

# PRAIRIE VOICE

## ELECTION EDITION



We're now more than halfway through the longest election period in Canadian history and it's already been a very busy few weeks.

Over the summer, PSAC launched an awareness campaign about the impact of the drastic cuts that have been made to public services. The **Vote to Stop the Cuts** campaign focuses on cuts to key services that have affected Canadians since the Harper Conservatives came into power: support for veterans, border security, search and rescue, Employment Insurance, environmental protection and food safety.

The campaign has generated mass media and public support. PSAC's Facebook page now boasts a huge

following of over 27,000 fans, giving PSAC the largest presence on Facebook of any Canadian-wide union. The incredible response is a testament to how our message is resonating with PSAC members and the Canadian public.

We hope this awareness raising campaign will encourage Canadians to vote in the next federal election for candidates who oppose further cuts and seek to restore vital public services.

Please continue to spread our message and share this campaign with your co-workers, neighbours, friends and family. Visit [votetostopthecuts.ca](http://votetostopthecuts.ca) for more information on the campaign.

As much as we've done so far, there is still more work to do. Our Area Councils have been busy organizing all candidates forums, phoning members to discuss election issues and attending community events to promote public services. Please contact your Area Council if you're interested in getting involved.

On October 19, vote for public services, for our veterans and for our future. Together, we can make a difference.

**Marianne Hladun**  
Regional Executive Vice-President  
Prairie Region



### INSIDE

- Join our Telephone Town Hall
- Take a course
- Sign up for our webinar
- Attend an all-candidates forum
- Your elections questions
- Learn about the issues

### CONNECT



**Facebook**  
Public Service Alliance  
of Canada - Prairie Region



**Twitter**  
[@psacprairies](https://twitter.com/psacprairies)  
[@mshladun](https://twitter.com/mshladun)

Visit [prairies.psic.com](http://prairies.psic.com)  
for more information

### JOIN OUR TELEPHONE TOWN HALL



On Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. MB / 6:30 p.m. AB/SK, the PSAC Prairie Region will host a special telephone town hall focused on the federal election. We will be joined by several guest speakers and members will have an opportunity to ask questions about election issues, PSAC's Stop the Cuts campaign, participating in political activities, and more.

To participate, all you have to do is answer the phone when we call to be automatically connected. If for some reason you haven't received a call within the first five minutes, please use the coordinates provided to you.

### TAKE A COURSE

Courses are typically held during an evening or weekend and are scheduled on various days depending on the regional office requirements and rep availability. Please contact your regional office to find out when courses are being offered in your area.

#### Political Action Skills Workshops

This three-hour workshop is targeted to Local executive members and activists. The goal of the course is to assist these members in having important one-on-one conversations on key election topics.

By the end of the workshop, participants will know the key issues, feel more confident in having political conversation with members and be able to make strategic choices about political conversations.

#### Setting the Stage for the Next Federal Election

The course objective is to know the impacts of the Conservative government's policies and actions; to be able to have political conversations about the upcoming election with members and the public; develop skills and confidence in having door-to-door conversations in targeted ridings, and in written communications (letters to the editor; blog responses, etc.).

Note: A commitment of one day of activist work (door knocking, phone banks) is required as part of this training. There will be multiple opportunities to do this work leading up to the election on October 19.

### SIGN UP FOR OUR WEBINAR

An effective way to counter the anti-labour rhetoric and misleading or incorrect information in the media is to submit a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. The letters page is one place where the public can have their voices heard and participate in a public discussion about an issue. Local activists, government officials, legislators and many community members read letters to the editor in local and regional papers.

Members often ask us for form letters to submit to their newspaper or MP. However, union talking points aren't the most effective way to convey your message and ensure your letter gets published, especially if a lot of people are using them.

Learn how to join the conversation and the tips and best practices to get your letters published with this special two-hour evening webinar.

On Thursday, October 1, former *Ottawa Citizen* journalist Pauline Tam will review how to write a letter to the editor using current news stories and answer questions.

Visit [psac.com/prairies](http://psac.com/prairies) to register for this free webinar.

### ATTEND AN ALL-CANDIDATES FORUM



PSAC is sponsoring all-candidate forums across the Prairie Region. Area Councils have invited all declared candidates to participate in these public events to discuss important election issues and take questions.

We encourage you to attend an event in your area and ask the candidates about protecting public services.

Visit the PSAC Prairies website or contact your regional office for specific dates and locations.

## THE QUESTIONS

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### How can I get involved?

There are many opportunities to put your skills to work during the election period, including phone banks, door knocking, mail outs, and more. Contact your regional office to discuss how you can get involved.

### I've voted in the past, do I need to register again?

Earlier this year, the Conservative government made changes to the requirements for voting. Even if you have voted in past elections, you may not be registered.

To avoid any problems on election day, make sure you're registered and you have the necessary identification!

Check out Elections Canada's website to find out:

- whether you are on the voter's list
- where and when to vote
- what kinds of ID are required to vote
- key dates for voting and registration

Your vote is important! Don't lose your right to vote on October 19.

*More information: <http://www.elections.ca>*

### How do I vote in this election?

Away from home or busy on election day? Ready to vote early? You choose the way you want to vote. Remember to bring appropriate identification. The voter identification card is not accepted as a valid form of ID.

