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Sisters and Brothers,

The past year has been both challenging and exhilarating for all of us in CUPE in Ontario. No one will forget Bill 115 and the attack on our collective bargaining rights but we are proud of the strength of our response to this attack.

CUPE members across Ontario mobilized alongside teachers and citizens and, as a result, the Liberals finally repealed Bill 115. When 30,000 people protested outside the Liberal leadership convention in Toronto, Kathleen Wynne said her government would not repeat its mistakes. We must make sure of this.

The first phase of Our Collective Bargaining Works campaign had a strong impact on our members and the general public. Our ads have brought home clearly the benefits that collective bargaining provides to both union members and all Canadians. Our market research shows that the public's understanding of the importance of the right to free collective bargaining has increased as a result of our ad campaign.

But our fight is not over. We know that collective bargaining works. We know that gains made through bargaining by CUPE and other unions which continue to benefit all Canadians are still being threatened by Liberal and Conservative legislative proposals. **We know that to protect our collective bargaining and other union rights all of us must get involved.**

We need to continue building our capacity for member mobilization if we are to successfully fight off the attacks we will face in the year ahead.

The government is continuing its austerity agenda – a program of cuts to public services that will hurt all Ontarians. Child care centres are closing across the province as funding cuts hit communities. Hospitals are closing 18,000 beds. Public pensions are under attack as revenue sources are cut by provincial and municipal governments. Good jobs are disappearing and more people are being forced into precarious, low-wage employment with no benefits.

We have already seen Ontario's Liberal government strip education workers of their collective bargaining rights and now their sights are aimed at removing the right to impartial third-party interest arbitration for CUPE members who do not have the right to strike—like our members who work in the health care sector

Provincial and Federal Conservatives are proposing plans to make major changes to labour laws that would allow employers to effectively strip away our ability to bargain collectively by eliminating the unions ability to collect dues.

For all these reasons, we are getting ready for the second phase of our Collective Bargaining Works campaign, a massive campaign to alert every single member, in face-to-face conversations, about the value of unionism and the threats to our union rights. Through these conversations, we will inform members about the need and the means to counter the threats, and to build our activist and mobilization capacity at the Local, Divisional and National level so we can effectively respond. We

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**Fred Hahn**  
President

**ONE STRONG VOICE**

**Candace Rennick**  
Secretary-Treasurer

will be asking all members to sign a pledge card supporting free collective bargaining as exercised by their union.

The objective is to win the active support of our membership and to organize a visible and powerful movement for change: public investments in public services, not cuts; free collective bargaining to defend the working conditions of our members, not contract concessions; a strong and democratic union, not laws intended to weaken us and to allow government interference in our internal affairs.

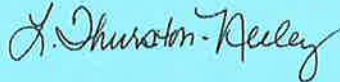
The threats facing us are serious but we can turn things around. We have the power and the capacity to win.

We are preparing training programs and materials so that every local can start the work at the base, speaking one-on-one with members about what is going on in Ontario. Every local will be invited to take part in a training sessions starting in April so that the work can begin as soon as possible. We will also be convening telephone conference calls of local presidents to discuss the next phase of our mobilization.

In Solidarity,



Fred Hahn, President



Linda Thurston-Neeley, Ontario Regional Director

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