

COMMUNIQUE

Canadian Union of Postal Workers
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‘Equality is the law, not an award’: Pay equity for rural carriers not a case for arbitration: CUPW

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OTTAWA- Postal workers have politely declined a suggestion from federal Minister of Labour MaryAnn Mihychuk to bring negotiations with Canada Post management to binding arbitration, saying it's a matter of principle.

“We appreciate the offer to help, but paying women equally for work of equal value is the law of the land; it's not something that can be awarded or withheld by an arbitrator,” said Mike Palecek, national president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

The union is demanding that Canada Post create an hourly wage for rural and suburban mail carriers, 70% of whom are women. They currently earn on average almost 30% less than their mostly male counterparts in the larger urban unit.

Palecek noted that Canada Post fought a major pay equity claim for 28 years, all the way to the Supreme Court, where it was eventually ordered to pay an estimated \$250 million settlement in 2011. It's still looking for some of those women, some of whom have passed away.

“Wouldn't it be easier, not to mention cheaper, for them to just do the right thing now so rural and suburban carriers don't have to wait?” said Palecek.

The Special Committee on Pay Equity recently recommended proactive pay equity legislation, which puts the onus on employers so that workers aren't forced to fight wage discrimination in the court system. Canada Post has refused to conduct any investigations or studies to determine if it is in compliance with the pay equity legislation. Palecek said that postal workers don't want to wait for years for legislation to settle the matter.

The union remains hopeful it can reach a negotiated settlement and encourages people to keep using the mail system and participate in the Liberal task force and review for the post office's future.

“Our members want to work and keep delivering good service to all Canadians. We want to expand our valuable postal service and safeguard it for the public,” Palecek said.

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