

What are the 3 most important things a REVP can do for women during a term of office? What one thing will you do?

Maria Fitzpatrick:

a) I believe the 3 most important things an REVP can do for women during a term of office are to listen, be respectful and be supportive of women's initiatives in the region eg. Pay Equity for our members at Canada Post and with the Separate Employers, fight back on Bill C 484.

b) I have already become involved in supporting the Pay Equity campaign with Canada Post and, sent a letter to my MP on Bill C484 and notified both women's committees about a demonstration at the Human Rights monument on Sat. May

Doug Marshall:

1. Recruit Women

Leadership should represent the membership. Recruitment is an important part of role of any leader and as a REVP I would continue to encourage women to fill local and regional positions. As the REVP is involved in selecting candidates for national committees and other leadership roles, I would also see that women are well represented.

Recruiting women is something that I have done, even when not in a leadership position. I was in a job that had always been held by a man. When I left the job, I encouraged several women to apply, one of whom got the job.

2. Support the Involvement of Women

We must support the involvement of women who have become active in the union. We need to ensure women are aware of the availability of childcare, taxis, etc. that would allow them to take part in activities they might otherwise not consider. We need to stop asking women to sacrifice a family life for a union life. We must strive for a work-life-union balance. This should be incorporated when scheduling training and other activities. We should establish a mentoring program, where successful union women are matched with young women and new activists, in order to provide real-life experience and networking opportunities. We also need to recognize the effort of women union members' work in the community. By acknowledging their work we are bringing union and community together.

3. Support the women's committees in the NCR

The REVP does not work in isolation and must work with the women's committees in the NCR. The REVP should ensure that the committees have the

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resources they need in order to carry out their mandates and work with them to achieve their goals.

As REVP, I would work on all three of these areas.

Larry Rousseau:

1. Ensure that equity rules regarding women (equitable participation rates at all levels) are being applied throughout the Public Service in the National Capital Region, and that action plans to improve situations are established, and that programs are evaluated as a function of this.
2. Work to have PSAC call for a national campaign to ensure that the same rules to apply to the entire public service, which means identifying those departments where the rules are not being followed, and following up on those departments, thus making them accountable.
3. Consult with the Ottawa Women's Committee, as well as each of the Regional Equity Committees, about the top three problems facing women (including Aboriginal, Racially Visible, women with disabilities, Lesbians and Transgender), and what can be proposed to deal with the problems that have been identified.

Daniel Charron

- 1- I propose co-chairs for this NCR convention resolution committees
- 2- Arrange to have on site child care upon request
- 3- Work closely with Womens committees to advance their agendas in the Political arena, Federal, Provincial and Municipal

Hybrid cars are a danger to the blind and the visually impaired. What would you do to keep our visually impaired members alive when they cross the road and can't hear the hybrid car?

Maria Fitzpatrick

I researched this issue first of all by contacting the CNIB who advised me they were unaware of a concern and I am still waiting for them to get back to me with any information they might find. I researched further and found the attached information. Based on this information I would support and encourage our membership to lobby manufactures to add a feature such as suggested here to provide a noise component to these vehicles.

In her article, "Stop, Look and Listen: Quiet Vehicles and Pedestrian Safety," (The Braille Monitor, Vol. 48, No. 6, June 2005), Deborah Kent Stein offers some possible solutions:

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"Perhaps hybrid vehicles could be engineered so that the radiator fan switches on whenever the car is operating in electric mode. The fan would emit a hum audible to pedestrians. Perhaps a device built into the axle could make a sound as the wheels rotate.

"It has also been suggested that blind travellers carry a device that would indicate when a hybrid or other quiet car is in the vicinity. The signal could be auditory or tactile. A tactile signal would have the advantage of not blocking other important sounds in the environment. In addition, it could be of great help to blind people who also have impaired hearing."

Technology certainly has made my life easier with talking computers and scanners, talking global positioning systems (which I want to acquire) etc., but these quiet cars pose dangers and could even be deadly for people who are blind or partially sighted.

I really feel passionate about this issue, as I cherish being able to travel independently. My dog is trained to stop for traffic but we are a team and a partnership, and I like to be able to provide as much input and guidance as I possibly can.

I just want these cars to make some kind of noise.

I received a voicemail message from CNIB to call them back which I will do tomorrow. If they provide further information I will forward to both Regional Reps to pass on to the Regional Women's Committees

When I failed to receive a further response from the CNIB I decided the best place to get to the issue was to go to our regional source of information, MDAC. I contacted the Chair of MDAC and she provided me with further information through the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians / L'Alliance pour l'égalité des personnes aveugles du Canada. One of the articles produced by the Alliance identifies that something must be done to the hybrid vehicles to emit a sound that is low yet loud enough to warn of their approach when running in the electric/battery mode. The Alliance assures they are not opposed to Hybrid vehicles which are "unquestionably good for the environment". These vehicles are much better for the environment and can be made safe with fairly minor adjustments using currently existing low-cost devices. Within the region this kind of information provides us with a vehicle to take action. For example, if purchasing a Hybrid vehicle, making a request to the dealer that such a device be part of the purchase package. Our members in the region could also be encouraged to send postcards/letters or sign petitions to be sent to the manufactures to make such an addition as to improve the safety of the vehicles.

