



## Employer unilaterally extends hours at ServiceOntario

The employer announced to staff today that it plans to introduce extended hours of operations at 33 ServiceOntario front counter locations starting the week of June 20. As we outlined in our May 3 communication, your Ministry Employee Relations Committee (MERC) team did not agree to this change. We did not sign off on this initiative. Our position with the employer has been: "In this process, we can't lose sight of the fact that our members have families too. We need a solution that meets the needs of the public and maintains work-life balance for our members." Unfortunately, the employer under management rights can impose changes in hours of operation.

We know that extending hours on Thursday evenings and Saturday morning openings can cause serious disruption to our members' lives. Maintaining a work-life balance and managing issues of child and attendant care are serious matters for our members.

We are also concerned that extending hours makes ServiceOntario attractive to potential private sector bidders. As you know, the government announced in the March budget that it is exploring "alternative service delivery models" for ServiceOntario. Your union believes privatization is a threat to the privacy and security of Ontarians' confidential information and will launch a Keep It Public campaign in the near future.

The MERC is committed to the principle that it is the members of the locals who will decide whether or not to enter into flexible work week scheduling agreements for their individual workplaces.

With this in mind, your team decided to meet with the employer to discuss processes and possible scheduling templates that

would minimize the disruption to the lives of our members. Discussions are on-going to find creative options to be presented for the consideration of the members. We have a wide variety of different work places which necessitates various creative solutions to help meet our members' needs. We need extensive participation of local representatives to help achieve the desired goals.

In order to assist in the accurate understanding of expectations and options, the parties have agreed that a MERC representative will be in attendance at as many of the initial information meetings as possible. The employer has scheduled these initial meetings for May 24-26. However, it is not possible for the MERC to have a representative at all 33 communities during this three day period. Whether or not a MERC Team representative is scheduled for an individual workplace visit in the three days, we invite Local contacts to email the Team all questions and concerns that are not addressed at the information meetings. Please bear with us if we are not able to respond immediately to enquiries during the week of May 24. You MERC Representatives will be on the road all week meeting with members.

We would like to thank the Locals that have put forward ServiceOntario contact names.

Please continue to do so to ensure a flow of communications between your MERC Team and the ServiceOntario workplaces.

*In Solidarity*  
*MGS MERC Service Ontario Subcommittee*

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