



FEDERAL ELECTION



On September 20th, 2021 Canadians go to the polls to vote in Canada's 44th general election. Our union has identified eight key areas that should be of interest to you as both voters and public service employees.

- ◆ Healthcare – expanded coverage, more practitioners, and privatization;
- ◆ Climate change/environment – cleaner air, water and land;
- ◆ Affordable child-care – more spaces or direct support;
- ◆ Workers' rights – harassment free work places and better labour rights;
- ◆ A just pandemic recovery – tax fairness, protecting public services, enhancing EI benefits and better sick leave;
- ◆ Indigenous issues – better housing, clean water and reconciliation;
- ◆ Human rights – addressing systemic racism, improved disability benefits, LGBTQ2+ rights and gender equity; and
- ◆ Post-secondary education – accessibility, student debt and sustainable funding.

As federal public servants, we are in a unique position as we are electing the very people who direct policy on job security, pensions and our work life at federal government departments and agencies. We are essentially electing our employer.

Past governments have affected the work that we do by making significant changes to not only tax policy, but how many of us work for the agency, what work we do and how much we are paid – including both raises, wage freezes and even roll backs. Who is elected can affect what we will be making in future years, whether we are even doing the work we do now and whether we have a stable pension for retirement.

PSAC members total over 215,000 workers across the country – this includes us, the almost 30,000 members of the Union of Taxation Employees. In some electoral districts we may have a handful of members, in some - a few hundred members and in some others - thousands.

You can actively participate, outside of work hours, in the election by wearing a button in public, displaying a lawn sign, giving political opinions, working on a campaign, formulating policies, peacefully demonstrating, raising funds for campaigns, attending conventions and running for

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**SI VOUS PRÉFÉREZ RECEVOIR CETTE PUBLICATION EN FRANÇAIS,
VEUILLEZ VOUS ADRESSER À VOTRE PRÉSIDENT- E DE SECTION LOCALE**

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political office. There may be rules and restrictions that may apply to some of these. You may contact your local union representatives for further information.

In the last federal election, there were many ridings that were won by the smallest of margins. Here are the ten closest:



- Yukon – 72 votes;
- Richmond Hill (ON) – 112 votes,
- Quebec – 215 votes;
- Kitchener-Conestoga (ON) – 273 votes;
- Hochelaga – 319 votes (QC);
- Port Moody-Coquitlam (BC) – 333 votes;
- Coquitlam-Port Coquitlam (BC) – 339 votes;
- Miramichi-Grand Lake (NB) – 414 votes;
- Cumberland-Colchester (NS) – 453 votes; and
- Chicoutimi-Le Fjord (QC) – 614 votes

In many of these ridings we have dozens, if not hundreds, of members and their families. UTE members have the ability to influence who is elected and whether they have a majority or a minority in the next Parliament of Canada. It is extremely important that UTE members are vocal and exercise their right to vote. Who gets in, who gets a majority government and who gets a minority government, will all have different impacts on our work life, our future bargaining and economic well being.

As a final note, I want to commend the political action of members across the country – especially our brothers, sisters and friends in Shawinigan, Quebec as they mobilize around the issue of the Quebec Single Tax Return.

*As a reminder to all locals, you are not allowed to spend funds without prior approval of UTE and PSAC as there are strict rules regarding spending during a federal election and all funds must be reported by PSAC.

In Solidarity,

Jamie vanSydenborgh

Regional Vice-President Southwestern Ontario

Chair – UTE Political Action Committee

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sisters, Brothers and Friends,

Summer is coming to an end and I hope you have taken the opportunity to take a well-deserved vacation and spend some quality time with your loved ones. I know that for some of you it has been a difficult summer with the raging forest fires, especially in British Columbia, Manitoba and Northern Ontario. Our hearts go out to the communities affected by these events. That is why the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE) has donated \$10,000 to the Red Cross Forest Fire Relief Fund in British Columbia and \$5,000 to the Ontario Red Cross to help communities in need as a result of the fires.

Since the beginning of 2021, Indigenous communities have been greatly affected by the devastating discoveries of burial sites of Indigenous children stolen from their communities. This has caused us all to step back, reflect and learn. In solidarity, UTE made a \$10,000 donation to Indspire. Indspire is a national Indigenous charity that invests in First Nations, Inuit and Métis education for the long-term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, and Canada.

Since the beginning of the year, we have been quite busy and several issues have come to our attention.

In February, the Minister of National Revenue announced the hiring of 2,000 new call center agents to assist the millions of taxpayers who have received Canada Emergency Benefits in preparing their tax returns. We welcomed this news because our members working in the Agency's call centers were in dire need of these reinforcements. This announcement was a victory for UTE, which has long advocated for more call center agents to better serve Canadians.



