

NEWS FROM CUPE ONTARIO

Spring 2017



Solidarity On Picket Lines Across Ontario

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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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Greetings from Fred and Candace

All across Ontario, in communities small and large, our members fight every day – on the picket line and on the job – to make sure our workplaces and our communities are organized around principles of fairness and dignity.

We've had an unprecedented number of strikes and lockouts so far this year. After more than a decade of austerity, our members are saying 'enough's enough.' We're not only refusing to accept concessions, we're demanding improvements. Library workers, children's aid workers, ASL interpreters, school board support staff, municipal employees ... this is the new face of the picket line in Ontario.

And it's all because trickle-down economics only benefits the sponges at the top, and our members refuse to pay the price for this approach to our province's economy and our public services any longer.

Why are we standing up? To push back against precarity and ensure that the lowest paid among us get paid at least \$15 hour. We're standing because our members, over 60% of whom are women, won't just roll over when asked to give up their hard-earned health and sick leave benefits. We're standing up because, as our members at the Canadian Hearing Society are clearly saying on their picket line, four years without a raise is four years too many.

We're also standing up because we can't abide the cuts to the services we offer – services that keep our cities and towns clean, green, safe and livable, services for the deaf community, services for vulnerable children, services that educate the next generation. We're standing on the picket line for them and fighting privatization and cuts across all our sectors.

As we approach Earth Day, we're also standing up for the very future of our planet. CUPE Ontario members know that we need to be bold if we are going to protect our earth for future generations. That's why we're currently figuring out how to make the LEAP Manifesto central to our work as a union and fighting to expand the green, clean public services our members provide that make Ontario a great place to live.

CUPE Ontario members are bold and brave. And every single day, we are both proud to say we work with, and for, you.

Fred Hahn and *Candace Rennick*

Fred Hahn
President

Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jason Stockdale

Durham Region's Paramedic of the Year
CUPE Local 1764



Jason Stockdale, a paramedic for over fifteen years, knows better than most the toll his line of work can take on our first responders.

That's because several years ago Jason began to volunteer with the Durham Region Critical Incident Stress Team. He quickly recognized that the employer didn't have the necessary supports in place for paramedics, firefighters and police officers following critical events. Sending these workers home without a proper recovery plan places an unreasonable burden on them, their families and their loved ones.

That's why Jason decided to devote himself to serving as the WSIB officer for his local. Over the last three years, he has successfully championed cases for several members to get their claims recognized and get the

treatment and support they desperately needed.

Seeing how hard it was to get both the employer and WSIB to take traumatic stress claims seriously, Jason soon realized that it would take more than local advocacy to make change for his colleagues. That's why Jason stepped up to participate in the April 2016 Lobby Day organized by CUPE Ontario's Ambulance Committee (CACO) to ensure our MPPs understand the issues paramedics face.

In fact, it's because of the hard work and determination of Jason and others in his sector that the provincial government passed the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act last year. The legislation was a long-awaited acknowledgement that PTSD among first responders needs to be taken seriously, responded to quickly and treated like any other form of work-related injury.

Jason sees this legislation as just the beginning. There is so much more to be done to ensure paramedics get the fair treatment and support they need from both their employers and from the province.

Who has it right with their hydro plan?



Last month both the NDP and the Liberals released plans to rein in skyrocketing hydro rates.

This should come as no surprise: everyone at Queen's Park knows people across Ontario are reeling from skyrocketing rates, and hydro is quite likely to be the ballot question in the next provincial election.

While both plans claim to help people's pocketbooks, only the NDP's plan, "Pay Less. Own More," actually focuses on public ownership. For more on the NDP's plan visit act.ontariondp.ca/hydro.

The Liberal plan, on the other hand, refinances the debt so we all end up paying more in the long run. Their plan is to amortize hydro costs over 30 years instead of 20. As a result, while some monthly bills may indeed go down, hydro bill payers will actually pay a staggering \$30 billion more in the long term.

Ontario created a public hydro system to grow the economy, create jobs, and generate revenue. Kathleen Wynne and her cronies are trying to sell our public asset off to the highest bidder. That's why CUPE Ontario is ramping up the pressure – on the streets and in the courts – in the fight to Keep Hydro Public.

STRIKE UPDATES

Where there's a strike, your support is needed

CUPE Local 4155 Eastern Ontario French Catholic School Board

These 250 education workers began their strike on February 7, after two years of their employer demanding concessions.

In one short week, members fought back the use of scabs and rallied their community. The strike, which began as the CUPE Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee (OSBCC) held their annual conference, received solidarity from across the province.

Members' determination paved the way for an agreement that mitigated the employers' proposed concessions and was overwhelmingly ratified.



CUPE Locals 32 and 1882 – Cambridge Municipal Workers

Local 32, the Cambridge outside workers, went out on strike on February 2, after their employer refused to address serious wage discrepancies. Six days later the local had put on enough pressure to reach an agreement that was overwhelmingly ratified.

BUT, apparently the employer didn't learn from the experience and on February 17, CUPE Local 1882, the inside workers went on strike against job evaluation concessions being demanded by the employer. Like Local 32, their strike ended six days later with an agreement that successfully pushed back proposed concessions.



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



CUPE Local 2049 Nipissing and Parry Sound Children's Aid Society

The dedicated frontline, administrative and support staff at Nipissing and Parry Sound CAS remain steadfast despite being locked out now for over three months.

They're still standing strong because they refuse to compromise over the quality of service they provide to keep children and youth safe in northern communities.

CUPE Ontario members and supporters from across the province continue to join them on the line.

It's no coincidence that this lockout comes after six years of stagnant funding for children's aid societies in

Ontario.

The workers bussed down to Queen's Park to meet with the Minister for Children and Youth Services and other MPPs.

Growing concern over the state of child protection in the region has prompted CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn to call on the Minister of Children and Youth Services to dissolve the Board of the Nipissing and Parry Sound CAS and launch a ministry takeover.



Local 2073



Strike: No concessions, say striking Canadian Hearing Society workers

CUPE Local 2073 Canadian Hearing Society

Local 2073 represents 227 counsellors, literacy instructors, audiologists, speech language pathologists, interpreters/interpreter trainers, clerical support, program coordinators, program assistants, information technology specialists and others at 24 CHS offices across the province.

The local membership, 90% of whom are women, have been without a contract or wage increases for 4 years. To add insult to injury, the employer is pushing for major concessions on sick leave and benefits.

After being presented with multiple options for negotiating a settlement, the CHS rejected all offers and left the union with no choice but to commence strike action on March 6.

CUPE Ontario's Executive Board, local leadership, staff, rank-and-file CUPE members, as well as union allies and NDP MPPs and MPs, have been boosting picket lines ever since. Striking members have also received widespread support from the community they serve. On March 24, the local took to the airwaves with a radio ad urging the employer back to the table.



Queen's Park Review

Bill 92 – School Boards Collective Bargaining Act

On March 23, Bill 92, the School Boards Collective Bargaining Amendment Act, passed into law with Liberals and PCs voting in favour. Only the NDP voted against the bill.

Despite strenuous objections by CUPE Ontario, Bill 92 makes participation in central bargaining mandatory for all education workers' unions, taking away the democratic rights of our school board workers to determine their participation.

The bill also creates a new, additional five-day notice requirement, if a union decides it's necessary to move from work-to-rule job actions to a full strike.

Bill 89 – Children's Aid Societies

CUPE Ontario continues to work hard to get changes to this mammoth bill. Bill 89 paves the way for a massive restructuring of child protection by allowing the Minister of Children and Youth Services to order mergers and amalgamations of children's aid societies.

One of CUPE Ontario's key objections is that the bill only mandates advanced notice of proposed mergers to the employers and not the union.

As it stands now, the bill requires the Minister to give societies advanced notice with a 30-day period to respond. It makes no such commitment to employees and their union, only requiring we be notified after the fact.

Ontario Budget 2017/18

Expected in April, the government has forecasted that Ontario will see a return to a balanced budget. This raises alarm bells about funding for public services. CUPE Ontario will release a detailed response as soon as the budget is made public.



Changing Workplace Review

The final recommendations of the Changing Workplace Review Special Advisors are expected this spring. They have the potential to make much-needed gains for hundreds of thousands of workers left behind by a changing economy. At issue are changes to the Employment Standards Act (laws that establish minimum protections for workers without a union) as well as to the rules on how workers can or can't join a union.

Recommendations from workers include: extending card check union certification to those Ontario workers still excluded; restoring the provincial ban on the use of scabs; and improving basic workplace protections by ensuring all workers can access benefits like paid sick time under the Employment Standards Act.

CUPE Ontario leaders have consistently told the government it is time to raise the bar in a province where precarious work is on the rise, and to ensure people are guaranteed the right to decent work and fair treatment by their employers.

Bill 02 - Changes to Ontario's election finance laws

Bill 02, which passed on December 5, 2016, makes sweeping changes to the financing of provincial election campaigns, candidates and political parties. It also places restrictions on third parties (like unions) before and during election campaigns. (con't...)

What's new?

