

As your President, I have focused this year on key priority areas that reflect my vision of PIPSC as a member-oriented organization ready to tackle the challenges ahead.

These focus areas include first and foremost to ensure our members' conditions are improved, protected and defended, through collective bargaining, labour relations and consultation.

To continue to grow as a union, we need to improve member engagement and awareness. PIPSC must have an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion perspective on our policies and activities to ensure we are a union for all members.

As I have said from day one, I am committed to proactive communication with all members and our constituent bodies. The more we can work together, the stronger we will be as a union.

I'm very proud of all that we have been able to accomplish this year, and confident that we have a strong foundation from which to grow.

Back to the Workplace

Our members have shown we can work remotely effectively. We need to see presence in the office linked to purpose; nobody needs to travel to work to sit alone online all day.

Regardless of who your employer is, PIPSC is working to ensure that any formal return to workplace policies are provided in writing – and that members returning to their workplaces have the rules and tools needed to keep them healthy and safe.

While employers have the legal right to require employee presence in the workplace, PIPSC is advocating for return to workplace policies that meet our core principles. We need to ensure that access to hybrid and telework arrangements is provided equitably, accommodates member preferences, and is approved without bias or unreasonable criteria.

PIPSC is here to support members who would like to request an accommodation or file a grievance.

Bargaining

Your negotiation teams are working hard for you. We will be negotiating 33 contracts over the next 2 years. Our top priorities will be negotiating a fair wage settlement, recognizing the pressure inflation is putting on us all.

Telework and leave requirements are also top of mind. We are bracing for a difficult round, and all our federal public service groups are working hard together.

After intense negotiations, the Chalk River Professional Employees Group bargaining team has signed a tentative agreement with Canadian Nuclear Laboratories.

Recently, PIPSC was able to secure new financial support for some nurses working in Northern and remote communities, but so much more needs to be done.

Protecting Your Pensions

Federal Budget 2022 announced an expansion of the Public Sector Pension Investment Board to include union representatives. This is a positive step for which PIPSC has long advocated.

More of a voice for unions as your representatives will ensure the best interests for your financial future are always top of mind.

Pay Systems

Phoenix has caused hundreds of thousands of pay errors, leaving tens of thousands of Canadian public service workers underpaid, overpaid, or not paid at all. I know this far too well as a victim of Phoenix myself.

To add insult to injury, many of our members are now being told they have overpayments that need to be reconciled while they still have unanswered questions about the accuracy of their pay.

The recovery process for Phoenix overpayments was launched in the fall of 2021. While some members have received an overpayment letter accurately representing an overpayment amount, many have faced numerous issues with the process.

PIPSC has filed policy grievances due to the employer's coercive approach to recovering overpayments. Members who need assistance in resolving their pay issues should contact our Phoenix Help team.

The government has publicly committed to working with our members to design and build a pay system that works (NextGen). This new system can't come fast enough.

Strategic Review in 2022 Federal Budget

The latest federal budget featured a surprise announcement: a “Strategic Policy Review” of the public service. It’s looking for projected savings of up to \$6 billion.

This is a concern not only for our members, but for all Canadians who rely on public services.

An earlier “Strategic Spending Review” a decade ago resulted in severe program and service cuts, as well as the loss of thousands of federal government jobs.

We will engage the Treasury Board to ensure the upcoming Review is focused on ways to make government work better, but doesn’t target staff or service cuts. We will work to ensure services to Canadians are not compromised.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

PIPSC should be an inclusive, diverse organization. But our research shows that many racialized members do not see themselves in the union right now.

We are taking action to correct this by developing a full EDI strategy to attract members from all backgrounds into our leadership.

We are working to identify and eliminate the barriers that are preventing all of our members from fully participating in our union.

With regards to Truth and Reconciliation, we need to better understand our nation’s history in the oppression of Indigenous peoples – and the role our union played. We are undertaking this work so that we can repair our relationship with Indigenous communities.

We also support the lawsuit launched by the Federal Black Employee Caucus.

