



# CONVENTION CAPSULE

CUPE Ontario Convention 2015

Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015



## One election away from a better Canada

Tom Mulcair, NDP Leader and soon to be Canada's first New democratic Prime Minister, electrified the CUPE Ontario convention with a rousing address on his NDP team's plan, with the help of CUPE members, to build a better Canada.

"When I hear CUPE say it's partners with the NDP, nothing makes me prouder," said Mulcair, who went on to highlight some of the party's pledges, such as helping parents with affordable child care.

"For decades we have had promises from Liberal and Conservative governments on childcare, and they have both created the same number of childcare spaces — zero," said

Mulcair. "We are going to create 1 million new child care spaces, at a maximum cost of \$15 per day for parents."

Mulcair made the case that the NDP is the only party that shares CUPE's values, like the importance of protecting public services and assets. With CUPE's help, the NDP can defeat the Harper conservatives, he said.

"Let's make October 15th the day we set this country on the right path," said Mulcair. "Our team is ready. Let's get this done, together."

## Julianne Vondrejs elected

Julianne Vondrejs was elected CUPE Ontario Trustee for a three-year term at Convention on Friday. Sister Julianne is a member of Local 4047 representing workers in the Air Transat Component. She is believed to be the first member of an airline local elected as an executive board member or trustee in CUPE Ontario.

CUPE Ontario has three trustees serving for overlapping three-year terms, with one trustee elected at each Convention. Trustees are responsible for preparing our union's annual audit statement.

Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick thanked outgoing trustee, Sister Lisa Edwards, for her three years of work in the role.

## Equality and Solidarity

MPP Cheri DiNovo and activist and journalist Desmond Cole addressed the equality lunch at noon Friday.

DiNovo spoke about all we've lost under the austerity agenda. Urging a renewed focus on children and youth, she noted how tax cuts mean one in four children goes to school hungry, and of lost opportunity for homeless youth.

Her landmark private members' bill to ban OHIP coverage of so-called "conversion therapy," the Affirming Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Act, will be passed into law in time for Pride celebrations in June.

In a heartfelt, moving speech, Cole spoke about the need to not be co-opted by the language of austerity. He called for activists to think about it "in broader terms, in terms of not just bricks and mortar and programs and services, but also of spiritual and emotional austerity" — the notion that one can know there's enough for everyone, but still not be willing to share. He encouraged us to focus on what we want to build, not just fighting back against someone else's definition of austerity.

Thursday night featured the International Solidarity Forum on global migration and the capitalist system. Professor Grace-Edward Galabuzi, UNISON President Lucia McKeever and Toronto writer and organizer Syed Hussan discussed racism and precarity, illustrating why solidarity across borders are critical in our fight for global justice.

## Let's talk about the kind of Canada we want

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) President Hassan Yussuff made a strong call to action for the upcoming federal election in his message to delegates at CUPE Ontario's annual convention.

"If we are going to win a new government, we have to reach out to those Canadians that vote Conservative," said Brother Hassan.

We cannot bring people to our cause by vilifying Stephen Harper, he said. Recent research and experience have proven it doesn't work and people will instead tune out and walk away.

Instead of talking about Stephen Harper, Yussuff asked delegates to talk about the kind of Canada they want.

Topping the list was a Canada where workers don't fear for their futures, and a new government that will expand the Canada Pension Plan so all Canadians can have retirement security.

Brother Hassan continued by calling for a Canada where close to three-quarters of all jobs created are not precarious, temporary or part-time, but instead a country where young



workers have good jobs and a promising future.

He also focused on child care – one of four planks of the CLC's Better Choice campaign ([betterchoice.ca](http://betterchoice.ca)).

"It's not a Canada where one in five children under six can't access regulated child care. It's not where child care is the second highest expense after housing," he

said. "It is a Canada where child care is valued and expanded."

Yussuff closed by urging delegates to support their NDP candidates.

"We have to get the vote out," he said. "We have to work hard for our NDP candidates, to defeat this Conservative government once and for all."

## Improving life for injured workers



Robert Gauthier, winner of CUPE Ontario's Injured Worker Advocate Award, is VP of CUPE Local 4000 and chairs the local's WSIB/Return-to-Work committee. According to his executive, he is a formidable force on behalf of injured workers.

"He knows his stuff extremely well, he works incredibly hard and he always manages to get the best terms and protections for members," said Rob Driskell, President of CUPE 4000.

Brother Gauthier's case notes are so comprehensive and well-written that the local uses them for steward training.

"I don't know how our local would function without him," concluded Brother Driskell.

### AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Day 4

9:00 am Call to order

Credentials Committee Report

Youth Camp Report Back

Adoption of Action Plan

Resolutions

Adjournment