

Thursday Rally Highlights Ongoing War on Workers' Rights

On Thursday May 28, our second day at convention, delegates will march on Bay Street. This is the home of corporations that profit from the gutting of public services in favour of government handouts for the wealthy. We will rally at the Ministry of Labour to demand card check certification, which is key to getting unorganized workers unionized. It was Mike Harris who made it mandatory for a vote to be held for certification. A period prior to the vote is allowed which some employers use to harass, coerce, and even terminate workers trying to organize themselves.



Equality Committees

CUPE Ontario's Equality Committees work throughout the year to implement members' equality resolutions. Whether it's marching with a million people at Toronto's Pride parade, spreading the message of racial justice at Caribana, or establishing links with aboriginal leaders, our committee members work to make our union as inclusive as possible.

In December this past year, CUPE Ontario held one of its largest women's conferences ever. At this year's convention, delegates will hear from Young Workers at our Equality Lunch on Friday, and from our International Solidarity committee at the IS forum on Thursday night.

Water Tour

CUPE Ontario and the Council of Canadians are mobilizing against the bottled water industry, which has devoted vast sums of money to undermining our public water system. In January, Sid Ryan and Maude Barlow launched the 'Unbottle It!' campaign. Thousands of people attended the 15-city provincial tour, which garnered major attention in both the mainstream and progressive media. Many communities are now considering banning bottled water, and a new generation of activists is taking the struggle to their own communities.



CUPE Ontario and the Council of Canadians are also working on another cross-Ontario tour to draw peoples' attention to the threat posed by new interprovincial trade accords being proposed by right-wing governments across Canada. As these plans take shape, we will keep you posted.



Pre-Convention Capsule

Economy the focus of CUPE Ontario's 46th Annual Convention.

This year's convention theme is Invest In People: We Are The Solution. The theme reflects what we have always known: that the best way out of this economic crisis is for our governments to invest directly in local communities, to expand our public services, and to promote green, sustainable jobs. Almost 1,000 delegates have registered for convention. From across Ontario, we will converge on Toronto to identify concrete solutions to the economic crisis, and to decide how to make those solutions a reality.



Welcome New Affiliates!

CUPE Ontario is proud to welcome a number of new affiliates to convention. Fifteen affiliates have joined in the past year including: Locals 256, 1059, 2049, 2177, 2357, 2620, 2665, 2816, 3732, 2816, 3732, 4154, 4645, 4698, 4742, 4891 and 7911. Collectively, these new affiliates strengthen us with nearly 3,000 brothers and sisters.

Striking Locals to be Recognized

Almost 2,000 CUPE members in Windsor have been walking the picket line since mid April to hold on to the hard fought wages and benefits that sustain their local community. The members of CUPE local 82, representing Windsor outside workers, and their sisters and brothers in local 543, the inside workers, will be onstage at convention. They will be joined by members of CUPE local 3903, York University. 3903 members were on strike for 85 days during the winter and recently ratified a mediated settlement reached with the University.



CUPE Members Mobilize!

Health Care

In the face of major cutbacks and restructurings in the hospital sector, CUPE Ontario has joined forces with other unions, community groups and concerned citizens to protect local hospital services. Our message is a simple one—Stop the Hospital Cuts! Hundreds have attended town hall meetings held to draw attention to the campaign, and many more town halls have been planned.



Our members continue to struggle for a minimum care standard for patients in long-term care (LTC).

CUPE Ontario, CUPE National and the Ontario Health Coalition teamed up in March to host a two-day event to share information and to strategize in advance of CUPE National's cross-country LTC tour.

CUPE Ontario is also fighting against the McGuinty government's cave-in to private home-care providers with an information campaign calling on Queen's Park to eliminate the disastrous competitive bidding process currently in place for home care services.

Social Services

CUPE Ontario continues to support the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care's 'Waiting for Child Care' campaign with the goal of encouraging parents to lobby the government and individual MPPs to enact legislation to protect public, not-for-profit childcare and make substantial investments to the public childcare system. We are also developing our capacity to fight privatization in the sector through a public information campaign on the economics of childcare, with a cross-Ontario media tour planned.



Universities

The strike at York University by CUPE Local 3903 highlighted Ontario's shameful underfunding of its colleges and universities. CUPE Ontario is now in the process of developing a strategy for post-secondary education (PSE) sector focusing on the need for adequate and sustained funding for our colleges and universities.



Municipalities

Our union is in the midst of an ongoing battle to stop the rollback of wages and benefits in this sector, as governments try to force our members to pay the price for the economic mistakes made by big business. We are engaged in a major labour action in Windsor, and are pushing back against efforts to roll back gains in other at-risk communities.

School Boards

School board workers have reached an historic agreement with representatives from all Ontario school boards, thanks to an enormous effort by bargaining units, staff reps, Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) specialists and union leadership.

Through a coordinated bargaining effort, over 50,000 CUPE school board workers will see a wage increase of 3.0 percent every year for the next four years. Gains have also been made with regard to benefit plans, working hours and staffing levels.