

## New phase in Keep Hydro Public campaign builds on growing opposition to sale

At Queen's Park February 9, CUPE Ontario and Keep Hydro Public coalition partners unveiled the next phase in the fight to stop privatization of Hydro One.

"An overwhelming majority of Ontarians are angry about the Liberals' planned hydro sell-off. This new phase in the campaign will help people already organizing in communities across the province to channel that strong and growing opposition to hold their Liberal MPP to account. It is an MPP's job to represent their constituents, and their constituents want them to keep hydro public," said CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn.



New campaign materials highlight that 85 percent of Hydro One is still owned by the people of Ontario, and it's not too late to Keep Hydro Public. They challenge Liberal MPPs to listen to their constituents, the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Office, Chambers of Commerce, and to the 194 municipalities that passed resolutions opposing the sale – and stop any

further privatization. As the campaign rolls out in Liberal ridings, advertising and leaflets will feature the face and contact information of local MPPs.

Hahn was joined at the launch by Ontario Health Coalition Executive Director Natalie Mehra and

TTCriders Executive Director Jessica Bell, as well as representatives of many Keep Hydro Public campaign partners, including ACORN, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Canadian Federation of Students and Put Food in the Budget.

The campaign will roll out over coming months, starting in two Toronto ridings later in February.

"Just like the anger Ontarians feel, we're not going away until the Liberals stop the hydro sell-off mistake," said Hahn.

Find out more about the campaign at [KeepHydroPublic.ca](http://KeepHydroPublic.ca).

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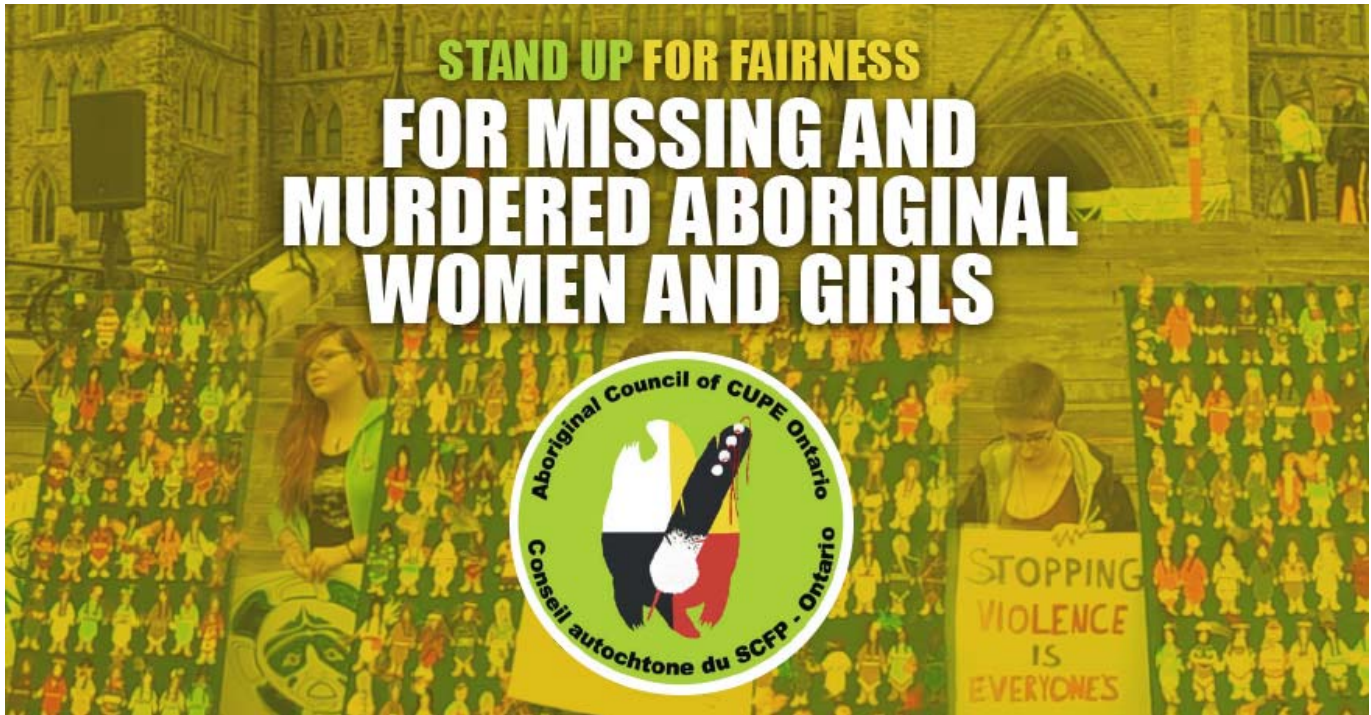
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## Fairness for missing and murdered aboriginal women