- Unions and corporations are barred from contributing money or goods and services to a political party, constituency association, candidate, nomination contestant or leadership contestant.
- “Third Parties” (unions and NGO’s) face new spending restrictions during and prior to elections. Changes now mean issue campaigns (like public healthcare or Keep Hydro Public) that address an issue associated with a political party will now be considered third party advertising, even if they don’t mention a party or candidate.
- Unions and NGOs, as “third parties,” are pretty much unrestricted in their ability to communicate internally with their own members about elections.
- An MPP, party leader, nomination candidate, someone running to be a party leader and anyone employed in the office of a party leader or as a chief of staff to a Minister, are legally barred from attending any political party fundraising event.

Many observers, including unions, third party groups and the NDP, believe that elements of this legislation are contrary to rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Charter.

As a union leader/activist, what am I legally allowed to do under the new “Bill 02” rules?

Communicating to CUPE members:

- You can make a speech or use the telephone, mail, email, texting, videos, newsletters, leaflets, broadcast voice messages, and/or posters to inform CUPE members (not the general public) about an election, an election issue, a party, a candidate and to encourage them to vote for a particular party and candidate and ask them to get active by volunteering for that party and candidate.
- You can ask a party or candidate to send a speaker to your union meeting.
- You can distribute, to members, by mail or in person, literature, posters, buttons, leaflets or videos that were produced by a party and/or candidate.
- You can ask/encourage your fellow CUPE members to make personal individual contributions of their own personal funds, not union funds, to a party or candidate.
- You can ask your members to volunteer for a candidate’s campaign and/or do any of the above yourself.

If you have any questions about what your Local can or cannot do in upcoming provincial elections, please contact CUPE Ontario.

Public Opinion

The Ontario Legislature has a short while left before summer recess. The biggest single issue continues to be hydro, as high prices and privatization fuel rising voter discontent.

Recent polling shows:

82% Oppose further sale of Hydro One shares

76% Say any further sale would affect their vote in the next election.

(Angus Reid March 24, 2017)

When the question becomes “**Who’s best for Premier?**”

23% Patrick Brown

22% Andrea Horwath

9% Kathleen Wynne

(Lowest value ever recorded for a premier – Forum Research, March 31, 2017)

Voters are certainly angry at the Liberals, but with the next election still over a year away, it’s far from certain who will form the next government in the spring of 2018.



CUPE Women, Bold and Brave

On March 5 and 8, CUPE Ontario members joined women around the globe to observe International Women's Day (IWD). Whether at our IWD Breakfast, at our Annual Spring School or at marches and events across Ontario, CUPE women and allies led the way in this annual touchstone in the struggle for gender equality.

First celebrated to commemorate the 1908 strike by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, IWD has deep roots in the labour movement. CUPE has a rich history of standing up for women's rights. In 1975, our union became the first major trade union in North America to elect a woman president. Today, women make up 68% of CUPE's membership. Over the past year, CUPE women across Ontario have taken the lead in organizing resistance to concessions and precarity on the picket lines.

Across Canada, working families continue to suffer from a lack of affordable, accessible child care. Women

remain over-represented in part-time, precarious work. And in Ontario, women workers earn an average of 30% less than men—a gap which is even bigger for racialized and Aboriginal women, young women, and women with disabilities.



Over the past year, CUPE Ontario has advocated for change in the workplace and beyond. At Queen's Park, our union actively supported Bill 177, the Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave, Accommodation and Training Act, now at committee. With the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care we advocate for the development of a universal, high quality public child care system, and we work with the Equal Pay Coalition to end the gender wage gap.

This International Women's Day, we redoubled our efforts in the fight for equality and empowerment for our union sisters and all women through political advocacy,





Caring for the Earth and Each Other: CUPE Ontario Leaps into Action

At last year's convention, CUPE Ontario ratified the Leap Manifesto "an action plan for Canada that focuses on caring for the Earth, and each other."

What does this mean for CUPE Ontario? It means first and foremost that we will join our allies in labour and elsewhere and pressure our government to take effective action to combat climate change.

But beyond that, what else could the Leap Manifesto mean for all of us, in our workplaces, in our homes and in our communities? Our Environment Working Group has taken on the task of figuring that out.

A key component to the Leap Manifesto is Just Transitions, or the creation of good jobs for workers who are displaced from high carbon industries. CUPE Ontario can advocate for strong policies and practices at the provincial level to support this kind of economic shift.

Many of CUPE Ontario's members are already engaged in the fight for green jobs and environmental justice. That's why we fight the privatization of public services and utilities – so they are managed with the public good, not profitability, at the forefront.

