We’re now more than halfway through the longest election period in Canadian history and it’s already been a very busy few weeks.

Over the summer, PSAC launched an awareness campaign about the impact of the drastic cuts that have been made to public services. The Vote to Stop the Cuts campaign focuses on cuts to key services that have affected Canadians since the Harper Conservatives came into power: support for veterans, border security, search and rescue, Employment Insurance, environmental protection and food safety.

The campaign has generated mass media and public support. PSAC’s Facebook page now boasts a huge following of over 27,000 fans, giving PSAC the largest presence on Facebook of any Canadian-wide union. The incredible response is a testament to how our message is resonating with PSAC members and the Canadian public.

We hope this awareness raising campaign will encourage Canadians to vote in the next federal election for candidates who oppose further cuts and seek to restore vital public services.

Please continue to spread our message and share this campaign with your co-workers, neighbours, friends and family. Visit votetostopthecuts.ca for more information on the campaign.

As much as we’ve done so far, there is still more work to do. Our Area Councils have been busy organizing all candidates forums, phoning members to discuss election issues and attending community events to promote public services. Please contact your Area Council if you’re interested in getting involved.

On October 19, vote for public services, for our veterans and for our future. Together, we can make a difference.

Marianne Hladun
Regional Executive Vice-President
Prairie Region
JOIN OUR TELEPHONE TOWN HALL

On Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. MB / 6:30 p.m. AB/SK, the PSAC Prairie Region will host a special telephone town hall focused on the federal election. We will be joined by several guest speakers and members will have an opportunity to ask questions about election issues, PSAC’s Stop the Cuts campaign, participating in political activities, and more.

To participate, all you have to do is answer the phone when we call to be automatically connected. If for some reason you haven’t received a call within the first five minutes, please use the coordinates provided to you.

SIGN UP FOR OUR WEBINAR

An effective way to counter the anti-labour rhetoric and misleading or incorrect information in the media is to submit a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. The letters page is one place where the public can have their voices heard and participate in a public discussion about an issue. Local activists, government officials, legislators and many community members read letters to the editor in local and regional papers.

Members often ask us for form letters to submit to their newspaper or MP. However, union talking points aren’t the most effective way to convey your message and ensure your letter gets published, especially if a lot of people are using them.

Learn how to join the conversation and the tips and best practices to get your letters published with this special two-hour evening webinar.

On Thursday, October 1, former Ottawa Citizen journalist Pauline Tam will review how to write a letter to the editor using current news stories and answer questions.

Visit psac.com/prairies to register for this free webinar.

ATTEND AN ALL-CANDIDATES FORUM

PSAC is sponsoring all-candidate forums across the Prairie Region. Area Councils have invited all declared candidates to participate in these public events to discuss important election issues and take questions.

We encourage you to attend an event in your area and ask the candidates about protecting public services.

Visit the PSAC Prairies website or contact your regional office for specific dates and locations.
How can I get involved?

There are many opportunities to put your skills to work during the election period, including phone banks, door knocking, mail outs, and more. Contact your regional office to discuss how you can get involved.

I've voted in the past, do I need to register again?

Earlier this year, the Conservative government made changes to the requirements for voting. Even if you have voted in past elections, you may not be registered.

To avoid any problems on election day, make sure you’re registered and you have the necessary identification!

Check out Elections Canada’s website to find out:
- whether you are on the voter’s list
- where and when to vote
- what kinds of ID are required to vote
- key dates for voting and registration

Your vote is important! Don’t lose your right to vote on October 19.

More information: http://www.elections.ca

What are my political rights during the election?

One of the hallmarks of a healthy democracy is the ability of citizens to participate freely and actively in determining who they elect to govern and make decisions on their behalf.

PSAC members are encouraged to take an active role in exercising their democratic political rights.

If you are disciplined in any way for participation in a political activity, this can be grieved. If you are disciplined, contact your Local/Branch or your Component for representation and advise your PSAC regional office. Any attempts by management to restrict your political rights should also be brought to the attention of the PSAC regional office.

More information: http://psacunion.ca/political-rights

How do I vote in this election?

Away from home or busy on election day? Ready to vote early? You choose the way you want to vote. Remember to bring appropriate identification. The voter identification card is not accepted as a valid form of ID.

- **Vote on election day – Monday, October 19**

  Polls are open for 12 hours. If you’re registered, you will get a voter information card in the mail by October 1. It tells you when and where to vote.

