

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour

# LABOUR REPORTER

THE VOICE OF SASKATCHEWAN'S WORKING FAMILIES SINCE 1956



SPRING  
2016

• ELECT A GOVERNMENT THAT LISTENS •



## LABOUR MOVEMENT LAUNCHES AMBITIOUS ELECTION CAMPAIGN

THE SASKATCHEWAN FEDERATION OF Labour is leading a province-wide campaign to engage and inform voters and make the case that the Sask. Party just isn't listening.

"After nearly a decade of a government that attack our Charter-protected rights, wasted a resource boom, racked-up huge amounts of debt, and is now giving away Saskatchewan Crown Corporations and slashing the province's health care and education services, it's time to elect a worker- and community-friendly government – a government that actually listens," said SFL president Larry Hubich.

Building on campaigns that the SFL has done during previous provincial elections, this initiative not only seeks to provide information

to voters on issues, but also point to the reason Saskatchewan people are seeing their Crowns disappear and having such a hard time making ends meet: the Sask. Party doesn't understand how difficult things are, and they aren't listening to what voters have to say.

"As an organization the SFL is non-partisan. However, whenever governments aren't doing their job – no matter what political party is in power – as an advocacy organization we have a responsibility to say so," said Hubich. "So, yes, we will be having important conversations with the voters of Saskatchewan about what kind of values they think their provincial government should have."

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As an organization the SFL is non-partisan. However, whenever governments aren't doing their job – no matter what political party is in power – as an advocacy organization we have a responsibility to say so. — **LARRY HUBICH** | SFL PRESIDENT



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“The Sask. Party is slashing funding to valuable public services, creating two-tier health care, and making it impossible for seniors to get the care they need. Things are really bad out there, and we will be working hard to elect worker- and community-friendly MLAs.”

Based on robust research and consultation, the SFL has narrowed in on four main issues that voters have indicated are important to them: health and seniors care, education, privatization, and the rising cost of living.

“We’ve all heard the horror stories that are becoming more and more common. We know there are seniors in long-term care right now in this province – perhaps a parent, grandparent, or loved one – that does not get weekly baths, does not get checked adequately for bedsores, and does not receive the level of care they need,” said Hubich.

“The problem is not that health providers in those facilities aren’t doing their jobs – the problem is that there isn’t enough funding to increase the number of staff to a safe level and there are no legislated care standards,” he added.

On education the situation is just as dire. A recent academic study by Dr. David McGrane from St. Thomas Moore College at the University of Saskatchewan showed that the Sask. Party has underfunded education in the province by \$2.4 billion from 2008-2014.

“I think students, parents, and educational staff are seeing the impacts of under-funding in our schools every single day. The Sask. Party isn’t listening to what those groups of people are saying,” said Hubich, “we know there are schools with crumbling roofs, class sizes are getting bigger and bigger, cuts have been made to educational assistants, and now the Sask. Party is using our money to build 18 privatized schools that will be operated by for-profit corporations – on top of all that, even these new rent-a-schools will require makeshift portable classrooms due to poor planning,” he added.



SGEU president Bob Bymoen talks to voters about supporting public services.

Privatization is also an issue hitting people hard. Privatization is the contracting out of public services, and the selling-off or dismantling of Crown corporations and other public assets. It means the benefits of those services and assets get shipped overseas or given to out-of-province corporations, and it means that family-supporting careers get replaced with fewer, part-time, minimum wage jobs. Despite receiving one of the largest petitions in the province's history – the pro-public services Own it! petition – the Sask. Party is still giving away public services and Crown corporations to out-of-province corporations.

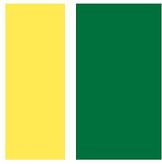
“This Sask. Party government has embarked on one of the most aggressive and dangerous privatization agendas we’ve ever seen,” said Hubich, “they are completely selling the farm. The Sask. Party is privatizing prisons, correctional food services, hospitals, hospital laundry services, our public liquor stores, they’ve allowed

American-style privatized MRIs, they are even building a \$2 billion road around the City of Regina – a privatized road,” he added.

Now, after a decade of high oil and resource revenue and a growth economy, Saskatchewan people are realizing they did not see the benefits of that boom and are having a hard time even making ends meet.

“Our research indicates that two-thirds of Saskatchewan people are hurting from the rising costs of living. It’s shocking that, after being told for 10 years about how good things are, that people can’t even pay for the rising cost of food, their power bills, or their phone bills,” said Hubich. “These problems are a direct result of decisions made by the Sask. Party government. Once again they refused to listen to what people had to say,” he added.

The provincial election takes place April 4th, and people can volunteer and pledge their vote at [www.notlistening.ca](http://www.notlistening.ca).



# OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR VOTES, OUR REPRESENTATIVES

**BY CHRISTINE MILLER**

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR—SEIU-WEST

LAST FALL, THERE WAS a lot of buzz about Community-Based Organization (CBO) workers.

In October, the annual SFL Convention passed a resolution that commits to lobbying provincial MLAs and candidates during the upcoming provincial election to ensure that CBOs receive predictable and adequate long-term funding.

The following month, CBO workers gathered in Regina to celebrate their work, share knowledge and strategize for the coming year. Conference attendees Andrea Schad and Trish Patey (both SGEU members) shared their compelling work experiences through the ‘CBO Live Talks’ format.

Participants also heard from many speakers, including Norm and Annette Phillips who shared their experience of dealing with Norm’s Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Santos Garcia described his experience as a political refugee, the discrimination he faced, and how he became a community leader and an advocate for diversity.

But the most interesting and most talked about speaker had to be Larry Hubich, our very own SFL President. As he gave his greetings to the crowd, he looked over at Don Morgan, the Minister of Labour, and stated that CBO funding was going to be an election issue this spring. It was interesting to see the minister squirm in his seat a little as he realized that the working people in this province are tired of the way they handle our tax dollars.

On April 4th, our job is to elect representatives who will take care of our province and will put our hard-earned money to work for all of us—not just corporate sponsors. But our job doesn’t end on E-day. Regardless of the make-up of our next legislative assembly, we



need to keep communicating with our elected representatives throughout their time in office to ensure they remain committed to our issues like ensuring reliable long-term funding for our CBOs.

It’s no secret that CBOs have been underfunded for years by successive governments. Even though these organizations deliver valuable services to some of the most vulnerable people in our society, the government hasn’t made a meaningful commitment to stable funding and expects CBOs to do more with less.

As our CBO Committee plans for 2016, we hope that our brothers and sisters in the labour movement will help us elect a government that is responsible to the people that elect them. Help magnify our voices to ensure that our MLAs put the best interest of our communities ahead of corporate greed and personal gain.

Remember, voting is a right. Being an elected MLA is a privilege. Vote for the person who should have the honour of representing you in the legislature.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## WHY WE CAMPAIGN



**BY KENT PETERSON**

SFL STRATEGIC ADVISOR

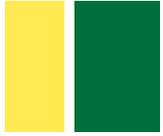
SOMETIMES WE ARE ALL so invested in advocating for workers, building stronger communities, and working on the ground that we can overlook exactly why it is we campaign – specifically, in this case, why we’re campaigning to elect a better government on April 4th.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) has a mandate to fulfill. We are obligated to advance the causes of working people, fight for our collective rights, and demand that any government do better to protect the interests of workers and community members.

Another reason is so we can build our organizing capacity. By training members and giving folks a chance to be politically involved we are making our unions and labour movement stronger. People who take training courses, do leaflet drops, go canvassing, and talk about issues to coworkers and neighbours are more likely to lead committees, run for leadership positions, organize volunteers, lead a strike action, and stand up for each other in workplaces. This is all about building our organizing capacity and strengthening our unions.

A final reason is to elect worker- and community-friendly governments. The SFL as an organization is non-partisan. But we have an obligation to push back against governments that are doing a poor job – no matter what political party is in power. We have, right now, a provincial government that has attacked workers for nearly a decade, took away our rights, privatized our services, mismanaged our economy, and now we’re facing massive layoffs in a stunning way. The Sask. Party is doing a poor job and we have a responsibility to say so. Not just say so, but to organize to ensure a better government gets elected.

Visit [www.notlistening.ca](http://www.notlistening.ca) to pledge your vote.



# THE SASK. PARTY: THEY

After a wasted boom, the Sask. Party cuts, cuts, cuts

THE SASKATCHEWAN ECONOMY was booming for a decade. So why are they cutting services and making life tougher, especially for families, the elderly, and the poor? When it comes to seniors care, health care and education, the Sask. Party just isn't listening.

Our seniors deserve better. The headlines speak for themselves:

“6000 seniors removed from province’s drug plan” (CBC news, March 18, 2015);

“Significant increase in complaints about seniors care, says ombudsman” (CTV News, Jan. 2, 2015);

“Seniors care homes understaffed” (CTV News, March 17, 2015).

The Sask. Party is just not listening. Not listening to the needs of our seniors, and not listening to the long line of people waiting for care at our hospitals and doctors’ offices.

What about that promise to eliminate emergency room waiting times? They’ve scrapped it, with no explanation.

