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## **Paramedics win victory in Court**

VANCOUVER—The Supreme Court of BC would not permit the contempt charges the government attempted to bring against the Ambulance Paramedics of BC yesterday due to short notice, requiring the application to follow the rules of the Court. The judge also would not grant the employer's application for alternative relief during the Celebration of Lights events, ruling that the type of relief the employer sought was under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Labour Relations Board.

Ambulance Paramedics of BC president John Strohmaier says he is pleased with the decision.

"We consider this a victory," says Strohmaier. "The Courts would not indulge the government's attempt to solve longstanding degeneration of ambulance services by taking paramedics to court. That's no way to fix the broken system. The government needs to address chronic understaffing of ambulance paramedics that is affecting services for every community in B.C."

Following the judge's ruling, CUPE 873 once again communicated to its members about the seriousness of the essential services order. Strohmaier notes that the union communicates with members on a regular basis about the importance of following the essential services order and upholding the law.

CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill is critical of the government for taking ambulance paramedics before the Court.

"It seems the government is willing to spend tens of thousands of dollars on court costs, which at the end of the day won't improve ambulance service for British Columbians in any way," says O'Neill. "We'll do what it takes to restore B.C.'s ambulance service to the award-winning service it once was. Our neighbours and communities are relying on us to do that."

The paramedics have been trying to address problems of a deteriorating ambulance service and are asking the government to get back to the bargaining table. They have now been on strike for 120 days. Members of CUPE 873 want the government to negotiate so that improvements can be made to how services are delivered. Chronic understaffing and long response times continue to be the biggest issues paramedics want the government to address.

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