- **Vote on advance voting days**

  There are four advance voting days. Polls are open from noon to 8:00 p.m. Your voter information card tells you the address of your advance polling place.

  - Friday, October 9 / Saturday, October 10 / Sunday, October 11 / Monday, October 12

- **Vote at the Elections Canada office before Oct. 13**

  Offices are open Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 4:00 p.m. See the Elections Canada website for locations.

How do I protect myself on social media?

Members, particularly those who work for the Government of Canada, have asked us if they can share PSAC’s Vote to Stop the Cuts advertising material through social media.

Union members and all employees have a right to freedom of expression protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, even if they work for the federal government. Expressing political opinions or sharing political content on social media is a form of political expression and is protected by the Charter. Online political expression does not benefit from any greater or any less protection than other forms of political expression.

You have the right to share content from our campaign on Facebook, Twitter or other social media accounts as long as you do so outside your hours of work and you don’t use the employer’s equipment.

Visit http://psacunion.ca to learn more about your rights on social media and what to consider before you post, share, or tweet.

What will happen to my sick leave?

PSAC’s request to the courts to stop the government from implementing its new sick leave plan will go before the court on October 29.

Keep in mind, however, that if we elect a new government that respects workers, we may not have to worry about this issue when we return to bargaining after the election.
The Conservative government cut 26,000 jobs in the public service with plans to cut 9,000 more, putting families and local economies in jeopardy. These job cuts mean that 35,000 full-time jobs will have been permanently eliminated from the economy.

Public Services

Workers’ Rights

The Conservative government has passed a number of laws designed to take away the democratic rights of workers in Canada. Bill C-4, Bill C-525 and Bill C-59 are all designed to weaken workers’ rights and, in the case of Bill C-59 in particular, are very likely unconstitutional.

Workers’ Rights

Veterans

This government closed nine Veterans Affairs offices and cut hundreds of front line workers who provide services to veterans. As a result, many veterans are not getting access to the services they need.

Veterans

Food Safety

Despite the Maple Leaf Foods tragedy that left 23 dead and dozens ill, the Conservative government has pushed ahead with cuts at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Canadians need more and better government inspection and less industry self-policing of food safety.

Food Safety

Child care

Fewer than 1 in 4 Canadian kids have access to regulated child care. The Conservatives abolished the federal-provincial-territorial funding agreements on childcare, cutting $1 billion out of child care in Canada.

Child care

Environment

Canada has one of the worst records on environmental protection among industrialized countries. The Harper government has slashed funding for conservation and restoration of landscapes, water and wildlife; monitoring climate change; and minimizing threats from pollution.

Environment

Employment Insurance

Legislative changes to EI are hurting workers and economies in many communities in Canada. Fewer than 40% of laid off workers are now covered by EI, the lowest in 40 years.

Employment Insurance

Human rights

The Conservative government has been steadily reversing gains on women’s rights, including gutting pay equity for federal employees. The Conservatives have also cut funding to programs that support Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees and to civil society groups that are critical of the government.

Human rights

Contact the Prairies Regional Office nearest you:

Southern Alberta
SOUTHERN ALBERTA
301 - 14th Street NW, Suite 302
Calgary, AB
T2N 2A1
Telephone: (403) 270-6555
Toll-free: 1-800-461-8914
Fax: (403) 270-6591

Contact your PSAC Regional Office to request copies of these signs to put up in your window at home or in your car to bring attention to the issues that matter most this federal election. You can also customize a blank sign with your own issues or ideas.

Northern Alberta
NORTHERN ALBERTA
10665 Jasper Avenue, Suite 670
Edmonton, AB T5J 3S9
Telephone: (780) 423-1290
Toll-free: 1-800-814-3948
Fax: (780) 429-2278

Southern Saskatchewan
SOUTHERN SASKATCHEWAN
2445 - 13th Avenue, Suite 200
Regina, SK S4P 0W1
Telephone: (306) 757-3575
Toll-free: 1-877-890-3575
Fax: (306) 569-8425

Northern Saskatchewan
NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN
511 1st Avenue N, Unit 5
Saskatoon, SK S7K 1X5
Telephone: (306) 244-3033
Toll-free: 1-800-992-3033
Fax: (306) 664-2016

Manitoba
MANITOBA
175 Hargrave Street, Suite 460
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3R8
Telephone: (204) 947-1601
Toll-free: 1-866-393-7722
Fax: (204) 943-0652