

Push to privatize or deregulate our post office is on

Not too late to push back

Right-wingers have been chasing their dream of taking down the post office since the Conservatives came to power last year. International mailers have been lobbying members of Parliament from all parties and the federal government now appears to be considering a reduction in Canada Post's exclusive privilege to satisfy the concerns of international mailers. In addition, the conservative think-tank, the CD Howe Institute, is arguing for privatization and deregulation of our public post office.

Canada Post's private sector competitors and others have been talking to members of Parliament (MPs) from all parties. This means we need to talk to MPs too.

We need to ask MPs where they stand on privatization and deregulation. And we need to do this very quickly as there could be an election called any day.

Where the parties line up on privatization and deregulation

Conservative government: The government says it has "no plans to privatize Canada Post." The government has not made a similar statement regarding deregulation. It has informed the union that, "no changes to Canada Post's exclusive privilege would be considered without thorough policy analysis." The government has noted that "the *Canada Post Corporation Act* defines Canada Post's exclusive privilege; thus, any changes to that privilege would require legislative amendment and public debate in Parliament."

Liberal Party: The Liberals say that it is their "intent to support the continued operations of international re-mailers within Canada." This support could result in a partial deregulation of Canada Post. The Liberals also state, "That said, it is also important to note that the Liberal Party does not support the deregulation and privatization of Canada Post."

Bloc Quebecois: The Bloc is opposed

to privatization. It says that "before reducing or eliminating Canada Post's exclusive privilege, the Government must carry out a comprehensive public review of the issue, including its impact on Canada Post's mandate to provide universal service."

New Democratic Party: The NDP "strongly opposes the privatization and deregulation of Canada Post."

Canada Post: Canada Post President Moya Greene says she is "not aware of any changes on the part of the government with respect to its ownership of Canada Post." She has dismissed the importance of the exclusive privilege by saying things like, "There's not much exclusivity left to the exclusive privilege."

Positions on international mail

CUPW believes the government may undermine Canada Post's ability to provide universal postal service, particularly in rural and remote parts of our country, if it decides to satisfy the concerns of international remailers by removing international letters from Canada Post's exclusive privilege to deliver letters.

In December, Lawrence Cannon, the federal minister responsible for Canada Post, told Parliament he would review the problems faced by international mailers and examine "legislative options."



Take action now to safeguard the future of public postal services and your job. See the back for details on what you can do.

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What can you do?

Call your MP. You can get your member of Parliament's name and phone number by calling Elections Canada at 1-800-463-6868 (no charge). Just tell the person who answers what you are looking for - the name and phone number of your MP - and give them your postal code.

When: The sooner the better. An election could be called any day.

Why call? A private-sector or deregulated post office would almost certainly look at cost-cutting measures such as eliminating jobs, reducing wages and closing post offices to increase profits.

What to say?

To Conservative MPs: Explain that you know the government has stated that it has "no plans to privatize Canada Post" but that it has not made a similar statement regarding deregulation, and in fact, appears to be considering partial deregulation of Canada Post (that is, removing international letters from Canada Post's exclusive privilege to deliver letters). In December, Minister Cannon said he is looking at his "legislative options." Tell the MP that Canada Post's exclusive privilege has worked well to date, and it should not be tinkered with, or undermined in any way. The exclusive privilege allows the post office to provide everyone, no matter where they live, with an effective and affordable communication and delivery system. This is no small feat in the second largest country in the world. Tell your MP that you would like to know where she or he stands on deregulation, that is, reducing or eliminating Canada Post's exclusive privilege to deliver letters.

To Liberal MPs: Thank them for opposing privatization and deregulation, but point out that their support of international mailers is likely to encourage the government to partially deregulate Canada Post (i.e. remove international letters from Canada's Post's exclusive privilege to deliver letters). Canada Post's exclusive privilege exists to fund universal service. Ask them to reconsider their position on international mail.

To Bloc Quebecois MPs: Thank them

for opposing privatization but let them know you are concerned about their position on deregulation. Tell them you would like the party to take a firm stand against reducing or eliminating Canada Post's exclusive privilege.

To New Democratic MPs: Thank them for taking a strong stand against privatization and deregulation of Canada Post. Ask them to write Minister Cannon and urge the government to oppose deregulation as well as privatization.

Remember that your MP is *your* representative in Parliament, and that she or he is supposed to be interested in what you think.

■ *If Canada Post were deregulated,* private companies would have the right to compete for the lucrative letter market but they would not necessarily be obliged to provide universal service like our public post office. Deregulation would threaten revenues, services and jobs at Canada Post and ultimately its ability to provide universal service at uniform rates.

■ *If Canada Post were privatized,* it would not have to consider the public's interest. A private post office's main goal is to make a profit, not provide jobs or services like a public post office.

Follow-up: If your MP doesn't take a position, tell her or him you understand that they may need time to think about the issue and that you will call them back. Keep calling and writing until your MP takes a position. You can also offer to provide them with additional information such as:

- CUPW's paper called *Postal Deregulation: Its Impact on Postal Workers and the Response of a Postal Union*.

-A backgrounder called *International Remailers' Attempt to Undermine Canada Post's Exclusive Privilege*

-*Our Vision of the Post Office*

You can get all of these documents from your local or the union's website: www.cupw-sttp.org.

What you do or don't do now could have a profound effect on your job and the future of public postal service. Please call your MP today.