



July 21, 2021

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hussen,

The Public Service Alliance of Canada, through our Component the Canada Employment and Immigration Union, represents approximately 23,000 workers who are employees of Service Canada. These members are dedicated public service workers who ensure that Canadians, and newcomers to our country, receive high-quality services when accessing programs such as Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, parental benefits, and many others.

Our members are proud of the work that they do. When the pandemic struck, they stepped up to the plate, transitioned to remote work, volunteered to staff emergency programs, and maintained a level of professionalism and flexibility in keeping with their dedication to their work and to Canadians.

Should they be rewarded for their commitment with an increased risk of their jobs being privatized?

We are particularly concerned about the use of private contractors at 1-800-O-Canada – the front line, first point of contact for many residents with Service Canada.

Canadians relying on Service Canada are at points of big change in their lives – of transition. These are stressful periods for anyone – employment, retirement, disability, a new child. Couple these situations with the ongoing pandemic and economic instability, it becomes clear that the government must provide clients with high-quality services and consistency that can only be provided by the public service. Private call centre workers do not have the training, experience, nor access to the systems and departments necessary to provide full and robust services to callers.

Minister, there is a substantial, [consistent](#) and ever-growing body of evidence that privatization costs [more](#), results in [poor service](#), and that governments always [underwrite the risks](#) involved should a [corporation fail](#) to meet its contractual obligations. The new contract for 1-800-O-Canada, which has been given to an American company that specializes in debt collections and not services to people in need, gives us a reason for concern.

ESDC has already brought 75 Service Canada jobs back into the public service. It is clear to us that the rest of the call centre work should also be delivered by public sector workers.

As Canada looks towards a post-pandemic recovery plan, we also must consider that privatization increases [poverty](#) and [economic disparity](#). In fact, it is clear that federal public sector jobs are strong and [stable economic drivers](#).

Minister, we ask two things:

First, that you consider the arguments for bringing the call centre work of the 1-800-O-Canada line back into the public service. We believe that such a change will benefit those who use the service and Canadians overall.

Second, that we arrange a meeting with you to further discuss this matter.

Kindest regards,



Chris Aylward
PSAC National President



Eddy Bourque
CEIU National President

c.c: Michele Girash, Programs Officer, PSAC
Tasia Brown, Political Assistant to the National President, PSAC
Marilène Gill, Bloc Québécois, Critic for Families, Children and Social Development
Leah Gazan, NDP, Critic for Families, Children and Social Development