

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May 1, 2020

I hope everyone is holding up okay.

Meetings with our bargaining unit employers have continued and I wanted to be very sure as to where we stood with our City of Edmonton and Edmonton Public Library (EPL) bargaining units in regard to layoffs before I made comments on the process. I'm sure we are all aware of the latest round of layoffs at the City of Edmonton. Speaking for CSU 52, I can say we are deeply concerned in a number of areas as to how these layoffs have been conducted. In many areas, it appears that seniority is not being taken into account in the manner we had agreed to. We have received a number of member complaints regarding how the layoffs in their areas were conducted— this is being investigating.

The Coalition of Edmonton Civic Unions (CECU), the City of Edmonton and EPL had agreed on a relaxation of the layoff procedures in our collective bargaining agreements in order to allow for a temporary layoff procedure that was not contemplated in our agreements. This in turn would allow the employer to provide benefits to continue, accrual of seniority and a SUB plan top up of EI to 75% of wages. Then the federal government implemented a program called the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). Unfortunately, under CERB rules anyone eligible for regular EI benefits on or after March 15, 2020 is being automatically pushed into the CERB plan. Under the current CERB plan rules, any top up of CERB by an employer is clawed back by CERB. The Liberal government has pushed language through parliament to try and get money to people as quickly as possible. However well intended the program is, it has significantly cut benefits to a large number of our memberships. This issue is not isolated to Edmonton but through municipalities and large corporations country-wide. The CECU, along with unions across the country, is preparing a letter to local Members of Parliament and the Minister of Employment identifying the problem and asking that the SUB plan benefits not be considered as earnings against the CERB benefit. We hope that the City of Edmonton will also sign on to this letter. Please remember that this problem has been created by our federal government and complaints should be brought to your local Member of Parliament. It should state how this program has negatively affected you and to ask for changes to be made to allow SUB to be collected.

Once again, let me say how concerned we are about our laid-off members and their welfare. We stand with you and feel your pain. We are here to answer questions and continue to work on your behalf.

***Thank you and stay safe,
Lanny Chudyk***