPS by five per cent by March 31, 2012, “*through attrition and other measures.*”
- Announced an additional 1,500 job cuts to the OPS, increasing the total job loss to 7 per cent of the OPS by March 31, 2014, or approximately 5,000 jobs.
- Claimed in the *Size of the OPS Q & A Package* released after the Budget that these reductions will bring the OPS down to a new cap of 63,745 FTEs by March 31, 2014. Claimed the job cuts will save the government approximately \$477 million annually as a result of not having to pay wages and benefits.
- Claimed it was delivering “*prison modernization*”. Announced the closure of the Owen Sound and Walkerton Jails in 2011, Sarnia Jail in 2013, and the decommissioning of 200 beds at Toronto West Detention Centre.

- Announced the government will explore “*alternative service delivery*” models for Service Ontario including “*leveraging private sector opportunities through a competition.*” This likely means a public-private sector partnership.
- Announced it will look at adding programs to ServiceOntario including “*delivering programs on behalf of other levels of government through partnerships.*”
- Announced the government will look at privatizing court enforcement services, thereby threatening the jobs of OPSEU members at the Ministry of the Attorney General. Announced the government will review the program to see if “*other delivery agents*” could carry out the seizure/sale of assets.
- Announced the establishment of a Commission on the Reform of Ontario’s Public Services to “*examine long-term fundamental changes to the way government works.*”
- The Commission to review all programs funded by the provincial government, which means services delivered by the Broader Public Sector as well as the OPS.
- The Commission to be headed by the former chief economist of the TD Bank, Don Drummond.
- The Commission to explore what programs are “*core to the government’s mandate,*” what programs can be cut and what programs should be privatized or in budget-speak, “*delivered by another entity.*”
- The Commission to report to the Minister of Finance in time to inform the development of the 2012 budget.
- The union believes we are witness to, and part of, a massive restructuring of the Ontario Public Service, with the clear aim of a smaller, cheaper, public service.

- July 1, 2011, the corporate income tax rate decreased from 12 per cent to 11.5 per cent.
- Prior to the Budget, on February 11, 2011, the government announced it was freezing the minimum wage. For the first time in seven years, there was no modest annual increase. The minimum wage was increased to \$10.25 an hour on March 31, 2010. There it remains.

2011 Fall Economic Statement

- The Liberals were re-elected October 6 with a minority government.
- The government is clear it won't deviate from its plan for fundamental changes to the delivery of public services as outlined in the 2011 Budget.
- The government started to prepare public opinion for major cuts to government spending.
- The chair of the government's commission on public services, Don Drummond, met with Premier Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal Cabinet, and Opposition leaders in the weeks in advance of the Fall Economic Statement.
- On November 2, the Premier met with Drummond for the first time to go over the findings to date of the commission.
- None of the commission's meetings have been public.
- The Premier announced that Drummond advised him to limit the increase in overall government spending to one per cent a year.
- This is repeated by McGuinty and Finance Minister Dwight Duncan in media interviews in advance of the Fall Economic Statement on November 24.

- The Fall Economic Statement forecasts the deficit will be \$16 billion for 2011-12.
- Dwight Duncan: *“We know that Drummond’s preliminary advice is to hold growth in program spending to one per cent per year. This is something we will be consulting Ontarians and the Legislature about when the commission’s report is finalized.”*
- A one per cent increase in overall spending is **really a cut** because inflation in Ontario is running at around 3 per cent.
- Duncan noted that any new spending or unforeseen expenditures must come from savings realized elsewhere.
- In media interviews prior to the Fall Economic Statement, the government indicated health will be allowed to grow by three per cent and education by one per cent.
- Combined they make up 70 per cent of the budget so all other ministries will have to be slashed deeply to make up for their spending increases.
- In the Toronto Star on November 16, Dwight Duncan is quoted as saying *“You’re talking about real cuts of upwards of 33 per cent in some ministries.”*
- From the Toronto Star’s Queen’s Park columnist, Martin Regg Cohn, *Ontario’s Perfect Storm of Budget Trouble*, November 23:

“Ontario’s Auditor General expressed skepticism about that original spending target [1.4 per cent] when he reviewed the budget last summer. Yet now Duncan wants to go further. As he told me last week, and reconfirmed Wednesday, he foresees “real cuts of upwards of 33 per cent in some ministries” in order to protect health and education, which remain the two priority areas.”

