

August 3, 2016

Honourable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Clark:

I write on behalf of all 85,000 CUPE members in British Columbia to urge your government to join with the other provinces and the federal government, which have agreed to a modest expansion of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP.)

Despite the alarmist response from some special interest groups, the proposed expansion of the CPP will bring much-needed retirement security to thousands of B.C. seniors in the future, and we strongly believe that your government should ratify the agreement immediately. Contrary to some of the opposing rhetoric, this expansion, while modest, will create additional economic activity and growth as it provides seniors with additional retirement security in the years ahead.

Our union, CUPE BC, and the entire national labour movement have campaigned for an expansion of CPP for many years. While the federal agreement currently on the table falls short of what thousands of union members fought for, we believe this represents an important first step toward eliminating poverty amongst seniors in Canada.

As many politicians are fond of proclaiming, seniors built this province and this country, and I'm sure you would agree with the proposition that no senior should be forced to spend their retirement choosing between medicine or food. That being said, it's rare that once elected a politician actually follows through with meaningful action to accomplish that goal. And in fact, your government's choices and political priorities have actually made life harder and more expensive for many seniors in our province.

That's why we were so pleasantly surprised that provincial leaders were able to strike this accord—but it's also why we're so disappointed that your government has unilaterally chosen to not sign the agreement pending "consultations."

While we are not supporters of your government, we give credit where it's due. Your government's initial decision to support the expansion was the correct one, and you should not be swayed by reactionary voices that seek to maintain the unacceptable status quo. Expanding the CPP means future retirees will have a better chance to make ends meet and retire with dignity.

In our view, this is no time for delay, nor is it time for retreat. Current retirees and future generations of British Columbians depend on an expanded CPP. To step back from progress will send a strong signal to citizens and voters that your government is siding with the wealthy and well connected, and not with hardworking B.C. families. I urge you to sign the agreement without further delay.

Sincerely,



Paul Faoro
President
CUPE BC

PF/LW


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