Working with the Ontario Federation of Labour and the New Brunswick Federation of Labour

In recent years, PIPSC has affiliated with the BC, Yukon and Manitoba Federations of Labour on behalf of our provincially regulated members.

We are now also affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Labour and the New Brunswick Federation of Labour. We have worked with both federations of labour in the past on joint campaigns and legal challenges.

We represent approximately 720 provincially regulated members in Ontario and 350 in the province of New Brunswick.

Affiliation strengthens our ability to represent and advocate on behalf of these members with their provincial governments and allows us to strengthen our ties with labour allies in these provinces.

Fighting Wage Restraint Legislation

June 2022 marked the third anniversary of the Ontario government's Bill 124. This bill limits collective bargaining wage increases to 1% per year for 3 years for all Ontario public sector workers. This includes our Ontario provincial health care professionals.

We refuse to accept Bill 124 and will continue to fight for fair wage increases for our members. They have worked tirelessly to provide care and treatment for vulnerable patients throughout the pandemic, but Bill 124 completely ignores their contribution.

We are working with the Ontario Federation of Labour and other unions to restore collective bargaining rights through a constitutional challenge filed in 2019. Court hearings are underway this fall.

Similarly in Manitoba, the fight against wage constraint legislation continues. In the spring, I appeared before the Manitoba Legislature's Standing Committee on Justice in defense of collective bargaining rights. Manitoba unions, through the Manitoba Federation of Labour, are seeking leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada in order to get a definitive ruling on the constitutionality of this wage-freeze legislation.

Nurses and Front-Line Workers

We represent 4,300 health care professionals in Canada, including close to 500 nurses who provide care to isolated Indigenous communities across the nation.

I recently made official visits to nursing stations in remote First Nations northern communities to shine a light on the crisis currently facing nurses in these communities.

It's not easy to find qualified candidates willing to accept the tough work, the distances and travel involved, the potential for accidents on the way to and from these communities, and the potential personal security issues that can occur.

This crisis won't be addressed until we see an investment in fully-funded, permanent, public sector solutions. It's time for the federal government to take real action to address this issue – and that doesn't mean contracting out to private employment agencies.

Contracting Out

Contracting out erodes institutional knowledge, skills and expertise from the public service.

Between 2011 and 2021, the federal government outsourced over \$21 billion in work to IT consultants, management consultants, and temporary help contractors. Moving specialized knowledge and skills out of the public service has created a lack of development and training opportunities inside the public service.

Our Career Development and Training Task Force is undertaking member-focused research and will be proposing evidence-based solutions to take to the employer.

Defending Public Science

Our over 15,000 public scientists, engineers and researchers are some of the world's best. But they need the resources to do their job. We can't depend on the private sector to provide solutions to today's challenges.

The government must increase spending on federal Research and Development, task the Chief Science Advisor with developing detailed metrics to better monitor federal science capacity in the future, and ensure that women are no longer under-represented in federal public science.

Finally, it is crucial that we protect and promote scientific integrity; we can't go back to the days of muzzling our federal public scientists.

Fair Taxation

I have taken every opportunity to raise issues with the tax system by bringing our message to parliamentarians. With insufficient resources and outdated technology, Canada's tax professionals are at a significant disadvantage.

Early in 2022, we hosted a webinar on tax fairness with parliamentarians of all stripes. It was an engaging event. I have also joined with PIPSC's civil society partners such as Canadians for Tax Fairness and Oxfam Canada to call on the government to end its unfair tax system, ensure all are paying their fair share, and provide professionals working at the CRA with the training and technology they require.

Reaching Members

The PIPSC Political Action & Engagement team has hosted a number of successful webinars over the last year, some of which I've been fortunate to participate in.

Some recent webinar topics include:

- Women in Science
- Bystander Intervention
- Mental Illness Awareness Week (in partnership with CMHA Mental Health)
- How to Calculate Your Pension
- Pride at Work
- Parental Leave

In solidarity,

Jennifer Carr
President, PIPSC