

Introduction

As President of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), I am fiercely proud of our members' resilience, dedication, and professionalism in the face of another year of challenges. From the front lines to the bargaining table, PIPSC members have stood strong in the fight for a fair, inclusive, and effective public service.

This year, we've taken that fight to new frontiers. We've been the loud, unwavering voice for our members in crucial discussions shaping the future of work. We've defended public science against the threat of austerity. We've championed tax fairness for all Canadians. At every turn, PIPSC has been there, standing shoulder to shoulder with our members.

But our advocacy doesn't stop at the federal level. I am extremely encouraged by the unprecedented participation we've seen from our separate employers this year. At our last AGM, for the first time, every one of our separate employers was represented. This is a testament to the hard work we've done to make our non-federal public service workers a priority, ensuring every PIPSC member is heard and supported.

Internally, we've been busy building a stronger, more responsive union. With the creation of our National Policy Office and innovative tools like Navigator, we're better equipped than ever to adapt to our members' evolving needs.

As we look to the future, I have never been more convinced of the power of solidarity. Together, we are building a public service that doesn't just work for Canadians, but truly reflects the best of what Canada can be. And with the unwavering dedication of PIPSC members, I know this future is within our reach.

Key Achievements and Ongoing Initiatives

Future of Work and Return to Workplace

As dedicated public service professionals, it should be more important to our employer what work we do on behalf of Canadians, rather than where we sit. For that reason we have consistently advocated for a flexible, hybrid approach that considers both operational needs and employee well-being.

Our stance on “presence with purpose” recognizes the diverse needs of our members – from those with disabilities to those in regional locations – and considers the environmental impact of unnecessary commuting. We are fighting at the bargaining

table to ensure that every public servant has fair, consistent telework rules, no matter where they work.

In our battle against inflexible Return to Office mandates, PIPSC has forged an unprecedented alliance with other public sector unions. Through joint statements, shared research, and coordinated lobbying, we have amplified our collective voice and exerted significant pressure on the government.

This solidarity has elevated the Return to Office issue to a national discussion about the future of work in Canada, making it clear that the desire for flexible work arrangements is widespread across the entire public service.

Our goal remains to shape a future of work in the public service that is inclusive, efficient, and responsive to the needs of both our members and the Canadians they serve. With the strength of our solidarity, we will continue to fight for this vision.

Collective Bargaining

This year, PIPSC has been a relentless force at the bargaining table, securing 27 collective agreements and making significant advancements in member rights. Across the federal public sector, provincial jurisdictions, and the federal private sector, we have fought tirelessly to achieve fair and competitive contracts for our members.

But our fight is far from over. With the arbitration decision still pending for the CP Group, we will not rest until every member has the agreement they deserve. We have faced challenges head-on, pushing past obstacles to ensure no member is left behind.

Beyond wages and benefits, we have made critical strides in addressing long-standing recruitment and retention issues. From the New Brunswick Crown Prosecutors to groups across various sectors, we are securing agreements that not only improve working conditions but also lay the foundation for strong, sustainable public services.

Our success is rooted in solidarity. By standing with other unions, like supporting PSAC during their strike, we have shown that our collective power is unmatched. This solidarity will be our strength as we face the potential challenges of upcoming elections and the threat of austerity-minded governments.

But no matter the political climate, PIPSC's commitment to our members remains unwavering. Armed with new resources like our Strike Manual and bolstered by unprecedented member engagement, we are ready to fight for the agreements our members deserve. Agreements that not only benefit them but contribute to a stronger, more effective public service for all Canadians.

Looking ahead, we are vigilant, we are prepared, and we will not back down. With the power of solidarity, strategic negotiation, and member engagement, we will continue to achieve victories at the bargaining table and beyond.

Stronger Supports for Members

National Policy Office

The creation of our National Policy Office is a game-changer for how we support our members and advocate for their interests. In the past, our labor relations officers were stretched thin, juggling responsibilities for both grievances and consultations. This often left individual consultation team presidents to fend for themselves, leading to inconsistencies in our strength and presence across departments.

