



BULLETIN

Political action: speaking up for health care and social services

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On November 19, 2005 British Columbians head to the polls again. This time, its to elect mayors, municipal councillors, school trustees, and regional district representatives.

In the past several years, HSA members have passed resolutions at annual conventions directing the union to do more to encourage HSA members to get involved in their communities through the political processes available to us. I encourage you to participate in the upcoming local elections. Either as a voter, a campaign worker, or as a candidate.

HSAs political action committee has been working hard to respond to members interests. During the provincial election, a number of HSA members were able to participate in election campaigns and received basic training at our non-partisan campaign school. For the municipal elections, the focus is on information about the process, as well as about why we should care about municipal elections.

Decisions made at the local level affect our everyday lives ... from water quality and transportation to community support for seniors, and recreation facilities for our children.

Local representatives speak up for communities on important issues ... whether they are local, provincial, or federal in nature. Local politicians are the closest to our communities, and higher levels of government count on municipal-level representatives to ensure communities voices are heard.

But local government isnt just about standing up for local communities. Its about shaping communities. Its about making our neighbourhoods, our towns, and our cities places where we want to live. Union members, through their local labour councils, are actively involved in community issues, including the election of local government representatives.

Through HSAs membership in the Canadian Labour Congress, the union is affiliated with local labour councils around BC.

Many HSA members will receive information in the mail from the union promoting participation in the municipal election, including information about the candidates who have been endorsed by local labour councils. labour councils have developed a process to interview candidates in order to identify candidates who share the values of the labour movement, and who want to make a difference on municipal councils, school boards, and regional districts.

They are candidates who have committed to principles like social justice, equity, democracy, quality construction, decent wages and working conditions. All candidates are subject to the same accountable, transparent and fair process to determine which of them the Labour Councils believe will best represent the interests of working families.

Historically, fewer than 20 per cent of British Columbians get involved in local elections. I encourage you to

help reverse that trend, and get out to vote on Saturday, November 19. 

Cindy Stewart is president of the Health Sciences Association of BC.

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