#### • **Vote on election day – Monday, October 19**

Polls are open for 12 hours. If you're registered, you will get a voter information card in the mail by October 1. It tells you when and where to vote.

#### • **Vote on advance voting days**

There are four advance voting days. Polls are open from noon to 8:00 p.m. Your voter information card tells you the address of your advance polling place.

Friday, October 9 / Saturday, October 10 /  
Sunday, October 11 / Monday, October 12

#### • **Vote at the Elections Canada office before Oct. 13**

Offices are open Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 4:00 p.m. See the Elections Canada website for locations.

### What are my political rights during the election?

One of the hallmarks of a healthy democracy is the ability of citizens to participate freely and actively in determining who they elect to govern and make decisions on their behalf.

PSAC members are encouraged to take an active role in exercising their democratic political rights

If you are disciplined in any way for participation in a political activity, this can be grieved. If you are disciplined, contact your Local/Branch or your Component for representation and advise your PSAC regional office. Any attempts by management to restrict your political rights should also be brought to the attention of the PSAC regional office.

*More information: <http://psacunion.ca/political-rights>*

### How do I protect myself on social media?

Members, particularly those who work for the Government of Canada, have asked us if they can share PSAC's Vote to Stop the Cuts advertising material through social media.

Union members and all employees have a right to freedom of expression protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, even if they work for the federal government. Expressing political opinions or sharing political content on social media is a form of political expression and is protected by the Charter. Online political expression does not benefit from any greater or any less protection than other forms of political expression.

You have the right to share content from our campaign on Facebook, Twitter or other social media accounts as long as you do so outside your hours of work and you don't use the employer's equipment.

Visit <http://psacunion.ca> to learn more about your rights on social media and what to consider before you post, share, or tweet.

### What will happen to my sick leave?

PSAC's request to the courts to stop the government from implementing its new sick leave plan will go before the court on October 29.

Keep in mind, however, that if we elect a new government that respects workers, we may not have to worry about this issue when we return to bargaining after the election.

## THE ISSUES

When you go to the polls, keep in mind these important issues and the Conservative government's record on the public services Canadians depend on. [Visit psacunion.ca/federal-election-2015](http://psacunion.ca/federal-election-2015) for more information.



### Public Services

The Conservative government cut 26,000 jobs in the public service with plans to cut 9,000 more, putting families and local economies in jeopardy. These job cuts mean that 35,000 full-time jobs will have been permanently eliminated from the economy.



### Workers' Rights

The Conservative government has passed a number of laws designed to take away the democratic rights of workers in Canada. Bill C-4, Bill C-525 and Bill C-59 are all designed to weaken workers' rights and, in the case of Bill C-59 in particular, are very likely unconstitutional.



### Veterans

This government closed nine Veterans Affairs offices and cut hundreds of front line workers who provide services to veterans. As a result, many veterans are not getting access to the services they need.



### Food Safety

Despite the Maple Leaf Foods tragedy that left 23 dead and dozens ill, the Conservative government has pushed ahead with cuts at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Canadians need more and better government inspection and less industry self-policing of food safety.



### Child care

Fewer than 1 in 4 Canadian kids have access to regulated child care. The Conservatives abolished the federal-provincial-territorial funding agreements on childcare, cutting \$1 billion out of child care in Canada.



### Environment

Canada has one of the worst records on environmental protection among industrialized countries. The Harper government has slashed funding for conservation and restoration of landscapes, water and wildlife; monitoring climate change; and minimizing threats from pollution.



### Employment Insurance

Legislative changes to EI are hurting workers and economies in many communities in Canada. Fewer than 40% of laid off workers are now covered by EI, the lowest in 40 years.



### Human rights

The Conservative government has been steadily reversing gains on women's rights, including gutting pay equity for federal employees. The Conservatives have also cut funding to programs that support Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees and to civil society groups that are critical of the government.



Contact your PSAC Regional Office to request copies of these signs to put up in your window at home or in your car to bring attention to the issues that matter most this federal election. You can also customize a blank sign with your own issues or ideas.



### CONTACT THE PRAIRIES REGIONAL OFFICE NEAREST YOU:

SOUTHERN ALBERTA	NORTHERN ALBERTA	SOUTHERN SASKATCHEWAN	NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN	MANITOBA
301 - 14th Street NW, Suite 302 Calgary, AB T2N 2A1 Telephone: (403) 270-6555 Toll-free: 1-800-461-8914 Fax: (403) 270-6591	10665 Jasper Avenue, Suite 670 Edmonton, AB T5J 3S9 Telephone: (780) 423-1290 Toll-free: 1-800-814-3948 Fax: (780) 429-2278	2445 - 13th Avenue, Suite 200 Regina, SK S4P 0W1 Telephone: (306) 757-3575 Toll-free: 1-877-890-3575 Fax: (306) 569-8425	511 1st Avenue N, Unit 5 Saskatoon, SK S7K 1X5 Telephone: (306) 244-3033 Toll-free: 1-800-992-3033 Fax: (306) 664-2016	175 Hargrave Street, Suite 460 Winnipeg, MB R3C 3R8 Telephone: (204) 947-1601 Toll-free: 1-866-393-7722 Fax: (204) 943-0652