The CUPE Ontario Aboriginal Council thanks all members who took action to support CUPE Ontario's campaign, Stand up for Fairness – For Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls.

The announcement by the federal government that they are beginning the process of holding a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls is due to the efforts of people across Canada, including CUPE Ontario members who overwhelmingly supported our campaign by sending

thousands of postcards to MPs.

It has been a long struggle, and it is one that is not over yet. But it shows our union can make a difference when we make our collective voices heard.

For more information on the CUPE Ontario Aboriginal Council, visit [cupe.on.ca/committees/aboriginal-council](http://cupe.on.ca/committees/aboriginal-council).

## Fairness works to build the base

"I ate it up right away," CUPE Local 960 President Tiffany Balducci says of the Stand Up for Fairness initiative. "I worked on Obama's campaign with the Snowflake initiative and knew it worked."

CUPE 960, representing about 85 library workers in Oshawa, sought out members who had never been active in their union before. They focused on giving them information and asking what the local should look like and do for them, bringing along bags with Fairness bracelets and other union materials.

The response was overwhelmingly positive, says Balducci, who is also a member of the CUPE Ontario executive board. The local now has stewards in every workplace, a full health and safety committee and more than half of members showing up for local meetings.

For more information about Fairness, contact CUPE Ontario at 905-739-9739.



## Stephen Lewis headlines Secretary-Treasurers Conference



Leaders from CUPE locals across Ontario met in Richmond Hill in January for CUPE Ontario's second Secretary-Treasurers Conference. The four-day conference featured hands-on workshops on budget preparation, by-laws, accounting and bookkeeping, spreadsheets and much more.

"We're living in a province where funding for public services has been frozen by the provincial government's austerity and where employers are making our members bear the brunt of the shortfall," said CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick. "Unions were invented to deal with tough times. They were born to right wrongs, and put an end to exploitation. And history has shown over and over again that when workers come together, pool their resources and exert their collective power, they make gains—not just for themselves, but for others that come up behind them."

Building the fiscal skills of secretary-treasurers helps ensure our union is in a strong position to meet those challenges for our members, she said.

On the conference's second day, AIDS-Free World co-founder Stephen Lewis delivered an inspiring keynote address about the important links between unions and social justice movements.

His speech highlighted his organization's role in exposing child sexual abuse at the hands of U.N. peacekeepers working in Africa, and the political pressure it took to force leaders at the United Nations to act.

It is work, he pointed out, that could not have happened without the support of unions.

"I sit on the board of lots of NGOs and people always say 'My group is funded by this corporation or that corporation,' and I always smile and say 'My organization is funded by unions,'" Lewis said.







## Building racial justice and human rights

A packed house kicked off CUPE Ontario's Racial Justice and Human Rights conferences on Monday, January 26 in Toronto.

The week began with the one-day Racial Justice Conference on "Removing Barriers to Moving Equality Forward." This featured hands-on workshops and lively panels and speakers, including Winnie Ng, the CAW-Sam Gindin Chair in Social Justice and Democracy at Ryerson University. Sister Winnie's speech, "If I had my way, this is how a union would combat racism," a challenging critique of equality within the labour movement, focused on the vital role unions play in advancing equality and steps we can take in mobilizing for a stronger fight going forward.

The three-day Human Rights Conference on "Moving Equality Forward, From Basics to Leadership," featured many workshops designed to help activists build the

skills and knowledge needed to advance equality and their ability to lead and help others to take on leadership roles.

Delegates heard first-hand accounts of what it's like to speak out for equality from people who have taken leadership roles. These included Toronto school board trustee and anti-racism activist Ausma Malik, LGBTQ activist Casey Oraa and disability rights activist David Lepofsky. CLC Executive Vice-President Marie Clarke Walker capped the conference with her keynote address, "What it takes to advance equality and leadership."