- A one-third cut to some ministry budgets is being considered at the same time as Ontario's corporate tax rate is in the process of being cut "to historic lows".
- The Corporate Income Tax rate has been cut from 14 to 11.5 per cent to date. It will go down to 10 per cent by 2013.
- A new study by consulting firm KPMG International shows that Canadian companies pay a combined 28 per cent of their income to federal and provincial taxes while American companies pay 40 per cent of their income to federal and state taxes.
- The unemployment rate in Ontario in October climbed half a percentage point to 8.1 per cent: 592,000 people are looking for work in this province.
- Remember that back in the 2009 Ontario Budget, the government claimed cuts to the Corporate Income Tax rate would *"increase investment and productivity leading to new job creation."*
- On November 29, 2011, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner released his annual report. He harshly criticized the government for slashing funding to the Ministries of Environment and Natural Resources.
- Gord Miler said the MOE receives **45 per cent less funding** now to operate than it did in 1992. The MNR receives **22 per cent less funding** now to operate than it did in 1992. He pointed out that *"only approximately three-quarters of one cent of every tax dollar to be spent on government operations in 2010-11 were allocated to the environment and natural resources."*
- December 1, 2011, social assistance rates increase by a modest 1 per cent. Rates are so low that the increase will still leave a single person 66 per cent below Canada's low income cut-off (poverty line) and a single parent with two young children 56 per cent below the low-income cut-off.

OPSEU'S RESPONSE TO THE OPS CUTS

- At the 2011 OPSEU convention, delegates voted unanimously to support a fightback against cuts and privatization in the OPS.
- A special two-day fightback meeting of OPS locals was held June 17 and 18 in Toronto. The *Cuts Hurt Us All* campaign was begun.
<http://opseu.org/ops/campaigns/cutshurtusall/index.htm>
- Locals across the province organized rallies and barbecues on “Pink Slip Day” July 14. Members wore Cuts Hurt Us All stickers, and Locals had t-shirts made with the slogan, to show their solidarity with and support for members who received pre-surplus notices that day.
- Media interest in the layoffs was intense with over 200 media stories about the July 14 layoffs.
- In the late summer and early fall, the Central Enforcement and Renewal Committee (CERC) developed a comprehensive campaign proposal to fight job and service cuts. It was approved by OPSEU's Executive Board in September. This phase of the mobilization, November 2011 – January 2012, is the result of the campaign proposal.

OPSEU'S RESPONSE TO DRUMMOND

- At the 2011 OPSEU convention, delegates voted unanimously to support an alternative view of the experience and value of public services in Ontario.
- OPSEU has requested the Public Services Foundation of Canada (PSFC) to review the value, quality and the role that key public services play in communities across Ontario through a series of public hearings.

- *The Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness* will be headed by one-time Manitoba Cabinet Minister, Judy Wasylycia-Leis, who also serves as chair of the PSFC.
- The PSFC is a national research and advocacy organization dedicated to defending and promoting the value of high quality public services.
- The PSFC's Board of Directors include:
 - Judy Wasylycia-Leis, a former Manitoba cabinet minister and Member of Parliament;
 - Alex Himmelfarb, former clerk of the Privy Council of Canada, (top civil servant in the federal civil service), and the current director of the Glendon School of Public and International Affairs at York University;
 - Neil Brooks, tax law expert and professor at Osgoode Hall Law School at York University;
 - Duncan Cameron, adjunct professor of political science at Simon Fraser University (SFU), a director of the Karl Polanyi Institute of Political Economy at Concordia University and a research fellow of the Centre for Global Political Economy at SFU; and
 - James Clancy, National President of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE)
- OPSEU will work with the PSFC to hold hearings and town hall meetings across Ontario in January and early February, 2012.
- The mandate of the review is two-fold: Wasylycia-Leis will gather testimony and evidence from experts in the field of progressive tax reform so that Ontario can implement funding that will sustain and strengthen public services.