No more. By centralizing consultation support in one office, we're ensuring that every consultation team has access to the same resources and expertise. Now, when a president calls for help, they'll get the full attention and support they need.

But the National Policy Office isn't just about fixing problems – it's about proactively strengthening our solidarity and positioning. By identifying systemic issues that affect multiple departments, like the need for a position on bed bugs, we can ensure all our consultation teams are on the same page and speaking with one powerful voice.

This is a huge victory for our collective bargaining power. With the National Policy Office providing critical information about what's happening on the ground in each department, we'll be better equipped than ever to represent our members' interests at the bargaining table.

Alongside the National Policy Office, the creation of the National Steward Officer role further strengthens our network of support. No longer will stewards feel alone in navigating the system – they now have a dedicated resource to turn to for guidance and assistance.

These structural changes represent a significant step forward in our capacity to support, represent, and fight for our members. With greater consistency, coordination, and proactive problem-solving, we're building a stronger, more unified union that's ready to tackle any challenge.

Member Engagement and Communication

In a year marked by unprecedented challenges, our commitment to engaging and empowering our members has never been stronger. Across the country, PIPSC members have stood up, spoken out, and demonstrated the incredible power of solidarity.

Nowhere was this more evident than in our fight against unfair Return to Office (RTO) mandates. Through emails, webinars, and petitions, our members made their voices heard loud and clear.

Beyond the RTO battle, we've been hard at work expanding and innovating our engagement tools. From the Women in Science Cafe Series to "PIPSC & You" webinars for new members, we're creating spaces for our members to connect, learn, and grow. Our Steward Framework, including the new steward portal and updated recruitment processes, is empowering a new generation of union leaders.

But engagement isn't just about digital tools and events. It's about showing up, in person and in force, to demonstrate our solidarity and strength. That's why we've ramped up our support for key events like Pride and Labour Day, ensuring that PIPSC's presence is felt in communities across Canada.

Looking ahead, we're more committed than ever to building a union that doesn't just represent our members, but is driven by their passion, their insights, and their collective power. The incredible engagement we've seen this year is just the beginning. Together, we're building a PIPSC that's stronger, more responsive, and better equipped to fight for the future our members deserve.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

I'm proud of the significant strides we've made in fostering a more inclusive and diverse organization. This isn't about meeting quotas – it's about creating a union that truly reflects the rich tapestry of experiences and perspectives that make our public service strong.

The establishment of our new Equity caucuses under the Human Rights and Diversity Committee marks a pivotal moment in our journey. We now have six dynamic groups:

- the Black Caucus
- The Indigenous Caucus
- The 2SLGBTQ+ Caucus
- The Workers of Colour Caucus

- The People with Disabilities caucus
- The Women's caucus.

Each brings a unique and invaluable perspective to our union's work.

Our comprehensive EDI strategy goes beyond mere representation. We're actively working to attract members from all backgrounds into leadership positions, ensuring that diverse experiences inform every decision we make.

PIPSC leaders continue to champion inclusivity through targeted webinars and networking opportunities. These initiatives keep the conversation around equity and inclusion at the forefront of our activities, fostering continuous learning and growth across our membership.

One of our most crucial tasks has been identifying and eliminating barriers that prevent members from reaching their full potential within our union. This ongoing work requires us to critically examine our practices and embrace necessary changes, however challenging they may be.

As we move forward, our commitment to this work remains unwavering. We're building a future where every member, regardless of their background, sees themselves reflected in our union's leadership.

Standing Up For All PIPSC Members

Fighting a Culture of Disrespect

For far too long, our members have been subject to a pervasive culture of disrespect from their employer. Nowhere is this more evident than in the ongoing Phoenix pay system fiasco and the botched transition to a new Public Service Health Care Plan provider.

As we approach the ninth year of the Phoenix crisis, it's clear that the government still doesn't grasp the profound impact their inaction has had on the lives of public servants. As I recently told the media, "You can't come and ask us to sit at the table and negotiate with you without recognizing the harm Phoenix has done to federal public servants."