Delegates to the Human Rights Conference also elected members to CUPE Ontario's Racial Justice, Pink Triangle, Workers with Disabilities, Young Workers and International Solidarity committees, and to the Aboriginal Council.

### Newly elected equality committees

#### Young Workers

Stephanie Grant, Local 2316  
Jennfer Foreshaw, Local 5277  
Felicia Forbes, Local 3791  
Nicole Leach, Local 3903  
Behzad Mohammadi, Local 3903  
Tim Caldito, Local 1328  
Denise Martins, Local 1281

#### Workers with Disabilities

Martine Stonehouse, Local 4400  
Kimberly Goode, Local 2605  
Gary Sprague, Local 2875  
Andy MacDonald, Local 7800  
Jayne Warner, Local 4400  
Emily Wright, Local 4400  
Victoria Warner, Local 4400

#### International Solidarity

Lisa Skeete, Local 4400  
Ellie Adekur, Local 3902  
Denise Martins, Local 1281  
Daveson Haraan, Local 2191  
Safia Gahayr, Local 3907  
Connie Sorio, Local 4557  
Justin Kong, Local 3902

#### Aboriginal Council

Louann Gauthier, Local 4826  
Dawn Bellerose, Local 1880  
Patricia Dignard, Local 2331  
Allan McLeod, Local 822  
Larry Giffin, Local 3798  
Luc Cyr, Local 5500

#### Racial Justice

Ellie Adekur, Local 3902  
Jacqueline Benn-John, Local 3907  
Connie Ndlovu, Local 4308  
Veriline Howe, Local 2191  
Kevin Edmonds, Local 3902  
Felicia Forbes, Local 3791  
Sandy Judhan, Local 4400

#### Pink Triangle

Drew Fockler, Local 1764  
Hancy Hanschmann, Local 109  
Dash Lavender, Local 109  
Ryan Culpepper, Local 3902  
Paul Clulow, Local 241  
Jodielynn Harrison, Local 4207  
Martine Stonehouse, Local 4400

*Note: The CUPE Ontario Women's Committee is elected at the biennial CUPE Ontario Women's Conference, and the Human Rights Committee comprises one member from each of the equality committees. The new CUPE Ontario Executive Board positions will be elected at Convention in May.*



## Make people your priority, CUPE Ontario urges Wynne government

Six years of Liberal austerity budgets have failed the people of Ontario but have profited already wealthy corporations, CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn told a pre-budget committee hearing at Queen's Park on February 2.

"We've seen years of cuts to public services to pay for corporate tax cuts from the Liberal government," said Hahn. "They've given billions to corporations through P3s for projects that would have been cheaper if done by the public sector. Despite massive public opposition, they're selling one of our most valuable public assets, Hydro One, to bolster the stock market's bottom line. And for what? It hasn't helped the many Ontarians who have seen their wages frozen, their purchasing power decline and their jobs become precarious."

Between 2003 and 2013, average after-tax incomes for workers in

Ontario rose by only 0.4%. In some regions of the province, more than 50% of jobs are now considered precarious. While corporate tax rates are at historic low levels, it is estimated that \$700 billion in Canadian

corporate returns are not being reinvested in the economy. Recent research indicates not only that corporate tax cuts do not lead to economic gains, but that raising corporate taxes may actually increase investment.

"It's time the Wynne government's budget prioritized people, not corporations," said Hahn.

As a result of previous Liberal austerity budgets, public-sector cuts are impacting communities across Ontario. Hundreds of health care positions have been eliminated, leading to service cuts at community hospitals. Wait lists for services like child care, long-term care and social services are growing, while tuition fees have increased by 360% since 2006.

*Read the full report at [cupe.on.ca](http://cupe.on.ca)*

### **CUPE Ontario's pre-budget submission, available at [cupe.on.ca](http://cupe.on.ca), includes four key recommendations:**

- Increase revenues, notably through returning corporate tax rates to 2010 levels
- End all forms of privatization, including the reckless sell-off of Hydro One
- Invest in public services to spark economic growth and improve workers' lives
- Budget for wage improvements for workers in Ontario, including real measures to close the gender wage gap.