- Second, the Commission will hear from front-line service providers and clients who will describe unmet needs and the impact they've experienced from a steady erosion of public services in Ontario, with recommendations aimed at strengthening programs and services.
- The Commission also expects to collect testimony from municipal and local business leaders, representatives of faith communities and the criminal justice system, and others, who can describe the impact of reduced public services on their communities.
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- Wasylycia-Leis expects to issue the Commission's final report and recommendations to the provincial government in late February, in time for the 2012 Budget.
- *The Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness* will be in stark contrast to the Drummond Commission, which is studying ways to eliminate some public services and cut funding to others.
- The OPSEU-Public Services Foundation of Canada review will promote community participation and open debate on the value of public services.
- Hearings will be held in publicly owned places in each OPSEU region.
- Advance meetings with officials to broaden our messages, meetings with local media e.g. newspaper editorial boards etc.
- Enlist support of Labour Councils to support and encourage private sector trade unionists to participate.
- OPSEU members will present on the value of services they provide and how they can be improved.

- The schedule of the Commission's hearings will be on www.standupontario.org

OPS JOB CUTS IN 2011

- 41 layoff notices issues in April 2011.
- 274 layoff notices issued in July 2011.
- 53 layoff notices issued in August 2011.
- 231 layoff notices issued on November 17.
- Over and above the waves of surplus identified, individual positions have been surplus at various ministries.
- Approximately 650 jobs, in total, have been lost in 2011
- Analysis of OPSEU lay offs in the OPS in July, August and November:
 - The Office Administration (OAD) category has taken 59 per cent of the layoffs. OADs are 37 per cent of the OPSEU membership in the OPS.
 - 79 per cent of the layoffs have been female. Women are 60 per cent of the OPSEU membership in the OPS.
 - 51 per cent of the layoffs have centered in the Toronto area; 25 per cent of OPSEU's OPS membership is in Region 5.
 - The five ministries hit the hardest in terms of OPSEU lay offs:
 - Ministry of Community and Social Services – 24.9 per cent

- Ministry of the Attorney General – 11.3 per cent
 - Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – 10.6 per cent
 - Ministry of the Environment – 10.4 per cent
 - Ministry of Revenue – 9.5 per cent
- It has become clear to the union that the employer is not interested in placing employees into vacancies or in displacing (bumping) employees, as per Article 20 of the collective agreement.
 - The employer clearly would prefer to simply get rid of our members. As a result, little effort is being put into retaining them.
 - As a result of the earlier waves of surplussing (prior to the Nov. 17 layoff notices), there were 337 of 411 members who had opted to be redeployed to other jobs in the Ontario Public Service.
 - Members weren't being matched to either permanent vacancies (Article 20.3) or temporary assignments (Article 20.8).
 - Members were also being denied displacement (bumping) opportunities, Article 20.4.
 - As result, members have been urged to file grievances, to abide by the grievance timelines and to ensure all communication with the employer is in writing.
 - Sample language for grievances relating to a number of job security situations was forwarded to Staff Representatives and to Local Presidents on Nov. 10 and 17, respectively.
 - The decision was made and relayed to Staff Representatives on Nov. 10 to grieve as “improper” all upcoming surplussing.