The Sask. Party also promised to reduce wait times for specialists – instead wait times have grown to almost a year in some places. They promised to reduce surgical wait times – instead they’ve grown by 67 per cent in Saskatoon and a staggering 145 per cent in Regina.

It’s not enough for the Sask. Party to say the province is in good shape if people aren’t feeling it in their own lives. When are they going to listen?

What about our kids? The Sask. Party has cut over 350 educational assistants from our schools, at a time when far too many classrooms have 35 or more kids. They’re also cutting millions from our colleges and universities – our youth will have a harder time getting the training they need right when we have a skills shortage.

Enough is enough. We need a government that listens and a government that works for all of us.

**The Sask. Party: they’re just not listening.**



**#NO LISTENING**

# 'RE JUST NOT LISTENING



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## The Sask. Party is out of touch: wasted money, no accountability

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THE SASK. PARTY IS OUT OF TOUCH. They're not paying attention to the needs of real people like you and me. If they're not listening to us, who are they listening to? The Sask. Party has more than doubled spending on consultants—over \$120 million each year. For what? Life doesn't seem to be getting any easier after all that high-priced advice.

For example, the Sask. Party is now sending our hospital laundry to Alberta ... a move that resulted in hundreds of lost jobs that will also cost taxpayers an extra \$30 million. To make matters worse, the laundry is coming back from Alberta "dirty, smelly and damaged." It just doesn't make sense.

Why is the Sask. Party spending so much time listening to consultants, and so little time listening to the needs of ordinary people like you and me?

Is our education system working better after all that expensive advice? Not so much. Too many of our schools are crumbling and overcrowded. New schools are desperately needed in some communities, but 68 portable classrooms are planned for schools that haven't even been built yet. And all because the government auctioned off school construction to the most expensive bidder.

The Sask. Party has said for years that our economy is strong. If that's the case, why are they cutting so many corners? And why aren't they going to table a budget before going to the polls in April? It seems like they don't want to let the public in on big decisions that affect us all.

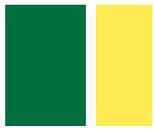
It's not enough for the Sask. Party to say the province is in good shape, if people aren't feeling it in their own lives. When are they going to listen?

Enough is enough. We need a government that listens and a government that works for all of us.

**The Sask. Party: they're just not listening.**



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**IN 2007,** THE SASK. PARTY PROMISED NOT TO PRIVATIZE CROWNS. BUT THEY'VE BROKEN THAT PROMISE BY UNDERMINING SASKTEL, SASKPOWER, AND PRIVATIZING PUBLIC SERVICES.




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## The Sask. Party is selling our services & privatizing Crown Corporations

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HERE IN SASKATCHEWAN we believe in looking out for each other. We want to make sure everyone has access to services they need no matter where we live or how much we earn. And most of all, we want a better future for our kids and grand-kids. That's why we built our Crown Corporations and our public services.

So why is the Sask. Party selling off our public assets to the highest private bidder?

When it comes to our Crowns and privatization, the Sask Party just isn't listening to us. And if they're not listening to us, who are they listening to? Two thirds of us believe privatization will make things less equal in this province. That's one big reason we want our government to protect our Crown Corporations and public services.

But the Sask. Party is doing the exact opposite.

They sold off parts of our Crown Corporations, like Sask-Tel's internet services and e-mail;

Schools, hospitals and roads are being built under private ownership or control – like the Regina bypass and its \$1.9 billion price tag;

Hospital laundry and correctional food services are being handed over to private operators who cut corners;

Our profitable liquor stores could be soon sold off to private vendors;

They're allowing private MRI clinics, so people can pay extra to jump the queue.

Back in 2007, the Sask. Party made a promise not to privatize Crowns. But they've broken that promise by undermining SaskTel, SaskPower, and privatizing public services. Why should we believe them now?

It's not enough for the Sask. Party to say they're protecting our Crowns if we're seeing our Crowns weakened and costs going up. When is the Sask. Party going to listen?

Enough is enough. We need a government that listens and a government that works for all of us.

**The Sask. Party: they're just not listening.**





IN 2015, **74 PERCENT** OF OUR FOOD BANKS REPORTED AN INCREASED USAGE. MORE AND MORE OF THEIR CLIENTS ARE SENIORS AND STUDENTS.

## Rising cost of living hurts two-thirds of Saskatchewan people

A LOT OF PEOPLE are struggling to get by these days. But our costs keep going up, especially our utility bills. Why do we keep getting charged more for basic services? When it comes to the cost of living in Saskatchewan, the Sask. Party just doesn't seem to be listening. And if they're not listening to us, just who are they listening to?

It's not enough for the Sask. Party to say the province is in good shape, if people aren't feeling it in their own lives.

Two-thirds of Saskatchewan residents believe the government needs to take action on cost of living. But what has the Sask. Party done? In the last three years SaskPower rates alone have gone up more than 15 percent.

Enough is enough. We need a government that listens, and a government that works for all of us.

Utilities, tuition fees, seniors care, health care supplies... the list of rising costs goes on and on. Not to mention the fact that the cost of housing and food continues to climb too. For far too many of us, just making ends meet is a struggle. As a result, more and more people in this province are struggling with poverty. Food banks and shelters report alarming increases in people needing help. In 2015, 74 percent of our food banks reported an increased usage. More and more of their clients are seniors and students.

Enough is enough. We need a government that listens and a government that works for all of us.

**The Sask. Party: they're just not listening.**



SEND PREMIER BRAD WALL A MESSAGE ON APRIL 4: WE NEED A GOVERNMENT THAT LISTENS AND WORKS FOR ALL OF US.

### SFL Young Workers' Conference



This conference for young trade unionists will be held April 29-30 in Saskatoon. Early bird deadline is April 1. To learn more or to register, visit [sfl.sk.ca/events/conferences](http://sfl.sk.ca/events/conferences).



### SFL Pensions Conference



This conference on pension issues will be held May 3-4 in Regina. Early bird deadline is April 6. To learn more or to register, visit [sfl.sk.ca/events/conferences](http://sfl.sk.ca/events/conferences).

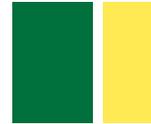




### BREAD AND ROSES ... AND TWITTER:

If you want your union's handle, or your handle, added to this list simply tweet as such to [@SKFedLabour](https://twitter.com/SKFedLabour).

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|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| @ActivistKent   | @LJohb           | @SKFedLabour    |
| @Bymoan         | @MSHladun        | @SUNnurses      |
| @CanadianLabour | @OwnYourSask     | @Thebaud        |
| @CLCSask        | @PrezCape        | @TracyZam       |
| @COPE397        | @PSACprairies    | @TriaDonaldson  |
| @CUPEsask       | @PurpleWorksSEIU | @UFCW649        |
| @DeniseLDick    | @SaskSpark       | @UFCWCanada1400 |
| @JudyHenley1    | @SGEU            | @Unifor1S       |
| @KLQbn          | @SGEUMary        | @jx5yak         |
| @LHubich        | @Shobna Radons   | @ATULocal615    |



### Unions of Regina Christmas Dinner has another successful year

On Dec. 21, for the 15th straight year, the unions of Regina through the Regina & District Labour Council (RDLC) have teamed up with the United Way Regina (UWR) and the Delta Regina hotel to host the annual Unions of Regina Christmas Dinner. The more than 1600 guests were treated to a full holiday meal, treats, and gifts delivered by Santa himself. Agencies of the UWR were provided with tickets to distribute to their patrons.

The dinner is funded by the unions in the Regina area and about 150 of their members came out to help put on the event. Additionally, the catering staff of the hotel, members of UNIFOR 651 gave of their time to cook and serve the meal. Thank you to the New Democratic Party (NDP) MLAs and Candidates who joined the volunteers to help serve our guests. Thanks as well to IMCF (Indian Métis Christian Fellowship) who provided children's outfits donated by an anonymous private patron for our guests and their families.

The event was held at the Delta Regina in the Raphael Ballroom. This Marriot hotel has provided the room free of charge every year for this event since its inception and their support of this event is invaluable.



Christmas Dinner volunteers at the Delta Regina

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

<b>March 8</b>	International Women's Day	
<b>March 20</b>	Shift work Recognition Day	
<b>March 21</b>	Int'l Day for Elimination of Racism	
<b>March 22</b>	World Water Day	
<b>April 4</b>	Provincial election	
<b>April 13</b>	Day of Pink	
<b>April 18-22</b>	SFL/CLC Spring School	Elk Ridge
<b>April 22</b>	Earth Day	
<b>April 28</b>	International Day of Mourning	
<b>April 28</b>	YDLC Annual General Meeting	

<b>April 29-30</b>	SFL Young Workers' Conference / Youth Action Summit	Saskatoon
<b>April 30</b>	RDLC Annual General Meeting	Regina
<b>May 1</b>	International Worker's Day (May Day)	
<b>May 3-4</b>	SFL Pension Conference	Regina
<b>May 10</b>	MJDLC Annual General Meeting	Moose Jaw
<b>May 17</b>	Int'l Day Against Homophobia	
<b>June 12-16</b>	Prairie School for Union Women	Waskesiu
<b>June 21</b>	Aboriginal Awareness Day	

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