

Decisions made by successive governments to cut taxes have had a negative impact on public services and public service jobs:

- Ontario is **missing** more than \$18 billion a year in revenues because of tax cuts dating from 1995 onwards.
- Ontario has the **lowest** program spending per capita of any province.
- Ontario has 33 per cent **fewer** public employees per capita of any province.

## Job Cuts

Prior to the first OPS strike in 1996, OPSEU had 67,000 members. There were thousands of layoffs under Mike Harris. We gained some members under the Liberal government, but downsizing by the same Liberal government from 2009 to 2013 resulted in a loss of 5,200 members. Today, we represent 34,504 members in the OPS. In recent years, the Office Administration classification group has been particularly targeted for lay offs.

Not only has the number of jobs been slashed, but also the quality has, in many cases, diminished. Everyone wants the chance to do something meaningful with their work life. **We all need to feel like we are making a difference.**

It's been clear for some years now that the government doesn't want to offer employees a long-term career with regular opportunities for professional development and training except for the favoured few.

We want to see a change in attitude from this employer towards our members.

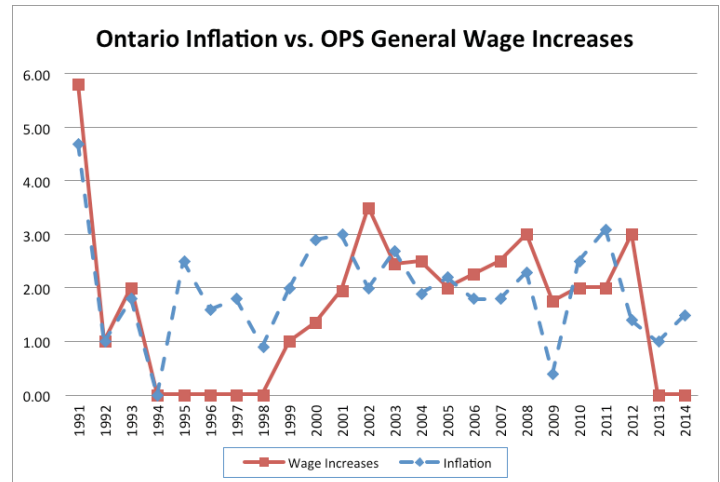
We want to contribute our experience, skills and knowledge to an organization that respects us and will give us the opportunity to grow our skills.

Finally, we want to see jobs open up in the OPS for young people in Ontario struggling to gain a foothold in the labour market. In 2013, only five per cent of regular OPS employees were under 30.

## Wages

Your wages have not kept up with inflation. If OPSEU members in the OPS had received general wage increases since 1991 that matched inflation, **your wages would be seven per cent higher.** For an OPS member earning, for example, \$50,000 a year that equals to \$3,500 a year lost.

Take your annual salary and multiply by 1.07. That would be your annual salary if you received wage increases that matched inflation from the years 1991 to 2014.



## Retiree Benefits

On February 18, OPSEU members were shocked to learn they will be expected to pay half the cost of extended health benefits when they retire, a time in life when they can least afford rising costs. This change takes effect January 1, 2017. No negotiations or consultations took place prior to the announcement.

The cut to retiree benefits will hurt lower-paid OPSEU members more than high-paid managers.

## Other bargaining units

### MCP/EXCLUDED

The employer has imposed a number of changes in the MCP/Excluded employee group including:

- paramedical benefits
- short term sickness entitlements
- dental and drug coverage
- long-term disability protection
- MCO days
- termination pay
- pension and post-retirement benefits

## AMAPCEO

The employer is seeking major concessions at the AMAPCEO table. As of March 20th, the employer was demanding the following from AMAPCEO:

### Wages:

- Employer is proposing a 4-year deal – the first year with a salary freeze to be followed by 3 years of no net compensation increases
- Employer is also seeking concessions on other wage provisions of the AMAPCEO agreement, including merit pay and COC days.

### Benefits

- Eliminate all current paramedical coverage for employees and their families for all services.
- Replace paramedical coverage with \$600 Health Care Spending Account for all paramedical services to cover an employee's entire family (with the exception of psychology and speech therapy).
- With a typical visit to a physiotherapist at around \$75-\$100, \$600 won't go very far for someone on Single coverage and is completely inadequate for Family coverage.

### Termination Pay

- No further accumulation of termination pay
- Limit accrual of termination pay entitlement upon retirement to service accrued up to April 1, 2014, payable at the wage rates applicable on April 1, 2014.

### Vacation

- Eliminate the one-time five-day vacation leave for employees at 25 year anniversary mark.
- Eliminate the one-time five-day vacation leave for 64-years-olds with 25 years of service.

### Long Term Income Protection

- LTIP benefits cease at the moment a recipient is eligible for an unreduced pension (Factor 90 or 60/20). Currently, LTIP benefits continue until age 65.
- Pensions for LTIP employees to be based on LTIP payments instead of regular salary.
- LTIP employees to pay employee pension contributions (currently employer pays both employer and employee share).

- LTIP to begin after 17 weeks (down from current 26 weeks).
- Mandatory rehabilitation plan which could force people off LTIP into work they cannot do or which adversely impacts their health.

### Short Term Sickness

- Reduce annual sick days from 130 days to 85 days to line up with changes to LTIP.

### Workplace Safety and Insurance

- Eliminate period at 100% pay while waiting for WSIB decision, replace with sick days (66 2/3% pay).
- Eliminate 100% pay once a WSIB loss of earnings award is made for first 3 months.

### Make employees pay for their salary increase

After its failure with the *Compensation Restraint Act* in 2010, the employer has taken this policy directly to the bargaining table by demanding that any across the board increases must be offset with an equivalent concession.

### In other words, employees have to pay for their own salary increase.

It is also clear that the employer's agenda is targeting some of the most vulnerable workers in the OPS.

Forced retirement for those on LTIP means that workers must retire, even if they were expecting to fully recover and return to work after being on LTIP.

Having employees on LTIP pay the employee pension contributions is a cut in salary for those who are already on a reduced income.

And the concessions the employer is seeking for those on Workers' Compensation or for those awaiting a decision means that those workers, who were injured in the workplace, will now have their salaries reduced.

***“OPSEU knows what it is like to face hostility and attack by employers. We know that an association like AMAPCEO needs all the solidarity and assistance legally possible during this tough period.”***

**OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas**