



70,000 join the women's marches all across Ontario.

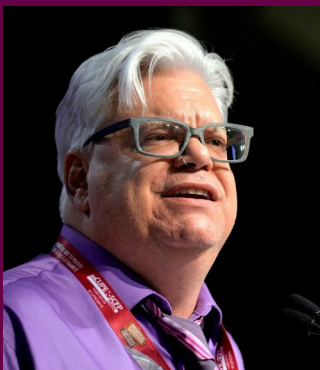
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Your CUPE Ontario Officers



Fred Hahn
President



Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

Political Pulse

News from CUPE Ontario

With more than 260,000 members, CUPE Ontario is a strong voice for rights and fairness for our members and our communities.

We work at the provincial level for legislative, policy and political change on issues affecting public services, equality, healthy communities and a better Ontario for everyone.

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Friends,

Divide and conquer is an age-old tactic used by employers to weaken the power of workers. Most of us have seen this in our own workplaces at some point, where the employer takes advantage of individual worries to spread misinformation designed to divide us. These days, we're seeing this strategy being used not only by employers, but also by politicians determined to pit their own citizens against each other for the purpose of implementing a mean-spirited corporate agenda.

People's response has been a true inspiration.

Instead of remaining silent, hundreds of thousands of people across Canada and the United States have taken to the streets to stand in defiance of the hate, fear, racism and misogyny that is being propagated by the new American President and political opportunists here in Canada.

On January 21st, in communities all across Ontario, close to a hundred thousand people came together at Women's Marches to stand with our sisters south of the border against the misogyny that was embraced in their recent election.

In the face of the horrific shooting at a mosque in Quebec, non-Muslims formed human chains of love around local mosques to stand with their fellow citizens in their time of unthinkable grief.

In response to Trump's unconstitutional travel ban, Ontarians have returned to the streets to denounce Islamophobia and to call on our governments to open our borders to those being denied entry to the U.S.

Across the province, CUPE members are joining these rallies, as a logical extension of the resistance our members are showing in their fight against unreasonable demands at the bargaining tables, their fight against privatization and contracting out, their fight against hospital cuts, fight to get better quality care for long-term care residents and the many other issues that matter.

Those trying to divide us never have our best interests at heart.

We are pushing back and we are winning. Whether it's in our workplaces, within our union or within our communities, we are stronger together. The more we come together to support those around us, the stronger we will be, and the greater our chances of building better lives for all of us.

In solidarity,

Fred Hahn
President

Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

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Member Spotlight: Kim Monette, Health & Safety Advocate



Kim Monette, CUPE 4000

When Kim first decided to become a health & safety instructor five years ago, incidents of injuries from violence at Ottawa Civic Hospital were out of control and management was doing little about it.

Violence in the workplace is extremely common in the health care sector. Patients and family members under heightened stress lash out at

staff. Orderlies grabbed by the hair and pulled to the ground, support workers thrown up against walls, and staff faced with addicts trying to get access to drugs.

When Kim first became active, there were only two certified health and safety reps for all campuses of the hospital – one union side and one management side. Today, that has all changed. Every campus now has a joint health and safety committee with all members trained by Kim, who became a certified instructor through the Workers Health & Safety Center. More than 2000 staff

have received Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training and the hospital allocated \$3 million for health and safety in their budget.

Change began when things hit a crisis point in 2014. With the rate of injuries and violent incidents out of control, all the unions representing workers in the hospital decided to create their own annual joint training day to build skills and a collaborative plan of action. Together the committee filed a joint recommendation under the Health and Safety Act outlining all the problems and their recommended solutions.

91 field visits from Ministry inspectors and 121 compliance orders later, management began to take the issues seriously.

The Ottawa hospital now has both a violent incident review group that meets every two weeks to review all occurrences with an eye to future prevention, and has implemented a risk assessment schedule for all areas at risk of violence at each of the hospital sites.

Having made substantial improvements to her own workplace, Kim has now been elected chair of CUPE Ontario's Health & Safety Committee with the goal of helping others make change within their own workplaces.



Where there's a strike your support is needed.

Strike Updates

CUPE 2974 - Essex County Library workers A tentative settlement has now been reached after a seven and a half month strike that has caused political fallout that will likely cost many on the county council to lose their seat in the next election. These impressive library workers stood strong in the face of a county council that refused to listen to their constituents. More than two-thirds of area voters stood with the workers.

CUPE 2049 - Nipissing & Parry Sound CAS workers have been locked out since December 23. Refusing to accept cutbacks these workers have now been out for more than seven weeks. With the recent Peel CAS settlement on their side, members remain strong in their convictions.

CUPE 4155 - French Catholic School Board of Eastern Ontario went out on strike on February 7. This is the only school board local that has not been able to get a local deal in their 2015 round of bargaining. After more that a year of fruitless bargaining with a Board bent on unreasonable takeaways, these workers were left with little choice but to hit the picket line.

Seven more locals are in strike or look-out positions in the next month.

Join our members on the picket lines. Make donations to their strike funds. Send them a message of solidarity. Visit cupe.on.ca for updates.

Public stands with CUPE Ontario over Hydro privatization

The fight to protect the people of Ontario from further privatization of our hydro system continues. As CUPE's lawsuit against the government moves forward, so do plans to fight this on the ground in communities and into the upcoming provincial election.



The Keep Hydro Public coalition is meeting to plan the next phase of their community engagement campaign that will begin to roll out early this spring. CUPE Ontario members across the province will be encouraged to get involved.

Rising electricity rates are already having a crippling effect on the budgets of municipalities, schools and health care

providers. Already underfunded services are having to divert resources away from frontline services to cover their increased costs.

Hydro privatization is a political decision that has far-reaching fallout that will continue for generations to come if we do not succeed in stopping it.

On January 31, the lawyers for the Premier and Ministers of Energy and Finance responded to CUPE's lawsuit against them, employing a typical legal stall tactic, asking the courts to dismiss the case.

In interviews with the media CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn pointed out that throughout the sell-off of Hydro One shares, the government has tried to avoid any form of public scrutiny. Though it is disappointing that the case won't go to trial sooner, it's not surprising that they want to try and stop the public spotlight this case will bring to their actions.

CUPE Ontario is confident the government won't succeed in their attempt to have the suit dismissed and strongly believes that it is in everyone's best interest that this case proceed to trial before the next election. It is anticipated that the government's motion will be heard by the courts later in the spring.

In the meantime, CUPE has requested that the Premier hold off on any further sale of Hydro One shares until the court has been able to hear the case. The people of Ontario still own the majority of shares and the vast majority want to keep it that way.



CUPE Ontario partners with communities to save local schools

Short-sighted government policy and lack of funding is resulting in the proposed closure of community schools all across Ontario. Beyond forcing kids to spend hours on buses, the loss of a local school can have a devastating impact on the towns and neighbourhoods around them that rely on the school as the focal point for community activity.

For many small towns, the loss of a school can be the beginning of the end as young families choose to live where their kids have access to a local school.

CUPE Ontario, along with our school board locals, has joined with parents and community allies to fight these closures and lobby the provincial government to develop viable alternatives that don't abandon whole towns.

Victory on Toronto Hydro and contracting out

In September, Toronto Mayor John Tory announced to a crowd of business people that he planned to privatize Toronto Hydro. CUPE Ontario immediately partnered with our Toronto locals and several community organizations to campaign against his plan. Together we hit the streets, knocking on doors, collecting petition signatures and getting people to phone and email their city councillors.

The public was on our side. Councillors received hundreds of emails and phone calls. The mayor wasn't able to get the votes he needed to approve the privatization and was forced to back down.

In December, Mayor Tory then announced his plan to contract out the garbage collection run by the City. CUPE 416, with support from the rest of our union, again sprung into action, lobbying key councillors and knocking on doors in the affected areas of the city.

Once again, we were able to build the public support we needed to defeat the Mayor's plan and were able to stop the contracting out of good quality jobs.



CUPE members and community allies, delivering petitions to councillors to stop the privatization of Toronto Hydro.



Peel Children's Aid workers celebrate the power of solidarity

Victory tastes sweet after three months on strike. On September 18, Peel Children's Aid workers went out on strike over workload issues that put them, and the children they're responsible for, at risk.

Despite attempts by the employer to

break member solidarity by bringing in scabs, trying to exploit the rumour mill and forcing a Ministry supervised vote, the members of CUPE 4914 stood strongly behind their bargaining team.

Their commitment to each other and the children they serve was rewarded.

In the end, they won a caseload reduction along with other improvements.

Their biggest victory according to the members is the bond they now have between them and the newfound strength of their local.

Queen's Park Review

The Ontario Legislature began its winter recess on December 8 after a busy fall. It will resume sitting on February 21.

The dominant issue still hounding the government is the widespread unhappiness over hydro, along with growing frustration over local school closures.

Important legislation we need to be aware of:

Bill 02 – Election Finance Reform

Under this new law we are still allowed to talk to our members, but there are now severe restrictions on the ability of unions to publicly campaign on issues we believe in beginning six months before a provincial election; union and corporate contributions have been banned outright; and MPPs, candidates and even persons seeking nomination as candidates are banned from attending any fundraising event sponsored by a political party.

Bill 70 – Budget Measures

This 120-page bill with 26 schedules included two sections that were particularly troubling to most of the labour movement.

Schedule 16 contains enabling legislation for a new system of workplace health and safety accreditation that Ministry staff said would allow some employers to get out of routine workplace inspections. After significant push back from CUPE and other unions, the Minister of Labour and Chief Prevention Officer have provided assurance this won't happen, though the new accreditation system has yet to be introduced.