The delay in paycheques isn't just an inconvenience – it's a fundamental breach of the employer's most basic responsibility. It's forcing public servants to put their lives on hold, delay major decisions, and even leave the public service altogether to become contractors just to ensure they're paid correctly and on time.

But Phoenix is just one symptom of a deeper problem. The transition to a new Public Service Health Care Plan provider has been marked by system glitches, service disruptions, and a lack of adequate provisions for members with serious health conditions. A recent Standing Committee report echoed many of PIPSC's concerns, highlighting the lack of union involvement, excessive leeway given to plan administrators, and the need for compensation for damages suffered by plan members.

Enough is enough. It's time for the government to step up, take responsibility, and start treating public servants with the respect they deserve. That means not just fixing Phoenix and ensuring a smooth transition to the NextGen system, but also involving unions as partners in the process. It means establishing clear service standards for health plan administration and compensating members for the hardships they've endured. And it means coming to the bargaining table ready to negotiate in good faith, not with empty platitudes.

At PIPSC, we will never stop fighting for our members' right to be paid correctly and on time, to have uninterrupted access to the health benefits they've earned, and to be treated with basic human dignity by their employer. We will continue to advocate, mobilize, and hold the government accountable until every member receives the respect they deserve.

The road ahead won't be easy. But with the solidarity and determination of our members, we know we can build a public service where respect, fairness, and accountability are the norm, not the exception. That's the future we're fighting for – and we won't rest until we get there.

Combatting Austerity Measures

In a time when austerity rhetoric threatens to undermine the very foundations of our public services, PIPSC has been unwavering in our advocacy for sustained investment and fair taxation. We know that a robust, well-funded public service isn't a luxury – it's the backbone of our society, delivering the essential services that Canadians rely on every day.

That's why we've been making the case loudly and clearly in our pre-budget submissions: cutting public service jobs and programs isn't just shortsighted – it's downright dangerous. It means longer wait times, reduced services, and a diminished capacity to respond to crises. It means hardworking public servants stretched to the breaking point, struggling to deliver more with less.

But our advocacy doesn't stop at the federal level. We know that public service jobs are the lifeblood of communities across Canada, especially in smaller towns and rural areas. These are the jobs that keep local economies afloat, provide essential services, and offer the promise of a meaningful career, regardless of geographic location. When governments slash these jobs, they're not just cutting costs – they're cutting the heart out of communities.

That's why PIPSC has been proud to partner with allies like Canadians for Tax Fairness to push for a more equitable, progressive tax system. We've advocated for common-sense measures like a public registry of beneficial owners and improvements to anti-avoidance rules – measures that would help ensure everyone pays their fair share and that our public services have the resources they need to thrive.

And we've called for investments in the Canada Revenue Agency to empower our members there to do their jobs to the fullest. Because we know that a fair, well-functioning tax system isn't just about revenue – it's about public trust. It's about the belief that we're all in this together, that the rules apply equally to everyone, and that our government is working for the common good.

Ultimately, our fight against austerity is a fight for the kind of Canada we all believe in – a Canada where no one is left behind, where public services are valued and strengthened, and where our shared prosperity is built on a foundation of fairness, equity, and trust.

As we move forward, PIPSC will continue to be on the front lines of this fight. We'll continue to mobilize our members, to build alliances with like-minded organizations, and to advocate tirelessly for a public service that reflects the best of who we are as a nation. Because we know that when we invest in our public services, we invest in ourselves – and in a brighter future for all Canadians.

Defending Member Interests

PIPSC continues to lead the charge in protecting whistleblowers, promoting bilingualism, and defending public science. Our efforts are reshaping policies and practices across the federal public service, ensuring a more accountable, inclusive, and innovative future for Canada.

We've made significant strides in strengthening safeguards for those who speak truth to power. With Bill C-290 nearing Royal Assent and our own David Yazbeck contributing to the review of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, PIPSC is at the forefront of creating a culture where integrity thrives without fear of reprisal. This commitment to

accountability extends to our advocacy for a truly bilingual public service. Our presentation before the House of Commons Standing Committee underscores our fight for fair language policies and robust training resources, recognizing that linguistic diversity is key to serving all Canadians effectively and fostering national unity.