On the other hand, the Minister also announced that the CRA had contracted out to a private sector third party service provider, Maximus, a company based in the U.S., to respond to general taxpayer inquiries regarding emergency benefits. UTE and PSAC protested this privatization of public sector jobs and immediately denounced this unfortunate and ill-advised decision.

In March, UTE and PSAC jointly launched the "Uncover the costs" campaign to publicly denounce this privatization of federal public sector jobs.

Despite assurances from the Minister that the contract would not be renewed when it expired, I have been following up closely with the Commissioner of the CRA over the past few months to ensure that this is indeed the case. I am now pleased to confirm that the contract has not been renewed. However, we will need to remain vigilant to combat any future attempts by the employer to outsource jobs.

Over the past few months, we have been following up regularly with the employer to ensure that the implementation of the latest collective agreement is going well and on schedule for both our current and former members.

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NEW DESIGNATED PAID HOLIDAY – PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

As you are likely aware, the Government of Canada has recently proclaimed legislation establishing September 30th as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and creating an additional designated paid holiday for federal public service employees pursuant to clause 30.01(l) of the collective agreement between the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). While this is good news and an additional benefit to our full-time members, it is not as beneficial to our part-time members.

Clause 61.07 of the aforementioned collective agreement states the following:

61.07 A part-time employee shall not be paid for the designated holidays but shall, instead be paid four decimal two five percent (4.25%) for all straight-time hours worked.

This language was incorporated into the collective agreement when there were eleven designated paid holidays enjoyed by our members. With the addition of the newly created twelfth designated paid holiday, part-time employees will now **work** 7.5 hours less and as a result, will receive 4.25% on these fewer hours worked.

Upon realizing the adverse impact on our part-time members, the National Office of the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE) raised the matter with Headquarters representatives of the CRA, requesting that they approach Treasury Board for a positive resolution to this matter. Additionally, UTE reached out to the bargaining agent, the PSAC, to engage Treasury Board in discussions on this matter.

We have now received a response from Treasury Board that they are not prepared to revise the language of the collective agreement at this time.

As the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily in this forum, UTE will address the matter during the upcoming round of negotiations.



D. Shane O'Brien
Senior Labour Relations Officer

GETTING READY, OUR NEXT ROUND OF BARGAINING WILL SOON BEGIN

Friends,

It is that time when we are about to start bargaining our contract once again. We were able to achieve incredible gains during the last round even though it took much longer than we would have preferred, but your resilience, your solidarity, and your commitment to public service during a pandemic were all factors to a successful, albeit drawn out bargaining process.



The benefits we were able to secure were as result of local activists and workers submitting demands that we advanced at the table. Yet again we have an ongoing process but one that is soon ending as we are getting ready to start the process. Locals have until October 1st to submit up to 10 bargaining demands. As members it is you who would have the most knowledge in identifying problems in your new work environment and as such, we need your input through demands that highlight a problem and propose solutions. These can be submitted to your local executive who will forward them on. Please reach out to your representatives who can help you prepare and submit your demands.

Our Work/Life has changed dramatically for everyone, and this should be reflected in improvements to any newly negotiated contract. To put it mildly our last round was about work/life balance and this one will be exponentially more important.

After we receive the demands the Bargaining Committee will put together a final package of demands. Subsequently a Bargaining Team will be chosen, and we will begin to set up dates to present the final package and begin bargaining with the employer.

Like the last rounds, there is no easy and fast round. We will always endeavour to conclude as soon as possible, but we must also be clear about the obstacles ahead. On the employer's side, they are beholden to the Treasury Board on many items and protocols for approval or denial at the table. We do not have such restrictions; our team has the authority to deal with the issues at hand. In that vein make no mistake that the current election is your opportunity to exercise your voice at the door, and at the ballot box on whom you wish to be in the government role in charge of the other side of the table. You are in the unique position of getting to help make that choice, take advantage of your power to do so as we are only as strong as our numbers in solidarity. If anything has proven that to be true it would be the last couple of rounds where the membership exercised their power and finalized the contracts, we now live with.

Let's get ready with a solid package of demands and unity in ensuring we are recognized for our hard work both during the pandemic and into the future.

