



CEIU National Executive Votes Unanimously to Run a “NO” Campaign

May 3, 2023

On May 1, 2023, the CEIU National Executive (NE) held a meeting to discuss the PA tentative agreement between our PSAC bargaining team and Treasury Board. Following a lengthy discussion, the NE voted unanimously to run a “NO” vote campaign against the ratification of the proposed tentative agreement.

CEIU leadership is therefore urging our members to vote against the ratification of this collective agreement.

### History

As a result of the pandemic, many CEIU members have been working full time from home. This, combined with the rising cost of inflation, made both the pay salary increases as well as the desire to have enshrined telework language in our collective agreement top priority issues for our Component in this round of collective bargaining. Our union has spent nearly two years negotiating with Treasury Board, until we ultimately held one of the largest strikes in Canadian history, with over 120,000 workers on the picket line for nearly two weeks – the first strike our union has had in over 19 years.

### Tentative Agreement

Although the full language of the agreement has not yet been released, the PSAC has issued a detailed statement. Whereas our members were under the impression that a three-year agreement was being signed, a four-year term was instead agreed to. Our members were adamant that we would not accept 9% over a three-year term – instead, we are being asked to accept, depending on how you do the math, either a little less or a little more than 3% a year for a FOUR-year term, putting our members even further behind on inflation. Many members are also mistaking the lump sum payment of \$2,500 as a signing bonus – this is rather a pensionable one-time lump sum payment that will be taxed.

Many CEIU members were also frustrated to learn that proposed language for telework does not enshrine remote work into our collective agreement – instead, it creates joint union-employer departmental panels that largely rely on the good will of the employer to address issues related to the Treasury Board’s application of the remote work directive.

### Response from our Members

CEIU members have been loudly responsive to the tentative agreement. Our leadership has heard a clear message from an overwhelming number of grassroots members that they do not want our union to accept this agreement.

Over 78% of CEIU members identify as women. We are the most racially diverse union in the federal public sector, and our members are amongst the lowest paid. This tentative agreement does not go far enough to support the most at risk, marginalized employees. Many of our members work second and third jobs, just to make ends meet.



CEIU also recognizes the significance of being the largest component at the largest bargaining table on the continent, and the impact this agreement will have on all workers. We must do better, not only for ourselves, but for the labour movement.

Our members are demanding better, and they are done waiting.

### Moving Ahead

We value the work done to date by the members of our bargaining team, including three of our own members at CEIU. But our leadership must consider the obligation we have to the nearly 36,000 members of CEIU and respond to their demands that our component take a strong position against the ratification of this contract, and urge the bargaining team to go back to the table.

The members of the CEIU NE believe that voting down this agreement will result in applying necessary additional pressure for this government to table more money and be more willing to negotiate other gains – including a better deal on remote work language.

We believe that our PA bargaining team worked towards the best deal that could have been achieved without having another mandate from our membership – it is therefore time to give them a new mandate.

CEIU members did the work. We showed up and led picket lines and stood in solidarity. This agreement disregards the years of work that CEIU members have put in and especially of the 12 days spent on the picket line. This strike was a historic opportunity to make gains for all working people that we cannot waste. We know that our demands are fair and necessary. We cannot accept this agreement.

### Possible Outcomes from a NO Vote

If 51% of members who vote on ratification vote “no,” the agreement will not be ratified. If the agreement is not ratified, the bargaining team will return to the bargaining table to try to reach a new deal, and with the added pressure of further strike action by the union. While another strike is possible, it is not automatic.

We are therefore asking our members to vote NO on the ratification of the PA tentative agreement. If you have further questions, please contact a member of the NE.

In solidarity,

The members of the CEIU National Executive