Doug Marshall

It is important that attempts to reduce car pollution should not endanger people's lives. Of all the possible solutions, probably the best would be to design hybrid

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cars so that they emit a sound when they are operating in electric (silent) mode. The noise must be audible to pedestrians but would still be far less noisy than a normal engine. This would be a low-cost solution and would not depend on the individual driver to take action.

In fact, the US is already taking steps in this direction. In April 2008, the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act of 2008 was introduced in Congress. It would require the government to set safety standards for hybrid cars, including audible noise to alert blind and visually impaired pedestrians.

Larry Rousseau

I would ask MDAC to explore what is the current situation in regard to the automakers and those groups that are currently lobbying on this issue. I would work with MDAC in coming up with possible options for getting PSAC to work with partners and allies on this issue, and come up with recommendations that could be submitted in the form of a resolution calling for the PSAC to lobby the relevant institutions, especially Transport Canada, and obtain the funding required. I would then work closely with MDAC to ensure that the follow-up and the necessary funding and support for such a campaign are successfully implemented.

Daniel Charron

I would invite the MDAC to debate and make recommendations to this Union and to Society at large.

We are a group of diverse Components with different ideals. If elected, how would you deal with the clashes this may bring? For example, the opposition to Canadian Military versus members who work for DND and are members of UNDE.

Maria Fitzpatrick

First and foremost – we have members who are in Afghanistan currently providing a support function for the Canadian Military and they along with our Soldiers must be supported. Even if some of our members do not support the war, I have not heard any member verbalize that they would not support our troops and those who work for DND providing a support function to the military.

Everyone has a right to their own opinion about the war. Being opposed to the war does not mean one does not support our troops and our members who are staff at DND. I also believe that UNDE is the first line of 'Defence' for our membership at DND. I believe the regions support the decisions made to back

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our members and as Regional Executive Vice President I will continue to support our members.

Doug Marshall

I believe that it is important to provide members with a safe environment for open communications and dialogue. It is through discussion and debate that we can learn about the needs and concerns of other PSAC members.

As a union leaders, I focus on the common interests and concerns of the membership. Regardless of which employer or department members work for, most of the members' concerns are common concerns – fair wages, job protection, a healthy and safe workplace, etc. No matter what political views members have, the members and our union must remain united in the support of public services and public service workers.

As REVP, I will lead and participate in discussions, sometimes where members will have different views. My experience as a mediator and facilitator will help me in carrying out my responsibilities. I will ensure that there is a safe environment to discuss our views, that we all conduct ourselves in a respectful manner, and that we stay focussed on our common goals as a union. I will not let divisive government decisions divide and weaken our membership.

Larry Rousseau

I would make sure that the debate is not about opposition to our soldiers, but to the political choices made by the government of the day that send our soldiers needlessly into suicide missions or missions that cannot be won militarily, such as Afghanistan. Once that distinction is made, I would make sure that ALL of our members in our region at least have the opportunity to voice their positions, and that in the best of trade unionist traditions, discussions lead to a negotiated understanding of tolerance and understanding of members' positions. I would work with UNDE, and propose that PSAC should hold a Conference on this issue, with the aim of arriving at a position on these issues that has consensus. My position, even as a Peace Activist, is that we must stand in solidarity with our soldier brothers and sisters, who are in fact workers, who are doing what they are told by their Employer. The issue is with the Employer, not the workers!

Daniel Charron

You have to explain the processes and educate Members on the issues of national defense and of the importance of supporting our Members and our troops. I don't believe that anyone in this organization is for war. There is, however a great need for the Canadian Army.

What would you do to address the poor quality and lack of sufficient accommodation for the members? Some places allow people to share cubicles however this puts strain on the physical, mental and emotional needs of our members. How should you and PSAC move on this issue?

Maria Fitzpatrick

I believe this question refers to our working conditions/accommodation. The Treasury Board has a formula for the space allotted to staff at different levels and staff with different responsibilities. I would certainly look into the TB policy as well as Health and Safety /Labour Code regulations and look at strategies to affect change working through the MDA Committee.

Doug Marshall

This is a matter of the workplace health and safety of our members. We need to gather sufficient information, including ergonomic studies, to determine the needs of workers who use cubicles. Once this assessment has been completed, PSAC should work to enshrine these standards in legislation. We must also ensure that employers put in place the conditions necessary to protect our members.

Larry Rousseau

Here is the policy as applied by Public Works and Government Services Canada:

Section A: General-purpose Office Space

A3. Standards

A3.3 Office and Support Space Allocations

Office Space - Workstations

... A universal workstation module, adaptable to team or individual configuration, is assigned to all personnel in an open systems furniture environment. The workstation area may vary between 5.9 m² and 7.4 m². The actual dimensions and configuration will depend upon specific site conditions and program requirements. Workstations in this size range can easily be reconfigured to accommodate two people, suitable for part-time, temporary, student or similar personnel.