In Solidarity forever,

Adam Jackson
2nd National Vice President (Bargaining)

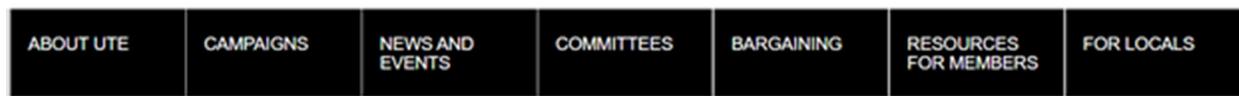
KEEPING CONNECTED

With the pandemic and the introduction of working from home for a significant majority of our membership, keeping connected with our friends, family, coworkers, and the union has become a very challenging and daunting task.

No doubt many of you reading this article may have been hired after mid-to late March 2020. There is a good chance that you, unfortunately, have never been introduced to your local executives and stewards. Conversely it is equally difficult for locals and UTE to communicate both effectively and in a timely manner with our membership. While UTE has a Facebook page and sends out information via email to all of our members who have signed up for it, we know those methods still fail to reach a fairly significant segment of our membership.

This article will provide members information on how to find out who the members of the local executive and stewards are in your particular local as well as contact information should you need to get a hold of a union representative. The path is quite easy and will be spelt out below.

The UTE website is www.ute-sei.org, from there you can choose the English or French version of the website. On the home page you will see the following banner:



On this banner click on ABOUT UTE, this opens another page that on the left-hand side there is a list of seven options, the second last is titled “locals”.

Once you click on that it brings up a webpage that lists the ten geographic regions by which UTE is divided.

Atlantic - this includes all locals located within the Atlantic provinces

Greater Toronto Region - this includes the locals located within the Greater Toronto Region plus the local located in the city of Barrie.

Montréal - this includes locals from the following locations; Laval, Montérégie South Shore, Montréal, Outaouais, Rouyn-Noranda and Sherbrooke.

Northern/Eastern Ontario - this includes locals from the following locations: Belleville, Kingston, Peterborough, Sudbury and Thunder Bay.

Pacific - this includes all locals located within the province of British Columbia

Prairie - this includes the Winnipeg Tax Centre, Winnipeg TSO, Winnipeg CCSC site, and the Regina TSO.

Québec - this includes locals from the following locations: Chicoutimi, Jonquière, Québec City, Shawinigan, and Trois Rivières.

Rocky Mountains - this includes locals from the following locations: Edmonton, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, the Calgary TSO, and the Calgary Call Centre.

South Western Ontario - this includes locals from the following locations: Hamilton, Kitchener, London, St. Catharines, and Windsor.

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National Capital Region - this includes all locals located in the National Capital Region.

Clicking on any local will provide a list of the members of the local executive and stewards, this also includes telephone numbers and, in some cases, a direct link to send an email to the local executive member. This email can be sent directly through the UTE webpage where the member needs to provide their name, phone number, email address (preferably a non-CRA email address), telephone number, and the preferred method of contact (via email or telephone). There is room for the member to provide information on the reason for the contact or the question being posed to the local executive.

In most cases finding your local is just a matter of finding your city within the region. In some cases, however, there can be many locals within a city. Each local's page also brings up the physical address where members report to work, in order to provide members with more clarity on whether they are indeed contacting the correct local.

Hopefully, this information will provide the membership with clear directions on how to get a hold of a member of the local who represents them and their interests.

Gary Esslinger
Chair of the Communications Committee

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In March, our members received general compensation for the failures of the Phoenix payroll system. Unfortunately, the federal government decided to tax these payments based on an interpretation by the Canada Revenue Agency. The PSAC and its Components intend to appeal this decision, which we believe to be wrong. In addition, former PSAC members, including those from UTE, are still waiting to receive the money they are owed because the form they are required to complete has not yet been made available by Treasury Board. This form should be available online shortly. We find this delay unacceptable. We have been lobbying the political decision-makers to get this issue resolved. I would like to point out that several current UTE members, who are term employees, are among those who have not received the general compensation. This is because they were not employed by the employer at the time the agreement was signed between the PSAC and Treasury Board on October 23, 2020. This situation is deplorable but there is nothing we can do about it.



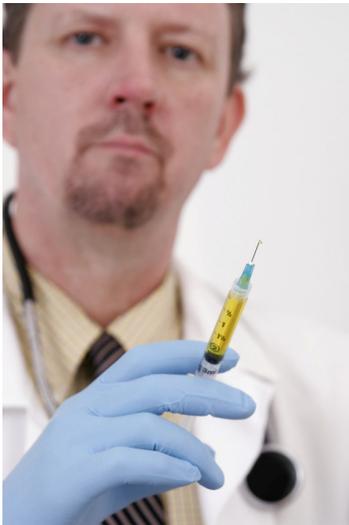
In May, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the remedy for the delay in implementing the new Clause 60.01 of the new collective agreement for call center employees.

