



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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MLAs should reject 29 per cent wage increase – HEU

\$23,000 pay hike won't meet fairness test for most British Columbians

A decision by B.C. Liberal MLAs to support a 29 per cent wage increase for themselves is unacceptable when they refuse to raise the minimum wage and continue to support low-wage policies in health care, says the Hospital Employees' Union.

“Government MLAs are demonstrating a profound lack of understanding about how their actions have affected B.C. workers,” says HEU’s secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

“By what test of fairness can these politicians reward themselves so richly when they have undermined the living standards of so many others?”

Darcy points to a system-wide recruitment and retention crisis for skilled health care workers that has been compounded by 15 per cent wage cuts legislated by government in 2004.

Those wage cuts affected about 38,000 workers in more than 270 different job classifications in hospitals and in long-term care facilities.

Thousands of others lost their jobs as a result of government-mandated privatization and government contractors now pay wages for hospital cleaning and dietary staff that fall below the poverty line in Canada’s most expensive urban centres.

“Our elected politicians deserve to be fairly compensated for their work,” says Darcy. “But all workers deserve to earn a living wage and this government has actively worked to deny them this right.

“I don’t think a \$23,000 pay hike will meet the fairness test for most British Columbians given this government’s penchant for picking workers’ pockets,” says Darcy.

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