

# **FB Group (Canada Border Services Agency) MEMBER ACTION KIT**

**July 2021**



## **How to use this action kit**

Contact your MP to let them know how CBSA has been treating their workers, and demand they call on their government to return to the bargaining table with a fair offer.

What this contact looks like will be different for everyone. We encourage you to find the method that you are most comfortable with or that best suits your circumstances or community.

- Schedule an in-person, telephone, or virtual meeting
- Leave a voicemail message at their constituency office
- Send an email or letter
- Send a tweet, or leave a comment on their social media pages
- Organize a rally or other action at their constituency office

Whatever method you choose, refer to the information in this kit to ensure you convey our key messages and your efforts have the maximum impact.

Remember to complete the Action Reporting Form after any meeting with an elected official and submit to Jeffrey Vallis at [vallisj@psac-afpc.com](mailto:vallisj@psac-afpc.com).

## **Objectives**

- To inform Members of Parliament about the core issues at the bargaining table and encourage them to pressure Treasury Board and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to reach a fair contract that improves our working conditions and provides reasonable wage increases.
- To ask opposition MPs to oppose the disrespect shown to CBSA employees by this government — despite their ongoing dedication to Canadians throughout the pandemic — pressuring the prime minister and his cabinet into action.
- To make it clear to government MPs that they must pressure Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his cabinet to deliver on their promise to respect public service workers, or risk losing support in the upcoming federal election.
- To garner support from municipal leaders to prevent disruptions at the borders that could hurt their communities.

## Talking points

- CBSA employees have been on the front lines of the pandemic for more than a year keeping Canadians safe. They deserve fair working conditions.
- After more than three years of negotiations, the employer refuses to budge on critical issues, including:
  - Parity with other law enforcement personnel across Canada.
    - The CBSA is the second largest law enforcement organization in Canada — only the RCMP is larger.
  - Better protections against harassment and discrimination.
    - We're taking a stand against toxic workplaces and demanding protection from the constant threat of heavy-handed discipline and abuse of authority.
  - A fair remote work policy for our non-uniformed members.
    - The employer refuses to negotiate remote work provisions for our non-uniformed members who have been serving Canadians remotely throughout the pandemic.
- We're ready and willing to return to the table, but Treasury Board and CBSA haven't shown any willingness to address our concerns.
- Workers want action and are prepared to take work-to-rule and strike action, if necessary, until the employer returns to the table with a fair offer.
- We know the government wants a smooth reopening for travelers at the Canada/U.S. border — we want that too. But we can't continue to work in toxic workplaces. If we are forced to go on strike because of government inaction, we are prepared.
- We've held strike votes throughout June and July and CBSA employees turned out to vote in large numbers because we're fed up.
- Year after year, the Public Service Employee Survey data shows CBSA is near or at the bottom for employee satisfaction. It's also near the top for issues related to harassment and management intimidation.
- The 2020 survey results shed light on just how terrible things are at CBSA. For example, 25 per cent of respondents aren't satisfied with CBSA, and 32 per cent do not have confidence in CBSA senior management. These results are more than double the public service average.

## For Liberal MPs

- We are urgently asking you to speak with your colleagues — Treasury Board President Jean-Yves Duclos, Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — to ask for their help in negotiating a fair settlement.
- The government needs to reach a deal with border services officers before the writ drops because a labour dispute at Canada's borders will damage your election campaign and take away from the issues that matter most to voters.
- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that he sees the public service as a “partner” that “must be valued by the government,” in his [open letter to Canada’s public service workers](#). Public Safety Minister Bill Blair said “CBSA officers who have been answering the call throughout this entire epidemic have done an extraordinary job.” Unfortunately, this is nothing but lip service.
- We want to see the same recognition at the bargaining table. If the government values our work, then it must address our concerns and respond to our proposals for improving the workplace.

## For opposition MPs

- We are asking you and your party to send a letter of support to Treasury Board President Jean-Yves Duclos, Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau demanding a fair deal for CBSA workers.
- We want to keep providing the best services to your constituents as possible, but we need a safe workplace free from harassment to make that happen.
- Is there any other way you can help us put pressure on CBSA and the government to negotiate a fair contract?

