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January 3, 2019

Dear Delegates,

Thank you for taking a moment to read this letter.

My name is Shane. I am offering for National President of the Union of Veterans Affairs Employees, with the support of my wife, family, and friends. I have been politically active since the age of 11 years old. My start began when I went to picket lines and rallies that supported workers with my father. As a long-time union activist with the Hospital Employees Union in BC, he brought me to these events to show me the importance of working people standing up for their rights. I learned well.

In grade 11, I was elected class president. In my first year of college I was elected to the student union at Douglas College. In the second year of college I was elected Treasurer. Then I was the External Relations Officer and attended the Canadian Federation of Student's provincial and national conventions. When I transferred to Simon Fraser University, I was elected to the Board of Directors of the CJSF 90.1, the university radio station.

While I was at SFU, I was able to secure a casual position at the Canada Revenue Agency. I started at CRA in March of 1990 and worked each tax season until after I graduated. After graduation I was offered a full-time job at CRA. While at CRA I was involved with the PSAC/UTE (Union of Taxation Employees of the Public Service Alliance of Canada). I became PSAC active in the national strike for the PA table in 1991.

I graduated from SFU with a degree in Economics in 1993. I studied the Economics of Labour and Econometrics. My academic career includes the study of Macro Economic Models, Capital Flows, Forensic Accounting and Mathematics.

In 1998, I transferred from CRA to Veterans Affairs Canada. In March of 1998 I was elected to my first union position as the Local Vice President. In 2000 I was the local

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President. In 2002, I was elected to National Vice President of UVAE for BC. Currently, I am the President of UVAE Local 20045.

I am also active in the PSAC BC Region. I was elected as an alternate Metro Vancouver Coordinator three times: 2002, 2005 and 2014. I have been an officer and President of the PSAC Vancouver and District Area Council. I have been elected as Secretary on the PSAC Lower Mainland Human Rights committee. Today, I am the elected Members with Disabilities Coordinator for the PSAC BC Region and an elected member at large on the Vancouver Area Council.

My education did not stop at SFU. I undertook study at the Justice Institute of BC, the School of the Public Service and PSAC Education. I have certification in conflict resolution, grievance mediation as well as many PSAC courses. My belief is that education should always be life long and consistent.

This brings me to the issue at hand. I am offering for the National President of the UVAE because I think the National Office is broken. We need effective leadership and communication.

The current leadership is acting strangely. Our National President was removed from office and the circumstances were not explained not communicated to the membership effectively. My local has a lot of questions and we all need answers. We are having this election and Mr. Gannon has yet to be heard in an appeal or full investigation. I would have been way more transparent if I were them. It is a shame that it seems so secretive and hidden.

Our national website is still a disgrace. We need to fix what is essential to our members' participation in the union. In today's world an internet presence is mandatory. We need also a twitter feed and a Facebook presence. We need to be a political force! We need to promote our issues to the public. The component has not been doing anything remotely close to this, ever.

The component lacks a vision. We have been fighting small fires for too long when bigger fires have been left unattended. We need to bring back the work from Medavie Blue Cross, immediately! The component has been idly standing by while our members' jobs have been farmed out to private third parties. We must rally support from our allies and bring the work back to our members.

Collective bargaining regarding our sick leave has not ended. We still need to protect the existing system while allowing those who have disabilities to take extended leave without

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using up all their sick leave. Our members needs a plan that includes the existing sick leave and long-term disability (LTD) model and adds to it a short-term disability (STD) plan. Members should not have to use sick leave for medical appointments. Sick leave should be for when you are sick. STD and LTD for when you are disabled or injured.

As a practiced leader in the labour movement, I offer to solve issues. This can be accomplished with an effective and prolonged lobby MPs, MLAs, bureaucrats and Cabinet Ministers. I have been on the front lines of politics. I have meet with several MPs and MLAs already, in Ottawa and at home. I now have close connections with elected officials in BC. I can and will make more ties to other elected officials across Canada.

In my discussion with these officials, I have lobbied to protect our Defined Benefit Pension Plans, to bring in a national pharmacy plan, for pay equity for all women and for the rights of all workers no matter what their status in Canada. UVAE always needs to be heard loud and clear on all issues that affect our members.

We can be better. Better is here. When you cast your ballot for National President, think of your future. Do you want collaborative and communicative leadership? Do you want a union that looks to the future? Do you think our leaders lack vision and transparency? Do you want better? If you pause to think about any of these questions, then your answer ought to be to mark an "X" on the ballot beside my name: Michael Shane Polak.

In solidarity,

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