Conclusion: The minimum workstation area is 5.9 m², or 64 sq. ft. (8'X8'), and the maximum is 7.4m², or 80.25 sq.ft (8'X10'). The policy is specific and clear: ***Workstations in this size range can easily be reconfigured to accommodate two people, suitable for part-time, temporary, student or similar personnel.*** Therefore, you cannot have two full-time employees share this space. Sharing a cubicle should only be for part-time, temporary, student or similar personnel. Furthermore, my interpretation is that where part-time staff are concerned, the space gets shared one-at-a-time. This is what our

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position should be, and that is what we should be demanding as a minimum for our members.

Daniel Charron

I would have information distributed on ergonomics and accommodation. Members must come forward in identifying workplace circumstances. Components are responsible for dealing directly with the Management of Workplaces.

Given the report of the latest Census that showed the big percentage increase in visible minorities and the latest Employment Equity Report that showed the decrease in misible minority representation and the decrease in application for jobs in the Federal Government and the commitment from the National Council for Visible Minorities (NCVM) to work with the PSAC to address this issue of low representation in the Federal Government; what will you do to try and fix this problem?

Maria Fitzpatrick

I would work with both National Council for Visible Minorities (NCVM) and our Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Racially Visible Action Committee (RVAC) to identify why there is a decrease in applications for jobs in the Federal Government. Once the issues are identified work with the RVAC to develop strategies to increase applications and work with the NCVM and Treasury Board (TB) to address open job postings and identifying positions and appropriate merit criteria. I would also encourage components to look for ways both individually and collectively to enhance visible minority presence within their ranks; and to recruit young persons of color who refresh and enhance our workplaces and our union.

Doug Marshall

At present, racialized workers in the federal public service are under-represented by about 17% compared the labour market availability (LMA) rate used by the government. Compared to more reliable LMA estimates used by PSAC, racialized workers are under-represented by 28%.

The federal government has made the situation worse by giving managers more discretion in hiring while eliminating rules that protect staffing fairness. They are hiring more casuals, who are hired without employment equity standards, and many indeterminate employees are hired from the pool of casuals.

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We must push the government to ensure that the representation of racialized workers represents their presence in labour force. We must press the government to ensure that managers use appropriate employment equity practices when hiring and that those managers be held accountable for meeting employment equity goals. As REVP, I would work with RVAC to ensure that the government takes the necessary actions to end the under-representation of racialized workers.

We need to also address the problem that Canada does not recognize the equivalency of foreign credentials. We need to work with our allies and communities to change this so that racialized workers finally have access to jobs that they are qualified to perform.

Finally, we need to look at the electing federal and provincial politicians who represent the diversity of the Canadian population. Then, we will increase the likelihood that political leaders will treat more seriously the under-representation of racialized workers.

Larry Rousseau

As REVP, I would invite RVAC to spearhead a PSAC approach to working with NCVM, by creating a joint task force that would be responsible for proposing an Action Plan. Resources for this initiative, including time spent by members working on this issue and on the task force, should be paid by the Public Service Commission (PSC), since they would be responsible for coming up with such a plan in the first place. It's a win-win situation, because clearly, Maria Barrados publicly stated at the RVAC Conference in May 2007 that the problem needed to be addressed. By creating a Joint NVCM-PSAC Task Force (which could include joint regional representation from across Canada), the PSC as well as the PSAC can present the Action Plan as completely representative of racially visible employees across the country. Additionally, the Action Plan should address two groups of racially visible employees distinctly: operational and support employees would form one group, and professional employees would form the other.

Daniel Charron

I would meet with the National Council for Visible Minorities with an RVAC representative and would jointly develop an action plan.

For Doug Marshall:

Given that the majority of Table 1 are women, please tell us what Treasury Board is doing requesting Table 1 adopt regional rates of pay and what you, as our rep at those negotiations, are doing

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to combat that. If you are elected what will you do about this and why has it not been made known to members.

Any suggestion that Treasury Board has proposed regional rates of pay for members of the PA bargaining unit (formerly known as Table 1) is nothing more than rumour. As of April 2008, the employer has NOT proposed regional rates of pay for the PA group.

I have always opposed regional rates of pay for our members. In fact, I was responsible for writing a brief on behalf of PSAC arguing that our members should no longer be subject to regional rates and I personally presented this argument before a conciliation board. The bargaining resulted in the elimination of one-third of the existing pay zones.

At the same time, I have used the collective bargaining process to advance the rights of women. For example, I was involved in the negotiations that led to the extension of maternity/parental leave and benefits to 52 weeks. The revised maternity parental article that I drafted – and that Treasury Board eventually accepted – became the standard adopted by other unions in the federal public service. I have also worked in the fight for pay equity for members in bargaining units across Canada. For example, I developed a proposal that resulted in a multi-million dollar reduction the long-standing pay equity gap for workers at Canada Post. Following my years of work in pay equity for PSAC members, I was invited to work in the Pay Equity Directorate of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.