



Meeting With Minister Mendicino

On March 25th, National President Jeff Wilkins, Ontario Regional President Rob Finucan, UCCO-SACC-CSN Team Coordinator Sam Courtemanche and CSN Vice President Francois Enault met with the Minister of Public Safety Marco Mendicino. The Minister started the meeting by apologizing for not meeting with the representatives of UCCO-SACC-CSN earlier recognizing that we have been requesting a meeting since his election. He did assure the representatives present that moving forward there would be an open line of communication and he wants to move forward showing the respect that our members deserve. The conversation began with a discussion about the various tools we require to maintain institutional and public safety. Most particularly, drone detection technology, body scanners, and proper dual threat vests. The Minister asked many questions surrounding the issue of drug interdiction, drone technology and the threat that it poses. Funding, and a lengthy procurement process were discussed as the largest barriers in acquiring these tools, however interim measures were also tabled to mitigate the current risks. The Minister committed to have further conversations with the CSC to lobby for these important tools. He also committed to visit our members in an institution to get a better understanding of the hazards.

The conversation turned to the government's response to Covid-19, most particularly the lack of recognition by our employer for the sacrifices our members have made throughout this pandemic. A brief history of previous conversations with members of the former Liberal cabinet was had to provide context for our position. The representatives made it

clear to the Minister that we are soon entering a new round of negotiations and we will surely seek recognition for the last two years at the bargaining table, but that it would show of good faith to find agreement on this issue before our negotiations begin. The Minister expressed his gratitude and respect that he has for all members of UCCO-SACC-CSN for our difficult occupation, most specifically during that last two years. We thank the Minister for this recognition; however, something more than words of thanks is what is needed now.

Finally, our respect campaign launched on Feb 27th was discussed. Your representatives concluded this meeting by expressing many of the important issues which are frustrating to the membership today. Issues of harassment and violence in the workplace, ordered overtime, challenges over the transgender population, the two-tiered disciplinary process as well as the employer's use of disciplinary process vs. productive conversation at the labour management tables were topics discussed, among others. It was important to highlight the fact that most of the issues discussed would not have been put on his table if there were respectful and fruitful conversations at our various labour management tables. We thank the Minister for our meeting and hearing our position and we remain cautiously optimistic that we will see some movement forward for the membership of UCCO-SACC-CSN.