

Telework Rights Working Group – Regional Track Kickoff Meeting

Date: September 16, 2024

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM ET

1. Welcome and Housekeeping

- Nate opened the meeting by sharing regrets from Frank Assu and initiated housekeeping remarks:
 - Headsets, interpretation, and harassment prevention.
 - Kendra was identified as the Anti-Harassment Lead.
 - Noted the need to include harassment prevention statements in future meeting bundles.
 - Delivered a land acknowledgment.

2. Overview of the Telework Rights Working Group

- Nate provided a brief overview of the Working Group's objectives.
- Apology for the delay in developing a regional approach.
- Strategic Framework:
 - Inside Strategy: Targeting senior civil service management.
 - Focus on workplace escalations by unifying members and exploiting contradictions in existing telework and in-office presence policies.
 - Leverage health and safety clauses to push back.
 - Outside Strategy: Pressure on federal politicians.
 - High-value targets, including Anita, President of the Treasury Board of Canada (TBC).
 - Focus on the Liberal Party and their lack of support from the NDP under the Supply and Confidence Agreement.
 - Activities include engaging municipal politicians and creating pressure in border cities like Ottawa/Gatineau.
 - Regional track will need a more outside-oriented strategy but can likely include some inside tactics where it makes sense

3. Regional Campaign Dynamics

- Open discussion on challenges and opportunities faced by regional members versus National Capital Region (NCR) members.
 - Message from chat: Many job postings require NCR presence without justification, and there's a perception that regional job opportunities have decreased since the return to office (RTO).
 - Participant highlighted the struggles of regional members due to reduced job opportunities and the perception that talent outside the NCR is undervalued.
 - Discussion about telework, work instability, and risks of non-renewal of contracts for employees unwilling to relocate to the NCR.
 - Emphasized the need for an actionable escalation plan that considers risks of dismissal and contract termination.

4. Regional Contexts and Organizing

- Nate led a discussion on:
 - Identifying potential local organizing committees and building community coalitions. Shared website resource re: locals
- Discussion on the importance of creating regional alignment:
 - Strategies to unite regional members and overcome challenges of geographic dispersal.
 - May need more virtual strategy combined with
 - NCR pilots as a focus for community coalition model, with pressure on municipal politicians to address impacts in rural areas and federal government job centralization. Could be repeated in different forms in different cities and bring in more provincial, municipal unions and other community orgs fighting for housing, climate action, child care, etc

5. Developing a Regional Ladder of Escalation

- Discussed ideas for developing a region-specific Ladder of Escalation:
 - Identifying the correct targets and adapting the general strategy to fit regional needs. MPs may be the early, low-hanging fruit while we target federally

- Tactics such as mass occupational health and safety grievances, petitions, and campaigns targeted at key MPs.
- Engaging community support through coalitions and digital campaigns, specifically targeting NDP MPs and Jagmeet Singh's riding. More discussion needed on the value of different party targeting as election pressure ramps up – PSAC digital campaign will help define this a bit, but we should have some kind of National direction on this if community coalitions are to begin forming

6. Next Steps and Action Items

- Summarized key takeaways:
 - Regional organizing efforts need to focus on flexible remote work rights, reducing GHG emissions, housing and other building conversion, addressing excess office space, and regional economic development
 - Nate: CLC is developing a broader electoral strategy against Poilievre that we can use with regards to message tested things to hit, where they overlap with our messaging. Will also have swing riding suggestions that we can exploit
 - Local organizing committees should be established in all regions once we have a more coherent sense of what a ladder of escalation would look like
 - Next meeting will require us to debate and nail down some tactical suggestions that make sense in a regional context – initial ideas are centred around targeting politicians in our cities, particularly in swing ridings
- Assigned initial tasks for regional campaign planning and are looking to set deadlines for next steps. Next meeting will be October 22, 12pm ET

7. Closing Remarks

- Nate reaffirmed the group's commitment to advancing the telework rights campaign.
- Encouraged members to spread the word and involve themselves in regional organizing efforts, and think about tactics to debate at next meeting, where we will lay out tactical options and begin prioritizing
- Shared details for the next meeting and thanked participants for their time.