Many of us work in sectors that are entirely focused on

well-being – of children, of seniors, of women, of our communities, our green spaces, and the environments in which we live and work. As a result, we know intuitively that the environment, health and the economy are completely intertwined.

At CUPE Ontario, we want to be leaders of a bold agenda for change. At the same time, we have an obligation to minimize the impact of economic transformation on our members, our fellow workers and all Ontarians. In the long run, we all win if both our economy AND our environment are made more sustainable.

Our indigenous communities teach us that we need to think about the impact of our decisions for seven generations after us. We have a moral obligation to them to avoid environmental catastrophe.

A Call for a Canada
Based on Caring
for the Earth
and One Another



the **leap manifesto**.org

**Your Environmental Working Group wants to hear your ideas for how we can Leap into action.
Please take a minute to read the Leap Manifesto online, and send us your thoughts to:
cupe.ontario.environment@gmail.com**

Conferences & Events

School Board Workers Conference

Over 350 delegates attended the annual OSBCC Conference in Richmond Hill on February 7-11. Members came together to discuss the Liberals' Bill 92, which makes central bargaining mandatory for all education workers. A panel of community allies representing Fix Our Schools, People for Education and the Ontario Alliance Against School Closures made links with a number of province-wide OSBCC campaigns. Delegates also grappled with pressing issues like the growing prevalence of workplace violence and how to make the campaign for Whole School Funding a reality.



80 delegates from Universities, attended the first-ever CUPE Ontario sectoral conference

Social Services Workers Conference

Whether it was through strikes and lockouts, public rallies or lobbying, CUPE Ontario's social service members have stood up to austerity, privatization and the forces that put profit before people.

This year's social services conference in Niagara Falls (March 23 to 26) kicked off with keynote speaker Dave Meslin telling delegates, "Your work defines our humanity," and urging everyone to create a "bottom-up flow of ideas and engagement" within the union and in our political systems.

That same day, delegates pressed the conference theme "Educate, Agitate, Organize, Resist" into action with a Keep Hydro Public Rally. As MPP Wayne Gates reminded the crowd, the city and the Falls themselves

University Workers Conference

Increased precarious work on campuses, looming strike deadlines at several locals, sexual violence on campus, reviewing the province's post-secondary funding formula: these are just a handful of the issues that the 80 delegates contended with at the first-ever CUPE Ontario sectoral conference to be held in the Ontario Regional Office. University members also took time to examine the pension landscape, including developments in the establishment of a Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan for the sector. An Action Plan was developed to support locals in bargaining and increase political pressure to achieve fair and accountable funding for post-secondary education.

are the first home of public power in Ontario.

A highlight of the conference was the strike panel, moderated by SSWCC chair Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam and featuring reps from CUPE Locals 4914, 2204, 2049, 3902 and 4325 who shared stories, advice and laughter from their time on the picket line.





The International Women's Day Breakfast was a highlight of this year's Spring School

Spring School 2017

450 CUPE Ontario members made their way to our annual Spring School held at the Sheraton Centre Toronto, February 28 to March 5.

Offering a wide range of sessions, the school is essential to ensuring members have the skills and information they need to support their co-workers and make advancements both at work and in the community.

"When I visited classrooms looking for feedback, I heard two things," said Yolanda McClean, CUPE Ontario's Education Committee Chair. "First, I heard people say it's impossible to ever get enough education, and for that reason they really value the school. The second thing I heard was a desire for more learning opportunities about CUPE's political campaigns."

One such learning opportunity came on Saturday morning at the International Women's Day breakfast, where delegates came together to talk about childcare, precarious work and other challenges faced primarily by women in the workforce.

Scholarships are one way CUPE Ontario tries to break down barriers to participation. Nine members were awarded scholarships this spring, which covered their enrollment, travel and accommodations.

Registration for Fall School opens in June. For a list of scholarships and to apply for them online, please visit: cupe.on.ca/scholarships.

The Education Committee is always keen for your feedback. To provide suggestions visit: cupe.on.ca/education and fill in the "Send us a message" form.

Upcoming Events

May 31 – June 3	Convention	Toronto Sheraton Centre
Sep 18 – 19	CACO Conference	Marriott Niagara Falls
Sep 19 – 22	HCWCC Conference	Marriott Niagara Falls
Oct 17 – 21	IWH&S Conference	Holiday Inn Toronto Airport
Oct 31 – Nov 5	Fall School	Toronto Sheraton Centre
Nov 12 – 15	Political Action Conference	Toronto Sheraton Centre
T.B.A.	Human Rights Conference	
T.B.A.	Secretary Treasurers Conference	