



*Alliance du personnel
professionnel et technique
de la santé et des services sociaux*

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Reaction to the Government's Information Bulletin on Pay Equity

In September, you received an information bulletin from the Chair of Treasury Board Monique Jérôme-Forget, in which the Government takes all the credit for the pay equity settlement. The unions that signed the settlement have reacted by publishing a news release reminding everyone that the unions had to force successive governments to take action on this particular issue.

We must also point out that, in the Government document, the table of examples of retroactivity and salary adjustments provides for eight (8) instalments over a period of seven (7) years, whereas the Pay Equity Commission has yet to rule on this question. The unions have already expressed their disagreement to the Pay Equity Commission, with respect to the Government's request to spread the salary adjustments over more than four (4) years. What's more, the table contains a sizable error in the calculation of the retroactivity for physical rehabilitation therapists. Indeed, their retroactivity should be equivalent to that of educators and specialized education technicians (35 hours).

We invite you to read the tract entitled "Activity for unions" which sets the record straight.

Luce Leblanc
Vice-President
Pay Equity Commission

PAY EQUITY

A VICTORY FOR UNIONS

Over the last few days, the Conseil du trésor has been distributing leaflets in our workplaces, portraying the government as the good guy in the pay equity settlement. This campaign looks like pure political manoeuvring on an issue which has been rallying unionized women and their allies in the feminist movement for more than thirty years.

Successive governments, including the current Liberal government, have not facilitated the progress of pay equity. Far from it! Over the years, these governments have maintained that there was no pay discrimination against women in the public sector. However, the settlement of June 20, 2006 demonstrates that the opposite is true: 360,000 people, or 95% of workers in predominantly female positions, will receive salary adjustments.

If this government, elected in 2003, was so convinced of the legitimacy of our claims, why did it wait until it was obliged by the Court to get on with the job? The unions had to go before the courts to force the government to take action. Why did this process have to be so difficult? Why was it necessary to organize so many demonstrations and rallies?

THE SETTLEMENT OF THIS FILE HAS COME ABOUT THANKS TO THE DETERMINATION OF OUR UNIONS AND OF TENS OF THOUSANDS OF WOMEN. IT IS NOT THE GIFT OF A GOVERNMENT SEEKING TO MAKE POLITICAL GAIN FROM A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT: THE RIGHT TO EQUITY!

ADJUSTMENTS OVER TIME

The government has asked the Pay Equity Commission for permission to spread adjustments out over seven years rather than the four years specified by the Pay Equity Act. The unions have not agreed to the government's request. By permitting employers to make adjustments over a four-year period, this Act allows them to greatly reduce the financial impact of correcting the discrimination. Nevertheless, employers may request an adjustment over a longer period if they are able to prove that, due to financial difficulties, they are unable to respect the rights of women.

The Commission should not give in to such a request unless it has been proven necessary and unless the right to pay equity threatens the very existence of jobs. However, from the information we have obtained regarding the state of public finances, we cannot reasonably conclude that the government, the largest employer of female labour in Quebec, is in a situation that would prevent it from giving full recognition to women. Any extension to the deadline for adjustments entails losses for those entitled to payments. Moreover, following the imposition of a two-year salary freeze, public sector employees should not be further penalized by an additional delay in the application of pay equity adjustments owed to a large number of women.

**WOMEN HAVE BEEN PATIENT.
BUT A 30-YEAR WAIT IS LONG ENOUGH!**