## For municipal leaders

- We are asking you to urge the federal government to reach a deal with border services officers before the election because a drawn-out labour dispute due to government inaction will delay the reopening of Canada's borders and could hurt your community.
- Border communities like yours know first-hand how important our border service officers are to keep our borders safe and protect Canadians.
- CBSA employees have been on the frontlines of the pandemic since day one and have stepped up for Canadians during this challenging time. Now we’re asking you to step up for us.

## **Background**

The PSAC/CIU bargaining team has been negotiating a new collective agreement with Treasury Board and CBSA since January 2019 and workers have been without a contract for more than three years.

PSAC/CIU and the employer appeared before a Public Interest Commission (PIC) hearing in May. Both sides presented their arguments on the outstanding issues at the table, and the Commission will prepare a report with its recommendations.

Unlike arbitration, the recommendation is non-binding. While the legislation provides for the PIC to issue its recommendation within 30 days of the hearing (end of June), the chair requested an extension and we're now expecting it by the end of July.

PSAC/CIU represents the more than 8,500 employees working at CBSA. Most of them are border services officers (roughly 5,500 border services officers at land ports of entry and airports), as well as staff at Canada Post facilities inspecting mail, at commercial entries examining freight, inland enforcement officers conducting investigations and around 2,000 are headquarters staff in Ottawa.

## Meeting Checklist

Whether it's an in-person, telephone, or virtual meeting with an elected official, use this checklist to prepare and ensure the meeting goes smoothly.

### Before the meeting

- Pair up with another PSAC/CIU activist.
- Call or email the politician to request a meeting.
- Follow up to confirm.
- Review the materials in this action kit to get a clear understanding of the issues and what we are asking for.
- Know how long your meeting is.
- Decide who will say what and how you'll stay within the allotted time.
- Decide who will take notes.

### During the meeting

- Right at the start, introduce yourselves. Say what you do and where you're from. Thank them for the meeting and confirm the time you've been given.
- Take charge. You asked for the meeting, so you can lead the meeting. Present your position clearly and don't be sidetracked.
- Listen well but don't let them talk so much that you don't get a chance.
- Treat all questions calmly and seriously. You can learn a lot from their questions.
- If you are asked a question you do not know the answer to, do not make up a response on the spot. Tell the politician you will get back to them.
- For the note taker, notes do not have to be exhaustive, but note if they commit to something or refuse to commit to something.
- Leave your contact information and thank them for meeting with you.

### After the meeting

- Debrief with your team right after the meeting.
- Flag any questions raised that you could not answer and any extra information that was requested.
- Flag any commitments that were made.
- Fill out the Action Reporting Form and email it to Jeffrey Vallis at [vallisj@psac-afpc.com](mailto:vallisj@psac-afpc.com).
- Send them a thank you email, including any follow-up discussed in the meeting. Provide answers to questions the politician asked you, and request information the politician promised you.

**ACTION REPORTING FORM — FB BARGAINING**

*Once complete, send back to Jeffrey Vallis at [vallisj@psac-afpc.com](mailto:vallisj@psac-afpc.com).*

**NAME OF POLITICIAN:**

**CONSTITUENCY:**

**DATE OF MEETING:**

**LOCATION OF MEETING:**

**TIME OF MEETING:**

**LENGTH OF MEETING:**

**PARTICIPANTS:**

Action team

Union role

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Others present

Reason for being there

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**GENERAL COMMENTS ON MEETING:**

(Include attitude of politician and whether they were interested, etc.)

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**POLITICIAN'S RESPONSE:**

(Both to general and specific points.)

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**COMMITMENTS BY POLITICIAN:**

(Be as specific as possible. Your follow-up email should also contain these points.)

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**FOLLOW-UP EMAIL:**

When was it sent:

Person responsible:

What was included:

Date completed:

**GENERAL COMMENTS:**

(Attach additional comments if necessary.)