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# FRONT *lines*

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## Grievance award “huge victory” for court reporters

A Grievance Settlement Board (GSB) award issued recently on the work of court reporters is being hailed as a huge victory for both court reporters and OPSEU.

The issue was the preparation and certification of court transcripts. Since the 1980s, this work was excluded from the duties of court reporters. As a result, the transcript work was contracted out to court reporters for a fee. This, said Attorney General MERC chair Julie Weber, meant that a sizable portion of a court reporter’s job was never recognized as part of their “official” work.

“This is a great victory for the union,” Weber said. “Now that this work has been ruled as bargaining unit work, it will be covered by the collective agreement.”

GSB Vice-Chair Abramsky ruled that the work of a court reporter “does not consist solely of taking the record” and that the transcription and certification of that record must be a part of a court reporter’s official duties. While the work of transcribing and

certifying was done mostly on the employee’s own time, there were many cases where this work was done on the employer’s time. Despite this, the employer claimed that the court reporters were not employees while doing the transcription work, and that they were, in fact, independent contractors.

“This is an issue we have fought since the early nineties,” said Paul Myers, member of the Attorney General MERC. “It’s a big win for us to have this work included.”

Now that the determination has been made by the GSB, it will be up to the union and the employer to work out the details of implementing the ruling. Myers expects that this will take some time.

“There will be a lot of issues to contend with,” Myers said. “But it’s certainly work we look forward to doing.”