At the heart of our mission is the unwavering support for our 15,000 world-class scientists, engineers, and researchers. PIPSC's participation in COP28 marked a turning point, securing recognition for scientific evidence in climate discussions and advocating for sustainable energy solutions, including nuclear power. Our delegation played a crucial role in representing the voices of government scientists and workers affected by climate change, successfully lobbying for the recognition of scientific evidence and promoting sustainable transition strategies.

Yet, we face significant challenges. Despite government rhetoric, inflation-adjusted science spending has plummeted across federal departments. We're pushing back against short-sighted cuts and the troubling plan to eliminate positions through attrition. PIPSC is championing increased R&D funding and fighting to protect the integrity of public science, recognizing that innovation and research connected to federal mandates have immense potential to benefit Canadians.

From the halls of Parliament to international conferences, PIPSC is ensuring our members' voices shape the policies that matter. Our expertise is increasingly sought after, with both the Canadian Labour Congress and Natural Resources Canada now seeking our input on critical issues. We're not just defending the public service – we're reimagining it, building a future where accountability, bilingualism, and scientific innovation are the cornerstones of a stronger Canada. As we move forward, PIPSC remains committed to securing the resources and support our members need to address Canada's most pressing challenges with their world-class expertise.

Fighting the Shadow Public Service

On February 28, 2024, I stood before the Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), armed with nearly two decades of experience as a Defence team member and a fierce determination to expose the truth about outsourcing in our public service. This wasn't just another committee appearance – it was a personal mission to protect the integrity of the work we do.

Drawing on my years in the trenches, I laid bare the alarming reality of outsourcing within the Department of National Defence. The numbers are staggering: \$5.1 billion spent last year on outsourced positions – more than double the cost of in-house public service employees. But this isn't just about dollars and cents. It's about the erosion of

our institutional knowledge, the compromising of our IT security, and the creation of a dangerous "shadow public service."

As I spoke, I could see the committee members' eyes widen. This wasn't just dry policy talk – it was a wake-up call. I proposed concrete solutions: streamlined in-house hiring, competitive salaries to retain our best and brightest, and measures to break the cycle of public servants being lured away by private contractors.

PIPSC isn't just pushing back against outsourcing – we're fighting for the soul of our public service. We're demanding a culture change that recognizes the irreplaceable value of public service expertise. From my testimony to our ongoing research and advocacy, we're sounding the alarm at every level of government.

This fight is personal for me, and it's personal for every PIPSC member who's seen firsthand the damage caused by excessive outsourcing. We won't rest until we've reclaimed our public services, ensuring they're delivered by dedicated public servants who put the interests of Canadians first. The tide is turning, and PIPSC is leading the charge towards a stronger, more accountable public service for all.

Preparing for Knowledge Worker Labour Shifts

As the government explores the use and regulation of Artificial Intelligence, PIPSC is ensuring that the expertise of our members is part of these crucial conversations. We're advocating for clear guidelines on the ethical use of AI, stronger regulatory frameworks, and investments in upskilling and training to prepare our workforce for technological changes.

Our approach to AI and digital transformation is balanced, recognizing both the potential benefits and the risks. We're working to ensure that the implementation of new technologies enhances rather than replaces the work of our members, and that proper safeguards are in place to protect privacy and ensure fairness in AI-driven decision-making processes.

In collaboration with the Future Skills Centre, PIPSC has developed Navigar, an innovative online skill development planning tool. This platform will help our members adapt to the changing world of work, providing personalized skills development plans and access to a wealth of learning resources.

Navigar represents our commitment to ensuring our members are prepared for the future of work. By providing this tool, we're empowering our members to take control of their professional development and stay ahead of the curve in their respective fields.

This initiative also demonstrates our proactive approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by evolving workplace technologies and practices.

Looking Ahead

As we move forward, PIPSC remains committed to adapting to the changing needs of our members and the evolving nature of public service work. We will continue to advocate for policies that support a strong, effective, and inclusive public service. This includes pushing for fair compensation, safe and flexible working conditions, and opportunities for professional growth and development