Schedule 17 raises serious concerns by making it easier for employers to assign tasks that require a certified trades person to people who have not been properly certified. CUPE Ontario continues to push the government for assurances that this won't happen.

Bill 89 – Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act

This bill has not yet been passed but has been introduced to facilitate anticipated mergers and amalgamation of many of Ontario Children's Aid Societies. Of significant concern is the fact that this proposed legislation requires the government to provide notice of potential mergers to CAS boards long before they're required to inform workers and their union.

Fred Hahn has formally asked the Minister to amend this to ensure all parties are notified at the same time.

Ongoing legislative issues:

The government also continues to move ahead slowly with the Changing Workplace Review that is expected to lead to reforms of the Employment Standards Act (ESA) and the Labour Relations Act (OLRA.) At this point, actual legislation is anticipated to be introduced prior to the June 2018 election.

With input from CUPE Ontario, the government is also continuing work on a gender wage gap strategy.

CUPE Ontario is also working to raise concerns about the proposed Basic Income Guarantee pilot program, that appears to be more of a public relations plan rather than a real plan for poverty reduction.

Face to face with the Premier

Locked out CAS workers took their concerns straight to the Premier on her visit to North Bay, January 25.

With an employer willing to put children's lives at risk by locking out the workers meant to protect them, it's important to make sure those at the top really know what's going on.

The workers shared their concerns, but the question remains whether or not it fell on deaf ears.





The voice of women was heard around the world

On January 21, we marched. In cities and towns across Ontario close to 100,000 of us marched. Close to 5 million marched worldwide.

We marched to stand with our sisters south of the border, against the misogyny that was minimized and even embraced in their recent election. We marched to end violence against women and for the missing and murdered aboriginal women. We marched for reproductive rights, racial justice, workers' rights, civil rights and protecting our planet.

We marched because women's rights are human rights.

And because we still have a long way to go to reach full equality here in Canada.

It was an uplifting and inspiring day.

Mothers marched with daughters, friends marched arm in arm, charged by the power they felt around them.

For CUPE Ontario leaders Candace Rennick and Fred Hahn it was the largest march they have ever walked. For many it was their first march.

There's no question that it was an important day, but we must build from here.

The cost of childcare is stopping women from being able to go back work. The wage gap between men and women is getting bigger not smaller. Women politicians are regularly subjected to hate speech.

We may look south of the border and feel grateful we live in Canada, but we can't be distracted from the real issues women face every day here in Ontario in 2017.

CUPE Ontario Women's Conference Inspires

"Take the power - be the change," were the themes of the 2016 Women's Conference held in December. For the women in attendance, this wasn't much to ask.

Over the course of the three days, hundreds of CUPE women came together to discuss issues that effect their lives - equal pay, childcare, sexual violence and funding for the public services we all depend on and work in.

Strategizing together on how to make real gains, these women created a space that respected and celebrated the diversity of each other's backgrounds and experiences.

They left with a determination to make 2017 the year of the woman.





1000 health care workers rally at Hamilton General

More than 1,000 health care workers and union leaders rallied outside Hamilton General on February 6 in a cry for help as funding cuts to our health care system are causing an increase in patient suffering and workers facing an increase violence and burnout.

"We're here today to say we're breaking – physically and emotionally, trying to deliver patient care," said Michael Hurley, president of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions. "Hospitals are dealing with too many patients, not enough beds and not enough staff to handle the beds we have. We're

asking the government to adequately address the health care needs of Ontario's aging and growing population."

"We stand together to defend our health care system," said CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn, speaking to the crowd. "The best advocacy we can do for patients and residents is to push hard for the resources to care for them properly."

Patients are being pushed out of hospitals before they are well enough to go home - and those needing to go to a nursing home can't find a bed.

Workers in hospitals and long-term care homes are facing violence from patients and their families who are overcome by stress and not getting the level of services they need.

Eight years of provincial Liberal funding cuts have reduced hospital budgets by over 25 per cent in real terms. Health care workers can't take it anymore.

Hamilton's rally was the second of a province-wide outcry. More demonstrations are planned in Kenora on April 26, Sudbury on June 15 and Ottawa on October 19.

Upcoming events

Ouwcc Conference

Ontario Regional Office
Feb 23-26

Spring School

Toronto Sheraton Centre
Feb 28-Mar 5

SSWCC Conference

Crowne Plaza, Niagara Falls
Mar 23-26

Library Workers Conference

Caesars Windsor
Mar 28 & 29

OMECC Conference

Caesars Windsor
Mar 29 – Apr 1

Convention

Toronto Sheraton Centre
May 31-June 3

CACO Conference

Marriott Niagara Falls
Sept 18 & 19

HCWCC Conference

Marriott Niagara Falls
Sept 19-22

National Convention

Toronto
Oct 2-6