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In July, we signed another Memorandum of Understanding regarding the issue of the hours of work in the Assessment, Benefit, Service Branch (ABSB) call centers. The parties agreed to establish a joint working group to implement the agreement.

Also in July, we were finally able to hold our Triennial Convention after having to delay it for a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The convention took place virtually and I am very pleased to report that everything went very well considering the circumstances. Once again, the delegates present renewed their confidence in me by re-electing me as UTE National President for a two (2) year term. I am very honoured and I would like to thank them warmly for their continued support and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our union representatives for their involvement and their great dedication to our members. I would also like to wish the best of success to all the other officers who were elected during convention and I promise you that you can count on my support throughout your term of office.



I look forward to continuing to work closely with the officers of the Executive Council as well as our Locals in order to advocate fiercely on behalf of all our members. I pledge again to serve you to the best of my ability and to spare no effort.

We will face new challenges. We will soon be returning to the bargaining table and we are feverishly preparing for that. Our bargaining committee and bargaining team will be in place shortly to complete our package of demands and establish our priorities. We are also continuing our discussions with the employer regarding the possible gradual return of more and more employees to the Agency's premises. And we will be watching for the possibility that the federal government may try to impose mandatory vaccination on all employees. Rest assured that nothing will be put in place until the new government is sworn in and we will be consulted before anything is decided.

Dear members, I thank you for your support and invite you to contact any of your local union representatives if you have a problem or question as they are there to assist you.

I look forward to serving you over the next two years.

In Solidarity,

Marc Brière
National President

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that all address changes should be done via e-mail to Louise Dorion (dorionl@ute-sei.org) or via the national web site. If you do not have access to an e-mail, please pass it on (with your PSAC ID) to a local representative or mail it directly to the National Office at 233 Gilmour Street, Suite 800, Ottawa ON K2P 0P2.



ELECTION RESULTS

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND ALTERNATES

Marc Brière

National President

Doug Gaetz

1st National Vice-President

Adam Jackson

2nd National Vice-President

Kimberley Koch

Regional Vice-President
Pacific Region

(Alternate RVP - Sharon Cowie)

Greg Krokosh

Regional Vice-President
Rocky Mountains Region

(Alternate RVP - Trixie Gorzo)

Gary Esslinger

Regional Vice-President
Prairies Region

(Alternate RVP - Wanda Dufty)

Jamie vanSydenborgh

Regional Vice-President
Southwestern Ontario Region

(Alternate RVP - Jennifer MacPherson)

Cosimo Crupi

Regional Vice-President
Northern and Eastern Ontario Region

(Alternate RVP - Chris Foucault)

Andria Cullen

Regional Vice-President
Greater Toronto Region

(Alternate RVP - Selby Hewitt)

David Lanthier

Regional Vice-President
National Capital Region

(Alternate RVP - Richard Weintrager)

Eddy Aristil

Regional Vice-President
Montréal Region

(Alternate RVP - Kristine Leclerc)

Jérôme Martel

Regional Vice-President
Québec Region

(Alternate RVP - Marc-André Gobeil)

Brian Oldford

Regional Vice-President
Atlantic Region

(Alternate RVP - Darlene Bembridge)



CRA 2021 WORKPLACE CHARITABLE CAMPAIGN

The CRA will be holding its Workplace Charitable Campaign again this fall.

UTE continues to support this campaign wholeheartedly.

Our national officers will participate in the launch and promotion of the 2021 Charitable Campaign with senior officials from the CRA. Our Regional Vice-Presidents will do the same with their regional counterparts. I strongly encourage our Locals to participate as well.

Of course, we once again encourage our members to be generous by continuing to contribute to charities.

They can donate through the CRA's 2021 Charitable Campaign or directly to the United Way or to the UTE's charitable organization of choice, namely International Children's Awareness (ICA) Canada (see below).

Together, let's keep making a difference in peoples' lives!

For further details about this, please contact one of the members of your local executive.



INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AWARENESS (ICA) CANADA

International Children's Awareness (ICA) Canada is a small, non-profit organization dedicated to the long-term development throughout countries in need. At any one time, ICA has multiple projects on the go and is attempting to obtain funding to undertake other projects. ICA's projects help small communities and families in developing nations.

ICA is a registered Canadian charity (registration no. 887858660RR0001). The organization is staffed entirely by volunteers, which means that all donations go towards the projects, not to salaries or administration costs.

We would like to ask our members to support this worthy organization by donating directly to ICA Canada or as part of the CRA 2021 Charitable Campaign.

