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For immediate release

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Deputy Sheriff job cuts jeopardize the safety of the public

www.sgeu.org

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

Suite 201,
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

The provincial government's mismanagement of public funds has resulted in cuts to frontline staff in the Ministry of Justice, which will jeopardize the safety and security of the public, according to SGEU.

Fourteen Deputy Sheriffs lost their jobs yesterday in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, North Battleford and Weyburn.

"This is the fallout of government wasting millions of dollars . . . and it's having real-life consequences on people's lives," says SGEU President Bob Bymoer. "Deputy Sheriffs keep vulnerable people safe, and ensure public safety."

The duties of a Deputy Sheriff include screening people entering a courthouse, operating detention areas, escorting prisoners inside the courthouse, providing security inside the courtroom, and transporting prisoners by vehicle.

"The role of a Deputy Sheriff is vital to keeping Saskatchewan people safe," says Bymoer, adding that Deputy Sheriffs carry firearms.

According to the government's competency profile for the job, Deputy Sheriffs of Court Security "have the responsibility to intervene in situations where lethal force is required to protect life."

Bymoer says the province wouldn't be in such dire financial circumstances had the government not squandered money on costly privatization schemes.

"The Sask. Party government wasted \$40 million on lean consultants, gave \$2 billion to a private corporation in France to build a bypass, and spent \$61 million on highways consultants," says Bymoer. "Meanwhile, frontline staff . . . the workers who reliably and efficiently provide vital services to Saskatchewan people . . . are facing job cuts, at the expense of their livelihoods, their families, and the people they serve."

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The Sask Party government also spent \$52 million on botched smart metres, handed over \$3 million to a private company, Skip the Dishes, and purchased land for the Global Transportation Hub at three times the value it was assessed.

Saskatchewan people shouldn't be forced to pay the price of this government's bad financial decisions, says Bymoan.

Someone has to do the critical work that Deputy Sheriffs do, which means government will out-source it to private contractors. The new contracts come at a cost. We either pay for quality, or accept lesser security in our courts, costing Saskatchewan people more in the long run, he added.

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For more information, contact:

Evie Ruddy
Communications Officer, SGEU
306.775.7877 (office)
306.550.1146 (cell)