

ALERT

To all BCGEU members

March 8, 2006

PLEASE POST

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

We are women of our union. Hear us roar.

A message from **Judi Filion**, BCGEU Secretary-Treasurer and Chair of the Provincial Executive Women's Committee

This International Women's Day, March 8, when women around the world come together to celebrate decades of struggle for equality, justice and peace, thousands of women in our union are at the bargaining table, demanding fair treatment and respect from their employers.

Women comprise two-thirds—66 percent—of our total membership, and the majority of them are in the public sector and in the midst of contract negotiations.

In the health and community social services sectors, BCGEU women care for seniors and people with disabilities, and provide vital services to women who are victims of violence, youth at risk, and families in crisis. They are seeking to restore and improve the wages, benefits, employment security and other provisions that were brutally taken away from them by the Campbell Liberal government.

In the public service, BCGEU women assist people with disabilities in institutions, provide administrative and information technology services, protect children, assist vulnerable people and people in poverty, and are the first point of contact for the public in communities across the province. They are at the bargaining table seeking a decent wage increase that makes up for a two-year

wage freeze and keeps pace with future inflation. After four years of massive cuts, they want stronger employment security and a halt to privatization and contracting out of their work.

In the education support sector that I come out of, my BCGEU sisters are seeking an end to the wage and benefit ghetto that has existed at post-secondary institutions for decades. They register students and help them sort out their schedules, maintain libraries and labs, and provide audio-visual and many other services on campuses

around the province. Their work is vital, and they deserve to be treated better.

This is a critical time for the women in our union. But when we stand together in sisterhood and solidarity, we prevail. I have every confidence that we will emerge from these negotiations strong and united, and with collective agreements that address our members' key issues and strengthen their rights in the workplace.

On March 8, my thoughts will be with our women members who are at the bargaining table, struggling for justice and respect. They are there not just for themselves; they are fighting for their clients and their communities, their daughters and their granddaughters, for our union and all working people.

My heartfelt thanks and best wishes go out to the women of the BCGEU. Happy International Women's Day!

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B.C. Government and
Service Employees' Union

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