In Solidarity,

Marc Brière
National President

WE ARE BACK

After a nine-month hiatus and many queries from our membership, “Whatever happened to the newsletter?” Welcome to the September 2021 edition of Union News.

The last nine months have been incredibly hectic for everyone involved in the union. As many may have experienced themselves, doing things virtually tends to take almost twice as long to accomplish. Much of this is the reality that we are a national organization, with members from coast to coast, spanning multiple time zones. This played a significant role in the amount of time required to get things done.

The pandemic resulted in all PSAC Regional conventions and the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE) Triennial National Convention being postponed until 2021. This combined with an effort to return to some degree of normalcy within UTE via virtual meetings, stretched the committee’s ability to produce a newsletter. However, WE ARE BACK.

A feature that appears quite regularly in the Union News is providing members clarification and insight into clauses within our collective agreement. With a new agreement signed this past year, the committee will endeavour to provide information useful to the membership.

Shane O’Brien, the Senior Labour Relations Officer for UTE has submitted two articles, both of which are timely and important; one relating to our part-time members, and one directed at our members working in call centres.

Gary Esslinger
Chair of the Communications Committee

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR CALL CENTRE MEMBERS

Off Phone Time

During the last round of collective bargaining, your Union, the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE), was successful in negotiating a provision to assist Call Centre members in enjoying a reprieve from the continuous engagement of responding to enquiries and requests for assistance from taxpayers. The following clause was agreed to during bargaining by the UTE and the employer (the CRA):

60.01 Employees working in call centres shall be provided five (5) consecutive minutes not on a call for each hour not interrupted by a regular break or meal period.



Although this clause was to have been given effect as of the date of signing of the collective agreement (November 13, 2020), the employer delayed the implementation of this provision. Accordingly, UTE immediately engaged in discussions with the employer to ensure compliance with the collective agreement and to provide remedy to members as a result of the late implementation of this clause resulting in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on this matter. The remedy in this MOA included the immediate implementation of this clause, as well as an allotment of 275 minutes not on a call to be used for professional and skill development activities.

Notwithstanding the conclusion of this MOA, representatives from UTE and the CRA continues discussions on this matter with a view to establishing guidelines on the use of this Off Phone Time. At the time of the writing of this article, draft guidelines have been created by the employer and approved by UTE.

UTE encourages our Call Centre members to avail of this newly negotiated provision and to speak with a local Union representative should they have any concerns or questions.

Hours of Work/Work Schedules

The Union of Taxation Employees (UTE) has engaged in a series of consultations with Headquarters representatives of the employer over the last several months with respect to the issue of Hours of Work in the employer's Assessment, Benefit and Services Branch (ABSB) Call Centres. More specifically, UTE has opposed the matters of the employer's unilateral assignment of hours of work (including extended hours), the implementation of a Tuesday to Saturday schedule, scheduling of work on Saturdays with unpaid overtime, the decision of the employer to schedule Day Workers to Shift Work, and issues of compensation surrounding these matters. Throughout these consultations, UTE was committed to protecting the rights of our members and ensuring compliance with the collective agreement.

On an interim basis, however, we have agreed to a Tuesday to Saturday schedule for new hires where such schedule is advertised on the Notice of Employment Opportunity and where this schedule is listed as a condition of employment for new hires. We have not agreed to such a schedule for existing employees and have insisted that if current employees are scheduled to work on Saturdays, the appropriate rate of overtime compensation must be paid.

Following these consultations, the parties have reached an agreement in principle which effectively addresses our concerns and allows the employer, within the confines of the collective agreement, to schedule hours of work to meet their operational needs. More specifically, the parties have agreed that the most effective instrument to address each of our issues and concerns are the provisions of clause 25.23 of the collective agreement with respect to Variable Shift Schedule Arrangements (VSSA).

To conclude our discussions in this matter and execute the terms of our agreement in principle, the parties have agreed to the creation of a joint task force to review and analyse the issues surrounding the implementation of VSSA, including but not limited to, the provisions of the collective agreement, employee preferences, the operational needs of the employer with respect to call volumes, service requirements and extended hours, and other such matters. The parties have also agreed that we would also collaborate in the creation of guidelines for the implementation and administration of the VSSA provisions of the collective agreement.

Even though the clause pertaining to VSSA schedules have been in the collective agreement for some time, they have not been applied to our members previously and it will take some time to identify all of the issues and details concerning this matter before implementation. The parties have committed to addressing this matter as a priority and will be earnestly dealing with this matter over the coming months.

D.Shane O'Brien
Senior Labour Relations Officer