

CHOOSE PUBLIC DAY

MARCH 29, 2012

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR CHOOSE PUBLIC DAY, THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2012

Q1. WHAT IS CHOOSE PUBLIC DAY?

Key public services are under attack and we risk losing them forever. This is a day for members to speak up for public services.

Q2. WHAT IS OUR KEY ARGUMENT AND SUPPORTING FACT?

Spending cuts and privatization won't make Ontario stronger. Ontario already spends less per person on public services than any other province in Canada. (See: "Ontario staggers under burden of fiscal federalism," Toronto Star, March 6, 2012.)

Q3. WHAT ARE WE ASKING MEMBERS TO DO?

- Wear black.
- Wear a Choose Public sticker or make your own.
- Download a Choose Public flyer, poster, sticker design and post.
- Take a group photo and send to mpark@opseu.org
(Identify your OPSEU Local number and workplace.)

Q4. WHY MARCH 29?

This is two days after the provincial government is expected to announce further deep spending cuts and job losses in the provincial budget.

Q5. WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

All OPSEU members in all workplaces. Organizing for this day started in the Ontario Public Service (direct employees of the provincial government). However, we know service cuts, privatization, wage cuts and lay offs are a very real threat for all public sector workplaces.

We are all in this together.

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Q6. HOW DO I GET THE STICKERS AND FLYERS?

You can download flyers, posters and the sticker design from the web opseu.org/choosepublic

To order stickers and flyers, pls e-mail Mary-Anne Di Adamo, OPSEU Campaigns, mdiadamo@opseu.org. Tell her your Local number, the quantities you need and the mailing address.

Stickers and flyers (in limited quantities) will be available at OPSEU Regional Offices early next week.

Q7. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER KEY ARGUMENTS I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT:

- Public services meet our most basic needs and reduce social inequality. Further spending cuts will cause more and bigger social problems. Over the long run these cuts will cost more than they “save”.
- As we have seen with the recent fiasco at Ornge, handing public services over to CEO wannabes to run them for their own profit is a recipe for disaster. When profit matters more than people, Ontarians pay the price.
- For most Canadians, public services are the best deal we will ever get. A 2009 study showed that the average Canadian household gets benefits worth \$41,000 a year from tax-funded services such as health and education. (See: “Canada’s Quiet Bargain,” by Hugh Mackenzie, Richard Shillington, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, April 15, 2009.)
- Our tax system is wildly imbalanced in favour of the rich. It’s unfair and needs to be corrected. The rate of income tax paid by Canada’s wealthiest today is only half of what it was in 1946. Tax cuts to corporations will cost the Ontario government \$2.4 billion a year by 2013.
- Our public and private sectors are connected. The taxes paid by a construction worker may help pay the wages of a lab technologist whose grocery shopping bill helps pay the wages of the store cashier. All three are part of the same economy.
- Austerity – the term for deep spending cuts – won’t reduce the deficit. It will slow the economy further and cost more jobs. About 20 per cent of OPSEU members earn less than \$20,000 a year. About 40 per cent earn less than \$40,000 a year.