



It is hard to believe that we are already in June. June is an important month for a lot of reasons. First it is Indigenous History Month (including National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21). Pride Month, the end of the school year throughout Nunavut, and, unfortunately, it is also the fourth month in which Iqaluit Housing Authority (IHA) workers have been on the picket line.

Let's start there. On March 17 (yes, three months ago) the Nunavut Employees Union (NEU) served IHA a [72-hour strike action notice](#). Since then, this employer has not shown any signs of bargaining in good faith or committing to end this labour impasse. Instead, they have chosen to use scab labour and [expensive contractors from the south](#) instead of working to find a way to pay their employees a fair wage.

Despite obvious public support for these workers in Iqaluit, Nunavut and beyond, the IHA refuses to negotiate for fair wages and drop concessions that strip rights away from term and casual workers. They also continue to refuse to negotiate on the fact that they want to limit future entitlements to bilingual bonuses for workers who speak English or French in addition to Inuktitut. Speaking Inuktitut to community members may not be required or valued by the employer, but it is fundamental to Reconciliation and keeping the language alive. **This is Nunavut and the IHA is supposed to serve the community and they should recognize staff that can serve community members in their first language.**

Thank you to all the community members, organizations and others who have stepped up with donations, gifts food/coffee, visits and support for the IHA workers while they stand their ground on the picket line. Please take a moment to read the June [IHA Bargaining Update](#) to see how low the IHA and their negotiator have sunk. Also, if you have not done so, please visit <http://psacnorth.com/nunavut-housing-corporation-must-step-up/> to add your voice to the calls for the IHA to do the right thing.

This fight is not only about Iqaluit and these workers, it is about setting a fair standard for workplaces and Local Housing Associations throughout Nunavut. As stated in the [IHA Bargaining Update](#), this fight is "about more than money". It is also a fight against systemic racism and battle for respect and fairness for all workers in Nunavut.

Respect and understanding are at the heart of both Indigenous History Month and Pride Month. There is a reason why the NEU supports and promotes events like these. It is the same reason why we fight for fair workplaces throughout Nunavut – to create a better place where all people are respected and treated fairly. This commitment is at the heart of the IHA fight and everything we do every day for our members and for all of Nunavut.

Indigenous History Month is a time for all who call Nunavut home to learn about and honor the past so that we can move forward together. As I stated in my [Pride Video](#) we need to be "allies" to each other – in the workplace and in society. The NEU proudly sponsored two Pride events – in [Iqaluit](#) and [Rankin Inlet](#) to stay we stand with and for all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

It also the reason why we are committed to negotiating Collective Agreements that include provisions that address traditional Inuit pursuits and reflect the importance of cultural practices. That also means fighting to ensure workplaces apply IQ Principles and Traditions – including compensating employees for the use of Inuit languages in the workplace.

This commitment to Inuit values will be present in the newest NEU bargaining unit, the Qammaq Housing Association (QHA) in Sanikiluaq. This unit was recently certified and we welcome the QHA workers to the NEU and will be with them as they start the process of negotiating their first Collective Agreement.

As summer approaches I wanted to ask people to watch for kids playing on and beside the streets and to watch out for each other. I would also like to send out a special 'happy summer' wish to all our members working in education (from primary schools to colleges) for their hard work encourages learning at all levels and sets the stage for a brighter future for all of us. After 20 years in education, I understand how hard these members work throughout the year and how they truly deserve a great summer break.

Don't forget, if you are planning on travelling this summer, the NEU can help with member discounts on flights (Canadian North and Calm Air), car rentals, hotel stays and train travel. Please visit [BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS](#). You will have to call or email us for the airline booking codes or check your monthly email updates you should be receiving from [communications@neu.ca](mailto:communications@neu.ca).

In Solidarity,

Jason Rochon – President Nunavut Employees Union