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NEWS RELEASE

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Saskatchewan people can't afford Sask Party government's proposed cut to the public service

www.sgeu.org

1011 Devonshire Drive North
Regina, SK S4X 2X4
(p) 522.8571
1.800.667.5221
(f) 352.1969

1114-22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0S5
(p) 652.1811
1.800.667.9791
(f) 664.7134

33-11th Street West
Prince Albert, SK S6V 3A8
(p) 764.5201
1.800.667.9355
(f) 763.4763

Premier Scott Moe's plan to cut the public service by five percent, on top of the Wall government's 15 percent cut, will have a major impact on Saskatchewan people, according to SGEU.

Moe and Finance Minister Donna Harpauer admitted Wednesday that government will pay for the partial reinstatement of PST exemptions with a five percent workforce reduction in executive government and the Crowns.

"Removing those PST exemptions in the first place was a mistake that punished Saskatchewan people," says SGEU President Bob Bymo. "And Moe's only solution is to exchange it for another ill-advised policy that will hurt the people of this province. The Sask Party may have a new leader, but it's still trying to make people pay for its costly mistakes by cutting services that families rely on."

In 2010, the Sask Party government implemented a "Workforce Adjustment Strategy" that decreased the size of the public service by 15 percent over four years. Since then, the public service workforce has shrunk even further.

Meanwhile, the provincial population has grown by 11.6% – climbing from 1,046,788 in April 2010, just after the workforce reduction was announced, to 1,168,057 as of October 2017. And Moe has promised to increase the population even further, adding another 28,000 people each year until 2030.

"Moe's proposed additional five percent cut raises huge concerns," says Bymo. "If he cuts the public service, who's going to do the work of providing vital public services? Strong public services improve the quality of life for everyone in this province. And it's been proven that the valued work done by public sector workers saves the province money."

In the past, when the Sask Party has cut public services, it's turned the job over to private consultants, who cost more than the public-sector workers they replace. [A 2015 study of roadbuilding consultants](#) in Saskatchewan found they cost two to four times as much as employing equivalent public sector workers. And in a government IT contract that SGEU obtained via a freedom of information request, consultants charged between \$100 and \$175 per hour for work that would earn ministry staff a maximum of \$46.31 per hour.

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"There's a costly side to cutting public services that shouldn't be overlooked," says Bymoer. "Saskatchewan people are already paying more and getting less, as a result of this government's financial mismanagement and budget cuts. Families in this province can't afford to keep paying for the Sask Party's costly decisions."

Bymoer adds that there's a better way to generate revenue for the province than to slash good jobs that support local communities, and cut public services in a growing province. For example, the Sask Party should implement a fair taxation policy and stop making giveaways to a business sector that has already been treated generously over the past decade. Even after reversing its absurd corporate tax cut, the government's last budget still gave businesses new tax breaks in several areas. On top of that, instead of using marijuana and liquor sales to boost Saskatchewan's public revenues, it turned the highly lucrative opportunities over to private business.

"With life already getting harder and less affordable for working families, public services need to be kept accessible," says Bymoer. "The impact of slashing staff and contracting out services will be felt by every person in every corner of this province. Now is the time for the new Sask Party leader to take a different approach, and commit to strong, affordable public services for the people of Saskatchewan."

Under Wall, the Sask Party government wasted millions of dollars on Lean, the overpriced Regina Bypass, the smart meter fiasco, and the GTH scandal. Moe could be more fiscally responsible by ditching costly megaprojects, cutting the number of MLAs, and reversing the 74% payroll increase that Wall gave his Executive Council between 2009 and 2016.

"As the new leader, Moe has a responsibility to clean up the mismanagement left behind by the Wall government," says Bymoer, who has requested to meet with Premier Moe, but has yet to hear back.

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For more information contact:

Evie Ruddy
Communications Officer
306.775.7877
306.550.1146