IMPACTS OF THE 2011 OPS JOB CUTS ON SERVICES

- Elimination of the Special Services at Home Program for adults with developmental disabilities.
- Delays in processing vital court documents like restraining orders, divorce papers and court orders for child and spousal support.
- Inability to provide timely and accurate information to enforcement officers monitoring road and vehicle safety.
- Elimination of staff responsible for ensuring local governments follow legislation when delivering tens of millions of dollars in social assistance.
- Drinking water inspectors cut in four districts: London, Windsor, Ajax and Cornwall.
- Elimination of all inspectors, based in Toronto, associated with the Lead in Drinking Water program.
- Elimination of several scientists and technical experts on air and water quality.
- A reduction in the number of staff regulating pay day loan companies, collection agencies and credit bureaus.
- Delays in processing claims from health care providers.
- Cuts to the preservation of Ontario's culture, including the lay off of the province's only Marine Heritage advisor.

Divestment of Ministry of Revenue members

- 1,200 OPSEU members job-threatened as a result of the harmonization of the PST and GST, announced by the government in March 2009.

- The divestment process, the transfer of work to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), started in March 2009 and will last until February-March of 2012.
- 996 OPSEU members received job offers to go to the CRA. Among them: tax collectors, administration, customer service, audit, special investigations.
- 875 members accepted job offers. A number of members were redeployed to other positions in the OPS. Ultimately, approximately 30 members received surplus notices.
- 45 additional members were surplus this summer due, in part, to the divestment.
- Corporate income tax was divested back in 2008 to the CRA. 600 OPSEU members were estimated to be impacted by the transfer of work. Ultimately, 300 members went to the CRA. Currently there are probably about 50 members involved in the wind-down of processing. They will receive their surplus notices over the next four years.

Jail closures

- OPSEU mounted an aggressive *Save Our Jails* campaign in May and June, 2011. It received a lot of public support.
- More than 12,000 people signed petitions and hundreds came out to town-hall meetings.
- The issue of the jail closures has been raised repeatedly in the Legislature by NDP leader Andrea Horwath and her MPPs, and by Conservatives MPPs.
- Despite repeated requests from community leaders, provincial politicians and OPSEU, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services failed to provide the cost analysis that would justify the closures of the jails.

- The impending closure of the Walkerton Jail contributed to the defeat of a Liberal cabinet minister in the provincial election in October 2011.
- Walkerton and Owen Sound Jails closed on December 4, 2011.
- Sarnia Jail slated to close 2013.
- Closure of 200 beds at the Toronto West Detention Centre.
- Opening of the Toronto Intermittent Centre.
- All Correctional Officers who wanted a job have been relocated. There have been no layoffs of COs.

WHAT ARE WE FACING?

More layoffs, cuts to services, restructuring and privatization.

- The surplussing of 650 OPSEU members this year is part of the five percent reduction to the OPS by March 2012.
- The employer can't say if it has met its reduction target. There could be more layoffs to offset the 2,000 new hires brought on since the target was established. The union believes few of these new hires were front line staff. Our numbers are decreasing in the OPS. It is possible more of *our members will be laid off* to offset the hiring of these additional managers.
- An unknown number of vacant OPSEU positions have been cut as part of the five per cent reduction. 200 OPSEU vacancies have been cut from the Ministry of Government Services (MGS) alone.
- 1,500 **additional** positions are to be cut by March 2014 as per the government's stated intention in the 2011 budget.

- There could be **thousands more layoffs** if the 2012 Budget follows Drummond's recommendation for overall program spending to increase by only one per cent. Again, this is **really a cut** because inflation is around three per cent.
- Major restructuring and massive technological change leading to further job losses.

