

SCRIPT – PUBLIC SECTOR VOTE 2020 VIDEO (FINAL)

****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY****

***DISCLAIMER:** if there are discrepancies between this script, the corresponding video and the official tentative agreements, the latter shall prevail

Dear sisters and brothers,

As you are likely aware, NAPE has reached a tentative agreement with your employer.

Your bargaining team is made up of democratically elected rank and file members from your bargaining unit. All teams are recommending acceptance of this agreement.

The tentative agreements apply to the following NAPE bargaining units:

Air Services

CNA Faculty

CNA Support Staff

Correctional Officers

General Service

Group Homes

Health Professionals

Hospital Support Staff

Lab and X-Ray

Marine Services

Maintenance and Operational Services

NLC

School Boards

Student Assistants

Ushers

and WorkplaceNL

I will take the next few minutes to explain the agreements. How they will affect you. Why your bargaining teams believe this is the best possible deal we could get given the current fiscal circumstances of the province. And why the teams think you should vote in favour of this deal.

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Before I go any further, I want to take a moment to thank each and every one of you for the vital work you do for the people of the province. I must commend you for your dedication, professionalism, and hard work to provide vital public services that the people of our province rely on. Our province works because you do. Thank you for everything you do.

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Given the current fiscal position of the province, this is a difficult time for bargaining on many fronts. In other parts of the country, collective bargaining and labour relations are under attack. We are seeing workers' wages and rights being rolled back in Alberta and Ontario.

Unfortunately, the province's fiscal situation has not improved over the last year.

If we discount the \$2.5 billion received from the Atlantic Accord deal, the deficit has gone from \$575 million to \$943 million. The province's net debt has grown from \$13.77 billion to \$13.95 billion.

That said, public sector members have more than contributed their fair share to help deal with the province's fiscal challenges in recent years.

Before this round of bargaining began, your union made it clear to the provincial government and to our members that the status quo was not acceptable. We fully understand the financial situation of the province. But we were clear we would not allow the burden of the problem – a problem our members did not create – to be balanced on your backs.

Over the course of several weeks late in the fall of 2019, discussions regarding collective bargaining began to pick up steam. It became clear that both sides wanted stability – for the province, for public services, and for our members. After marathon sessions in November, your union was able to reach an agreement with the government on a contract extension. So this was not an easy task. But we are pleased with the result.

What does a contract extension mean to you? It means instead of going through what could have been a long, drawn-out bargaining process, both sides agree to extend the provisions of the existing collective agreement for a period of time.

This means that the provisions and protections of the agreement stay in place. The contract clauses dealing with no layoff, sick leave, family leave, contracting out, public-private partnerships, just to name a few, will stay in place for the next two years (at least).

In any round of bargaining, you have the opportunity to make gains as a worker and as a union. However, at the same time, the employer also has an opportunity to ask to have things added or taken away from your contract. This is not to say that we would accept any of the employer's proposals. But in the tentative agreement we have negotiated, all of the provisions you currently enjoy are protected for at least the next two years.

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So, with that in mind, let's get into the details.

The agreement includes a salary increase of 4% over 18 months.

The initial 2% increase will come on the first day after your current agreement expires. For most groups, that's April 1, 2020.

One year later, you'll receive an additional 1% increase, followed six months' later by the final 1% increase.

If accepted by the members, this would be the first time in many years that a salary increase would be implemented on the first day of the agreement.

Just to put things in perspective, the last round of bargaining took nearly two years to complete.

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If NAPE members vote to accept, your contracts will be extended by two years.

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In addition to a wage increase, the employer and NAPE have agreed to establish a committee to find out if it would be practical and beneficial to establish a joint trust arrangement to manage group insurance programs.

The committee will be established by December 31, 2020, and will conclude its work by December 31, 2021.

As you may recall, a joint trusteeship was created for the Public Sector Pension Plan (PSPP) which is now 94% funded – a significant improvement since the joint trusteeship was formed.

A joint trusteeship means your union would have some level of control and say over the group insurance plans (health, dental, accidental death and dismemberment, etc.). In return, the union would accept some level of liability as a partner in the plans.

With joint trusteeship, your union would have much more control and say in how the plans operate and any changes that are made. The assessment process would allow both parties (the union and the government) to have a third party determine the viability of such an arrangement.

Group insurance coverage is extremely important to our members. We believe joint trusteeship would be in the best interests of the long-term stability and viability of the group insurance programs – just as it was for the pension plan.

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Part of the tentative agreement includes changes to Other Post Retirement Benefits or OPEBS for short. OPEBS, in this case, refers to post-retirement group insurance coverage.

If members vote to accept the agreement, all current employees who qualify for post-employment benefit coverage will be eligible for 50 / 50 premium sharing with the employer.

As you may recall, there were some changes in the last agreement on this front – this reverses those changes, which is a benefit to all current members of our union covered under these agreements.

All employees hired after commencement of the new agreement, who qualify for post-employment benefit coverage will pay 60%, and the employer will pay 40%.

The first possible changes for new hires will be 15 years from now and will likely be 30 plus years for most. In the interim, we will work to set up a joint trusteeship to help deal with OPEB issues.

To be clear, OPEB coverage will not change for current employees, and it will actually improve for those of you who were affected by changes in the last agreement. While it will affect new employees, we have time to help improve this situation for this group in the next number of years.

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The final aspect of this agreement is the savings that may be realized from future Public Sector Pension Plan (PSPP) premiums. These are paid equally by you and your employer.

These changes will come about because of changes to the Canada Pension Plan or CPP that will see premiums and benefits increase.

The PSPP is integrated with the CPP. You can find information about this on the Provident 10 website.

In essence, this provision says that any savings realized in PSPP premiums should benefit you directly.

Simply put, the federal government has made changes to the CPP that could mean savings to the provincial government and the pension plan. Instead of treating these savings as general revenue, they will be passed along to members as part of the salary increase.

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In summary, here are the changes you are voting on:

- A salary increase
- A two-year extension of the current agreements
- Changes to Other Post Retirement Benefits for future members
- A study to assess the feasibility of joint trusteeship for group insurance
- Passing on to members any savings resulting from CPP changes

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Voting is open as of 9 am NST on January 27 and will be open until January 29 at 9 pm NST.

You have three days to think this through, talk it over with family and friends or other union members, and reach out to your union if you have any questions.

In addition to this video, we have posted additional information on the NAPE website including a copy of each of the agreements and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

We have also set up a telephone hotline you can call with any questions you may have. The phone bank is staffed by members of your bargaining teams as well as senior staff

negotiators. The toll-free number is 1-844-919-1977, and it will be open from 9 am to 9 pm NST from January 27th to January 29th.

NAPE is your union – so please take the time to familiarize yourself with the tentative agreement, ask any questions you may have, and exercise your democratic right to vote.

By now you will have received either an email or physical mail with details on how to vote online or by phone. I won't get into the details here since the purpose of this video is to talk about the agreements.

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Given the current fiscal and labour relations environment in our province and across the country, your teams, consisting of over 100 NAPE members like you, are unanimously recommending acceptance of this agreement.

Your union told you the status quo would not be acceptable. Your union delivered on that commitment. We firmly believe this is the best deal possible.

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Thank you for all that you do for your province and your union.

Solidarity, sisters and brothers.