



Report of the Alternate REVP to the 2020 PSAC-NCR Triennial Convention  
January 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019  
Prepared December 17<sup>th</sup> 2019

Friends, Sisters, Brothers,

It's been an eventful year together. For myself in my mandate as your A-REVP, 2019 began with continued engagement in the "Heat Is On" campaign to fight plans to privatize downtown-core heating plants, rebuilding the Young Workers Committee with a new executive, organizing a network between DCLs in the region, and a day of action on the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Phoenix fiasco where hundreds of PSAC members mobilized and took to the streets of downtown Ottawa to express our dissatisfaction with the government's insufficient & unacceptable response to fix Phoenix and fairly compensate our members for our financial & emotional hardship.

Ultimately, although hard-fought, the plans to privatize the Cliff Heating Plant proceeded. However I believe we were able to broaden the conversation on privatization at the highest levels of government as well as make a strong stand on the record as the union representing public servants of our fervent opposition to privatization as well as our specific & general concerns with the negative impacts of plans like these to not only jobs but also the irresponsible use of taxpayer funds and dangers to public health & safety.

The Young Workers committee was and remains one of my key priorities as Member-At-Large and I can proudly say we started off 2019 on strong footing with a brand-new executive of dedicated young worker activists. We've emphasized 3 priorities as part of our yearly mandate: 1. Engaging young workers and recruiting new members for the committee, 2. Participating in community actions, and 3. Campaigning against precarious work.

Engaging young workers will remain an ongoing priority for the committee as connecting with our members and developing new activists must always be a chief objective of our union. We've also strengthened interregional ties with young workers across our union in view of collaborating on common goals. On community involvement we've actively participated in fundraising initiatives by the Youth Services Bureau as well as volunteering for breakfast services at Operation Come Home. As for our work on

precarious employment, we've launched a campaign beginning with a survey with the goal of collecting data to eventually building a lobbying campaign.

The network of NCR DCLs has also grown into a fully-fledged regional outreach committee, as adopted at our last regional AGM. The work of this committee will focus on providing support resources to directly chartered local, creating a collaborative body, and promoting both engagement & awareness of DCL members in our union.

As for steps taken since the day of action on Phoenix last February – increasingly, we've turned that dissatisfaction into action.

With our bargaining teams' steadfast determination and our national leadership's resolute commitment to accepting nothing less than the fair compensation our members deserve, we've mobilized with actions & lobbying efforts throughout the year in support of our bargaining teams and achieving the fair contract our members deserve for their hard work and dedication towards serving Canadians.

I've had the great privilege of connecting with members across our union over the last months at various component & local events and meetings. Getting to know workers from diverse backgrounds in the public service. What I've seen the most as a defining common thread is a profound commitment to the important work we do for Canadians.

One of the things I'm proudest of during my mandate was being able to support the striking members of UNDE 639 and DCL 818; Military Base Cleaners at GRN Petawawa and Commissionaires at CFB Kingston. We held rallies for both locals here in Ottawa, raised funds to support their strike efforts, and I was able to make the trip up to Petawawa & Kingston a number of times to walk the piquet lines there. These workers took an admirable stand for the rights of all workers to have access to sick leave, to work in respectful intimidation-free environments, and to have their collective agreements and wages honored by their employer. After 17 weeks and 21 weeks respectively, the strikes ended and the workers returned to their jobs with newly developed shop stewards more unified & stronger than ever.

I've also committed to working closely with our allies in the community & labour. Directly involving myself in campaigns and actions by Ottawa ACORN, \$15 and Fairness, OCAF (Ottawa Coalition Against Ford), the Climate Justice movement, as well as the OFL's Power of Many campaign. I've also joined various actions and piquet lines in solidarity with other unions in the region representing education and healthcare workers, among others. Firmly believing that our strength as a labour movement lies in uniting for fairness & respect for all workers and all people.

I've involved myself with both of our region's political action councils, CRAPO & OAC, especially in the months leading up to the federal election. As a union it's our responsibility to fight for our members' best interests. Political action and engaging

ourselves in ensuring we elect representatives who will stand with workers is one of the most effective ways we can do that. Especially in light of being a public service union, political action and communicating the issues to our members is all that much more important. With this in mind I engaged myself fully in the OAC's phonebanking & canvassing initiatives. I have to say, I've done canvassing before, but I've never had anyone be so happy for me to ring their doorbell at 7 p.m. than when I said I was there from their union. A clear reminder of the importance of directly reaching out to our members one-on-one and that our members want to hear from their union.

I've also had the fortune of involving myself in allyship with our regional equity committees. Proudly participating in the Pride parade, as well as engaging myself in the meetings, actions, and campaigns of all our human rights committees – most recently having the opportunity to help serve up some brunch over the Holidays with the Indigenous Action Circle at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre's Drop-In.

In this period of contract negotiations reaching impasse across 8 national bargaining units (PA, SV, TC, EB, FB, CRA, Parks, CFIA) collectively representing 140,000 members and as of the writing of this report currently at the PIC stage - mobilizing in support of bargaining has increased and strike preparations are in motion with a growing feeling amongst our membership that enough is enough and if need be we will take this government to task to keep their promise to respect the public servants that keep this country running.

For us to win the contract and the compensation we deserve, we need to continue to be vocal & visible in support of our bargaining teams. In the workplace, on social media, in lobbying, and on the streets. So, with that in mind I'm looking forward to starting 2020 prioritizing strike training to put this employer on notice that we will take it there if we need to.

We know that the best way to win a strike is by preparing for a strike and showing this employer that we are united, we have each other's backs, and we will not be bullied or accept anything less than what's fair.

Another priority for me in 2020 will be continuing to do outreach amongst our membership. I've had the great privilege of getting to know members from across our union and our different components and getting to know all these dedicated public servants & labour activists has been one of the most rewarding things about my role as a regional officer. I want to keep getting out there, meeting with members on-the-ground, in their locals, and hearing from them what challenges they are facing. What their priorities, concerns, and goals are, and what they need from their union.

Our strength as a union is in our diversity. Our diversity of experience & skill. Our diversity of background & identity. Our diversity of spirit. Uniting that diversity across our movement is how we win.

Together we can achieve the respect we are due. Together we can make our workplaces healthier & safer environments to do our jobs in.

Together we can obtain fair compensation and damages for 4 years of personal stress & financial instability caused by the Phoenix fiasco. Together we can achieve the fair contract, wage increases, work-life balance enhancements, and collective agreement improvements our members deserve.

Together we can continue to fight for progress in labour and human rights. Together we can mobilize, energize, and strengthen the National Capital Region and have our voices heard and demands met.

United, we can win.

Solidarity,

Alex Silas  
Alternate Regional Executive Vice-President  
Public Service Alliance of Canada – National Capital Region