Privatization of ServiceOntario

- ServiceOntario is an OPS organization which offers over 80 services, including: driver and vehicle licensing, Health Card registration and renewal, registration of births, marriages and deaths, property registrations, the Outdoors cards, etc.
- 1,900 OPSEU members work for ServiceOntario, including its head office in Toronto, 4 call centres, 87 Service Ontario counters in the OPS and 54 Land Registry offices across Ontario.
- There are also about 200 ServiceOntario counters across Ontario that are run privately by independent contractors and 71 kiosks in malls which are managed under contract by IBM.
- ServiceOntario processed 47.5 million transactions in 2010-11. The most common transactions are driver and vehicle services at 20 million transactions. Most of the transactions are done in-person at the counters.
- It will cost the government \$270.4 million to operate ServiceOntario in 2011-12. ServiceOntario collects revenue of \$2.7 billion which goes into the province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. In other words, the revenue helps pay for public services.

- The government issued a Request for Information (RFI) in July, 2011, soliciting the private sector to give suggestions about building, managing and funding a new operating model for ServiceOntario. It wants a lot more of the public to access ServiceOntario on-line and through the kiosks.
- Through a request under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the union has asked for a wide range of information relating to ServiceOntario, including copies of the submissions made by the private sector to the government's RFI.
- The union was told that the CEO of ServiceOntario, Bob Stark, has consulted with both the Drummond Commission and the social assistance review (see below).
- The union was told that Bob Stark would forward his recommendation for the operating model for ServiceOntario to the Minister of Government Services, in the late fall.
- OPSEU commissioned a poll of 1,000 Ontarians from September 27 through October 4 around the possible privatization of ServiceOntario:
 - 63 per cent oppose privatization of public services in Ontario.
 - 71 per cent oppose the privatization of ServiceOntario.
 - 71 – 75 per cent were concerned about security of personal information if the same services were provided by private agencies.
 - 68 per cent believe that privatization should be put on hold, given the fragile state of the economy.
 - 68 per cent prefer service delivery in person.
 - 73 per cent level of satisfaction with ServiceOntario

Downloading of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

- ServiceOntario also wants to take over other provincial, municipal and federal programs, including social housing, social assistance and the Ontario Disability Program (ODSP). There is the possibility that the work of 2,000 to 3,000 OPSEU members could be transferred to ServiceOntario.
- If this happens, there is the possibility of destructive run-off votes with other unions that represent municipal and federal employees
- There is another threat to ODSP. In November, 2010, the government established a Commission for the Review of Social Assistance. The Commission will produce an “Options” report in December and a final report next June.
- OPSEU has produced two reports for the social assistance review recommending substantial improvements to the ODSP and maintaining delivery of the program by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).
- OPSEU represents about 1,600 members (caseworkers and support staff) who work for ODSP at 45 offices across Ontario.
- In March 2011, 391,000 people accessed ODSP. 44 per cent of primary applicants have a physical disability, 38 per cent have a mental disability and 18 per cent have a developmental disability.
- Commission Co-Chair Frances Lankin told OPSEU at a meeting between the Commission and the MCSS MERC on October 12, that one option the Commission is considering is to recommend the downloading of ODSP to municipalities. The province would continue to fund ODSP, but municipalities would deliver the program. Municipalities currently deliver Ontario Works, social assistance for individuals and families.

Privatization of Information and Information Technology work (I&IT)

- In the last report the union received from the employer, as per Appendix 38 of the collective agreement, the OPS employs more than 600 IT consultants. By rotating these people through, the employer is constantly paying people to learn the business of the OPS. Appendix 38 provides for a hiring pool model that would keep the knowledge in-house and likely contribute to having systems that are better integrated into the whole IT structure.
- As well, Bob Stark, CEO of ServiceOntario, was not provided the funding for the IT system to support ServiceOntario, so to save capital costs in 2012, the OPS will pay for a number of years to have a private firm maintain its systems. We suspect this situation is not unique to ServiceOntario.
- In addition, since the employer refuses to put any money into the training and development of Systems Officers, our members are unable to keep up with industry changes (unless they take it upon themselves to upgrade their skills on their own). Therefore, we're in a "catch-22": the employer increasingly relies on outside consultants because it will not maintain its in-house expertise.
- As of November, 2011, 63 Systems Officers have been laid off, while the number of IT consultants grows.
- In the 2008 round of bargaining, OPSEU tried to address these issues by negotiating Appendix 38. In exchange for the continued use of IT consultants, the employer was supposed to create 230 new SO positions as well as create a new level in the SO series – the Systems Officer 7 – and pay to OPSEU the equivalent of union dues for the consultants.

