

MERC Chairs/MERC Teams/All OPS Presidents

Sisters and Brothers, we met with you the weekend of June 17, 2011 at the OPS Fight back meeting. At that time we gave you an update of what the landscape was in the OPS after the Spring Provincial Budget. At that time we talked about different events that we could do to bring recognition to the work that we do as well as to fight back this government.

Today I am writing to you with an update of what is happening within the OPS. In August 2011 ServiceOntario put out a Request For Information (RFI) to attract private sector investment. ServiceOntario is looking at their operating model. They are looking at going private, to an agency, joint partnership with private/federal/municipal sectors, or to remain in the OPS. ServiceOntario is also looking at providing other services that are presently delivered through private, federal and other OPS programs.

We know from the March 2011 budget that all programs in the OPS are on the table for review for alternative service delivery. We know that ServiceOntario is looking at which programs would fit under their model.

We know that there are three Correctional Facilities that are slated to be closed.

We know that the Don Drummond Commission is reviewing the Ontario Public Service. The following statement was made by Don Drummond, Chair, Commission on the Reform of Ontario Public Services in the Toronto Star on September 9, 2011. "Whoever forms the next government on Oct 7 is going to find themselves in a deep fiscal hole... Somebody is going to have to do something and it's going to have to be forceful."

At a meeting last week I was told that the OPS is going to be in a lay-off mode for the next two years. We know that it is the front-line workers that are being laid off not middle and senior management.

Your CERC team along with staff from OPSEU have put together a presentation to the Executive Board to position OPSEU and the OPS bargaining unit to fight against attacks on the value of public services, public employees, and the role of unions for the public good and to position OPSEU as the union of choice in future organizing drives with improved contract enforcement, member representation, workplace and community campaigning. We will be going to the Executive Board meeting on September 21, 2011.

Our four main goals are;

- 1) Reach out to every OPS member to defend against management tactics and contract violations in job security provisions.
- 2) Prepare for bargaining now by recruiting information stewards now. Develop materials and resources for local demand setting process. Plan for an OPS all-presidents meeting prior to demand setting to update the OPS leadership on the current political environment and to help shape the message for local demand setting meetings.

- 3) Build alliances with public sector unions and community allies to defend against privatization.
- 4) Prepare for divestment/privatization of Service Ontario.

Within the next six months, we will need to campaign against privatization and job cuts, build the union presence in OPS workplaces, challenge the gutting of services, win the hearts and minds of members in preparation for possible privatization of ServiceOntario and set the stage for the next round of bargaining. We will need to be flexible and nimble on the ground to respond and resist the austerity agenda of the new government.

We are looking for any feedback that you wish to give us on our plan of action. We also encourage you to lobby your board members to support the fight back campaign.

Talk/Connect/Unite

In Solidarity,

Roxanne Barnes
CERC Chair