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Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

May 24, 2017

People at Stand Up for Saskatchewan Rally call for an end to budget cuts

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People from across the province are demanding an end to the Sask Party government's cuts and privatizations, and are standing up for the Saskatchewan children, seniors, families and communities that are under attack, according to speakers at a rally held at the Legislature in Regina today.

"How can anyone justify cuts that target those who need help the most – kids with special needs, students, people in long-term care, people with disabilities, and vulnerable families?" asked Vice-President of SGEU's Public Service Sector Barry Nowoselsky.

"There is no justification for the slash and burn agenda of the 2017 budget. It's wrong. The cuts need to be reversed, and the Sask Party government needs to take responsibility for its own fiscal waste and mismanagement," he added.

"It was the Sask Party government – not school kids and seniors – who blew through the province's rainy day fund, and spent hundreds of millions of dollars on overpriced consultants and costly megaprojects," said Nowoselsky.

The Sask Party government added three new MLAs at a cost of \$700,000 a year, and gave the premier's political staff a huge increase in salaries and benefits – 74 per cent since 2009. Now it's demanding a 3.5 per cent compensation claw back from public sector workers, the people who deliver frontline services to Saskatchewan families.

"Saskatchewan people didn't create the deficit, but now they are being forced to pay the price for the government's incompetence and misplaced priorities," said Nowoselsky.

"While families are being hit with new taxes on kids' clothes, snack foods, restaurant meals and insurance premiums, government is handing out huge tax breaks to large corporations. That means Saskatchewan will be losing hundreds of millions of dollars that could be spent on the services families rely on," Nowoselsky pointed out. "It's time to get Saskatchewan back on track, and turn the cuts around."

The noon-hour rally at the Legislature also featured the following speakers: Tom Graham, President, Saskatchewan Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); Barb Cape, President, Service Employees International Union (SEIU-West); Christie Best, Prairie Regional Chair, Unifor; Emily Barber, Students Mobilizing Against Cuts, (SMAC); Nestor Mryglod, of Why Tower Road?; and, Hassan Yussuff, President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).

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