

PRESS RELEASE
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Federal Budget 2018
The End of Phoenix, Finally

Ottawa, Wednesday, February 28 – The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO-SACC-CSN) welcomes the decision to replace the Phoenix pay system, which will unfortunately go down in history for its ineffectiveness and as a nightmare that continues to haunt tens of thousands of federal government employees, including several hundred correctional officers.

“While this decision comes a bit late, after an unsuccessful billion-dollar public investment has been made, it is nevertheless encouraging,” said Jason Godin, UCCO-SACC-CSN National President. “However, we are not satisfied with the transitional measures that have been proposed in the interim until the new system is ready. We feel that it is unacceptable for any more correctional officers to experience the failures of the Phoenix system and to live with the anxiety of not being paid correctly.” The union maintains that correctional officers should be able to reach resource people with full access to Phoenix in order to resolve issues at the source.

Investment in Mental Health

For several years, UCCO-SACC-CSN has worked tirelessly to develop policies and legislation to help public safety officers who have mental health issues. In addition to numerous meetings with policy-makers, in September 2017, the union launched a campaign, *Working on the Edge*, aimed at raising awareness about the reality of correctional officers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The union is therefore pleased to see several investments in the 2018 budget, totalling \$30 million over five years, to support research on post-traumatic stress injuries and to ensure better access to mental health supports for public safety officers. “When correctional officers have PTSD that is caused by their work,” said Mr. Godin, “it is the government’s responsibility to ensure that they have timely access to adequate care. We hope that these measures will persuade the provincial governments of Quebec, British Columbia, and New Brunswick to finally adopt legislation for first responders, including correctional officers, with PTSD.”

UCCO-SACC-CSN would also like to acknowledge that the additional \$20 million in the budget of Correctional Service Canada to better meet needs with regard to the mental health of federal inmates is a step in the right direction. The union has been calling for investments of this nature for over 10 years. “There has been a significant increase in the number of violent incidents in the institutions, specifically in treatment centers” said Mr. Godin. “The number of inmate assaults on correctional officers is on the rise, and we have found that these incidents are often perpetrated

by inmates with mental health issues. There is an urgent need to act and put the necessary resources in place on the ground, particularly in women's institutions."

About the union

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO-SACC-CSN) represents more than 7400 members, across Canada's five major regions: Pacific, Prairies, Ontario, Québec and Atlantic. UCCO-SACC-CSN represents Correctional Officers in 49 federal institutions.