## Don't scuttle CPP expansion for weaker provincial plan

In January, the Wynne government announced it is moving forward with its flawed, Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP), which leaves out millions of Ontario workers.

"By moving forward with their non-universal ORPP, the Ontario Liberal government is abandoning the push to expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), a plan which would benefit all Canadians," said CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn. "For years, the Ontario Liberals said CPP expansion was the best way to ensure

retirement income security and blamed Stephen Harper's Conservative government in Ottawa for standing in the way. Well, Harper is gone. But so too, it seems, is the Ontario government's commitment to CPP expansion."

The Wynne government said the only reason it embarked on the ORPP was because Stephen Harper's Conservatives were unwilling to enter into discussions to enhance the CPP. During the recent federal election, Premier Wynne said she

would drop the idea of an ORPP if her federal Liberal counterpart, Justin Trudeau, who campaigned on expanding the CPP, was elected.

CUPE Ontario is calling on the provincial Liberals to not jeopardize CPP expansion, which would help all Canadian workers, and instead press the Trudeau government to live up to its election promises and make CPP expansion a priority.



## Ontario ends PSW registry

In January, the Ontario government finally scrapped its controversial registry for personal support workers (PSWs) in long-term care, hospitals and community care. CUPE Ontario and OCHU have challenged the establishment of the PSW Registry since it was first proposed in 2011 and have campaigned with PSW members against it.

Educational requirements and occupational demands for PSWs have increased significantly over the past five years, but regulation to end exploitation of the predominantly racialized, female workforce has not advanced along with those demands.

While the province has acknowledged low wages paid to PSWs are an issue, no steps have been taken to address serious issues that diminish the standard of

living for PSWs or the fact many PSWs are still not paid for mileage or travel time while working. Home care PSWs often do not have guaranteed hours of work and, although they are expected to be on-call for up to 12 hours each day, many receive only three or four hours of paid work providing care and support for increasingly ill home care patients.

CUPE Ontario is recommending serious consideration be given to reversing a questionable Conservative policy from the mid-1990s which changed delivery of care from non-profit, community agencies like the Victorian Order of Nurses to mostly large-scale, for-profit providers who skim between 15 and 20 percent of provincial funding for profit.

## RPN fired for speaking out on violence in workplace

Sue McIntyre, a CUPE nurse who spoke on a panel about patient violence against health care workers was terminated by the North Bay Regional Hospital. Our union is working to see the sister reinstated and calling on the provincial government to adopt legislation that would make it a criminal offense to assault a health care worker and protect staff who report violent incidents from reprisal.

"The CEO of the North Bay hospital cannot repress discussion about the prevalence of violence. Health care staff must be able to speak up about the widespread extent of this problem and its devastating impact," said CUPE Ontario First Vice-President and OCHU President Michael Hurley. "We look to the Ontario government to act

immediately to protect nurses by investing in increased hospital and long-term care staffing and by introducing proactive legislation, as New York and California have done. At the end of the day, the understaffing of

Ontario's health care facilities, which have the fewest staff in Canada, leaves health care workers vulnerable to these assaults."

The incident comes on the heels of high-profile attacks in Hamilton.

According to Statistics Canada, 47 percent of RPNs have been physically assaulted by a patient or patient's family member in the past year.

A rally to support Sister McIntyre is being planned for noon on February 29 at the North Bay Regional Hospital. For more information, visit [cupe.on.ca](http://cupe.on.ca).



## Upcoming Events

### OUWCC Conference

Feb 18 - 21 - Holiday Inn Toronto Yorkdale

### Spring School

Feb 23 - 28 - Toronto Sheraton Centre

### OMECC Conference

Mar 30 - Apr 2 - Crowne Plaza Niagara Falls

### SSWCC Conference

Apr 7 - 10 - London Hilton

### 2016 CUPE Ontario Convention

May 25 - 28 - Toronto Sheraton Centre

### CACO Conference

Sept. 19 - 20 - Double Tree by Hilton Hotel London

### HCWCC Conference

Sept. 20 - 23 - Double Tree by Hilton Hotel London

### Northern Ontario CUPE Conference

Oct. 5 - 7 - Ramada Timmins



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