

## ONE MORE MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

On November 10<sup>th</sup> 2016, members of UCCO-SACC-CSN Atlantic, along with Correctional Officers from NSGEU (Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union) lobbied outside of Province House in Nova Scotia and petitioned the Nova Scotia government to adopt presumptive legislation for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a workplace injury. UCCO-SACC-CSN invited members of the legislature to “become a Correctional Officer for a few minutes” inside of our mock range set up in front of the legislature. The members of the legislative assembly who toured our truck were able to experience firsthand the type of violent & often dangerous work correctional officers might encounter on a daily basis.

Subsequently, the government introduced, just under a year later, Bill 7, an act to Amend the Workers Compensation Act. This amendment identifies first responder occupational groups, which includes correctional officers and identifies post traumatic stress disorder as an occupational illness for first responders. Bill 7 received Royal Assent on October 26, 2017 and will become law on October 27, 2018. Once this bill commences in Nova Scotia, a PTSD diagnosis for a correctional officer will be presumed to be caused by the work.

This is a very important step by the provincial government in respecting and understanding the important work that correctional officers do as first responders, along with other first responder groups on a daily basis.

This issue was pushed to the forefront of the government’s agenda because of the hard work and mobilization strategies of UCCO-SACC-CSN to bring the reality of our work to their attention. The new law will provide for claims to be accepted faster, which will allow for quicker treatment of our members to get the help they need when suffering from mental injuries as a result of working as a correctional officer.



**Jeff Wilkins**, Atlantic Regional President UCCO-SACC-CSN, **Jason MacLean**, NSGEU, and **Premier Stephen McNeil**