- The creation of 230 new SO positions has not happened. The union has filed a policy grievance on this. And only **one** SO7 position has been created since 2009.

Fewer front-line workers, more managers

- OPSEU's membership in the Ontario Public Service has decreased by more than 20,000 members since 1996. We had between 55,000 to 60,000 active members in 1996. As of the December 31, 2010, head count done by the employer, we had 38,526 members in the OPS. According to the 2009 and 2010 Ontario Budgets, the Ontario Public Service has been frozen at 68,645 employees.
- AMAPCEO's membership is now at 12,000. In 1996, they were between 5,000 and 7,000. Their membership has grown by over 140 per cent.
- For every one job that is posted in the OPS, three jobs are posted AMAPCEO or management-excluded.
- In the last round of bargaining, the union tried to address the AMAPCEO issue by negotiating Article 1.8 that reads: "For clarity, the Employer agrees that any new positions or any new classifications not excluded pursuant to Article 1.1, Article UN 1.1, and Article COR 1.1, will be placed in a bargaining unit represented by OPSEU."
- The employer has ignored this article.

Wages stagnate in the OPS

- On November 18, 2011, Conservative leader Tim Hudak called for a "mandated" wage freeze for all public sector workers in the province. Mandated means that he wants a law passed.

- It is possible that such legislation would be struck down by the courts following a 2007 Supreme Court of Canada ruling against similar legislation in B.C.
- The fact is wages have stagnated in the public sector.
- A typical OPSEU member in the OPS earns about the same wage today as they did in 1992. In fact, they earn four per cent less.
- From the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, OPSEU members experienced four years of zeros, followed by three years of increases that were below inflation.
- From 2002 to 2010, pay raises were slightly ahead of inflation, but not by much. After inflation, wages increased by just 4.45 per cent over those eight years.
- The latest figures from Statistics Canada paint a worsening picture for wages in Canada and particularly in Ontario. Wage increases are now falling behind inflation which means workers are losing their purchasing power.
- Business lobby groups such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business misleadingly talk about "gold-plated pensions" for public sector employees.
- The fact is, according to the OPSEU Pension Trust, the average annual pension for an OPTrust member in 2010 was \$20,456.
- Three out of eight Canadians can only find part-time or temporary jobs, temp agency work, or low paid self-employment.

- Temporary and contract work has been a long-standing problem in the OPS. Twenty per cent of OPSEU members are fixed-term employees. (The term used to be unclassified.) They have no job security and are often the first casualties of government downsizing.

MOBILIZATION: MAIN ACTIVITIES

November 28, 2011 - January 31, 2012

- OPS Stewards assemblies – December 5 - 16, 2011
- Plant gating/desk drops – December 2011
- The *Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness* hearings – January - February 2012
- Promotion of OPS ServiceOntario counters – December 2011 and January 2012.

Preparing For Bargaining:

- 2012 is a bargaining year for OPSEU members in the OPS.
- Our collective agreement expires on December 31, 2012.
- Our mobilization against the cuts will clearly shape the environment in which we negotiate the renewal of our collective agreement.
- There will be an OPS All-Presidents meeting in Toronto on February 4, 2012. A “call” letter will go to all OPS Locals before the new year.
- Preparing for bargaining.

- General Bargaining timelines (specific dates not yet finalized)
 - Spring – demand-set
 - Late Spring – regional and central bargaining conferences where the two bargaining teams (Central/Unified and Corrections) are elected.
 - Late summer – team training and beginning work on proposals
 - Early fall – serve notice to bargain and further preparation of proposals

SOURCES

Budget Timeline pages 1-9

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