

Before I begin, I need to let you know that this isn't my regular voice – I do have a significant case of laryngitis. For those of you who have never heard me speak before, I will tell you that my normal speaking voice is a healthy mix of Morgan Freeman, Sam Elliott, and James Earl Jones.

I'm a settler here on Treaty One lands, and I acknowledge the Indigenous people and their ancestors who are sharing their land with me – those who were signatories to the treaties and those who were not included in the process. I am thankful for the way in which Indigenous peoples have honoured the treaties and the land, I commit to doing my part, and holding my elected officials accountable to doing theirs.

Fellow delegates, it's my honour to come before you again and to ask a third time for your support; I'm also thankful to my local for their on-going support as I enter my seventh year as president. I'm excited to be here before you, surrounded on the stage by Members who are also standing ready to work on behalf of members, and I share in their enthusiasm, even if my voice has betrayed me this week.

For three of my last four years. I have served members as the chair of the provincial bargaining committee. The time I have spent advocating on behalf of members across the province as a member of the table team has been an invaluable learning opportunity. Talking with members about the diversity of needs for members province-wide (and province-tall), has been a journey of growth, of self-examination, and it has led me to seek out professional development on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and psychologically safe leadership, always looking to do the work in a better, more aware, and more informed way. With this learning, I don't shy away from the conversations and discussions at the Provincial Executive table. Advocating for the needs of members is a regular occurrence - it's the way in which I work.

As a member of the Human Resources committee of the Provincial Executive, and through the work of provincial bargaining, working alongside our staff, witnessing and sharing in their expertise has also been a privilege. We are a union and professional organization that is committed to the welfare of

teachers, among other mandates, and some of the hardest parts of that work is done by our staff; it is important that the board also supports them as they, in turn, support members of all stripes, often those who are suffering most.

I am committed to continuing the learning, the conversations, the listening, and the personal growth required to serve members in a way that is respectful and honours member needs. I vow to continue to look for actionable ways to bring member voices to the work of the Society, especially those whose voices have been oppressed and marginalized.

Mr. Rogers has famously said, “Look for the helpers; you will always find people who are helping.” As an advocate and servant leader, I present myself to you as an experienced and qualified candidate, able to be that helper.

My name is Joel Swaan, I’m running for Provincial Executive, and I am asking for your support.

Meegwetch, Tansi, merci and thank you.