

NEWS FROM CUPE ONTARIO

WINTER 2018



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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

Friends,

Provincial election season is upon us – what does it mean for the services you provide?

With a June election only months away we can expect to see an increase in political rhetoric, government announcements and election promises. The question becomes, how do you tell the difference between what they say and what they will really do.

This is an especially important question for CUPE Ontario members who work in public services. Our provincial government controls the funding for almost all the work we do. They're responsible for staffing levels and regulations to protect workers from violence on the job. Their decisions directly effect the health of our communities and the lives of the people we serve.

In Ontario, CUPE is 260,000 members strong. Those are 260,000 votes that can make a big difference in which party wins the election.

Here's a quick cheat sheet on what to look for.

If they're talking about tax cuts or the need for efficiencies, this equals job and service cuts along with more wage freezes.

If they're talking about how the private sector can do things better and cheaper, it equals contracting out and wage cuts. We now have decades of proof that privatization actually costs more, and results in understaffing and a deterioration of services while people in a corporate boardroom somewhere line their pockets.

If they're saying all the things you want to hear, what does their track record tell you?

In an era of fake news, it is sometimes hard to tell fact from fiction. As the election cycle moves into high gear, CUPE Ontario will be fact checking the credibility of the party leaders' commitments. Through our website and social media feeds you will get the information you need for when you get out to vote.

We are fortunate to live in a country where we get to elect our government. It's up to all of us to make sure it's a government that works in the interest of all people and not just those at the top. Your vote matters.

**In solidarity,**

Fred Hahn  
President

&

Candace Rennick  
Secretary-Treasurer

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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Aaron Woznica, CUPE 7797 Toronto Street Health worker



Trained as a social worker, Aaron started volunteering at Toronto's Street Health, on the recommendation of a prof. Ten years later he still works there, helping the marginalized and homeless get the health care and supports they need. But sometimes he can feel frustrated by the

help he's not able provide. That's why in April, he joined with a group of volunteers to set up and run an overdose prevention site in Moss Park.

"Hundreds of people were dying from the opioid crisis and we knew those deaths could be prevented. The government wasn't responding to the crisis, so we had to," said Woznica. "The war on drugs is making people sicker. As a volunteer at the overdose prevention site I can help in ways I can't at work."

**Named Torontonians of the Year by CBC's Metro**

Morning in December, the volunteers set up tents to provide a safe place for drug users to get clean needles, warm clothing, snacks and naloxone, with someone trained to administer it if needed. In their first 100 days, the volunteers witnessed 2,611 injections and stopped or reversed 106 drug poisonings/overdoses.

As winter approached and the government continued to drag its heels on providing the necessary supports, Aaron and the other volunteers began to worry about what would happen to the people they were serving once the temperature dropped.

"I have never been so proud to be a CUPE member as I was the day the trailer showed up," said Woznica. "For this group of people the winter can be deadly. All of a sudden we knew we could continue to help."

In the absence of government help, CUPE Ontario has provided a large heated trailer for the group to use. CUPE 1000, the Power Workers, came in and hooked up the power.

"What frustrates me is," said Woznica, "If a group of volunteers can come together and save 100 lives in four months, just think what we could do if the government stepped up. The opioid crisis isn't just happening in Toronto's downtown east side. It's happening in communities all across this province."

## CUPE Ontario stands with Tim Hortons workers

Unionized or not, all workers deserve respect and when some Tim Hortons franchisees decided to penalize their workers for the increase in minimum wage the support for these workers was fierce.

In communities all across the province protest rallies popped up in front of Tim Hortons and CUPE Ontario members were there.

"All workers deserve a living wage," said Fred Hahn, outside a Tim Hortons. "The idea that this popular chain threatened to take away the few benefits their workers have because the law now requires them to pay \$14 an hour is despicable. It can't be allowed to happen."







## Health care workers rally for increased funding for hospitals

Hundreds of health care workers and supporters from across Ontario gathered outside Oshawa's Lakeridge hospital on February 6, to call for increased provincial funding for hospitals.

Concerned that small, temporary funding fixes, will do little to ease chronic hospital overcrowding, and will not restore decade-long cuts to patient care, beds and staffing, health care workers came from across the province to make their voices heard.

"The recent announcement in hospital funding represents less than half-a-percent increase in overall hospital funding, and the funding stops for 1,200 hospital beds in April. To offset existing cost pressures,

overall funding will have to increase to 5.3 per cent, and the new announcement only brings it to 3.6 per cent," said OCHU president Michael Hurley, speaking to the crowd. "Without significant further investment, the service cuts and access problems will continue. And, it's a given that our hospital system cannot withstand the closure of hospital beds in April."

Ontario hospitals need a yearly influx of a minimum 5.3 per cent funding increase to deal with inflationary costs, like rising prices for drugs and doctors' salaries, according to the Fiscal Office of Accountability.

"We're rallying on behalf of our patients who are simply not getting the level of care they need," said Hurley.

## First Political Action Conference ignites member engagement



Three days of dynamic speakers, skills training and movement building captivated members who went home inspired to be change makers in their own communities.

The conference began and ended hearing directly from two of Canada's leading change makers, Stephen Lewis and Desmond Cole, who spoke about their work and

what inspired them to push on when the road ahead was hard. Panels brought together organizers from a variety of social justice campaigns who talked about the different tactics and strategies they used to win public support.

Delegates were trained in communications, lobbying, direct action and more, then put their new

skills into action. Half the delegates spent a day at Queen's Park meeting with MPPs to convince them to support the Time to Care Act, while the other half hit the streets to engage the public in street theater designed to get them talking about the need to increase hours of care for seniors living in long-term care.

## Secretary-Treasurer's Conference



Local treasurers shoulder one of the biggest responsibilities in our union – making sure that local dues are used effectively to ensure the greatest benefit for our members. It is not a job to be taken on lightly and requires skills and training.



CUPE Ontario's Secretary-Treasurer's conference is one of the best ways to build up skills and problem solve with treasurers from other locals who may be dealing with similar issues.

"I believe it is important to recognize the contribution our union's treasurers and trustees make to building our union's strength and solidarity," said CUPE Ontario's Secretary-Treasurer in her opening remarks. "In CUPE Ontario we often say that the power of our union lies in our membership – and this is absolutely true. But it takes financial and organizational

resources to harness the full power of our membership. And figuring out how to do that is the treasurer's job."

This year's conference brought together 250 of our best and brightest to learn best practices and how to identify fraud.

Delegates participated in skill building workshops on Local Union By-Laws, Strategic Planning, Per Capita Tax & Accessing National Funding, Preparing and Understanding Budgets and Basic Excel for the CUPE National Ledger. Delegates also had the opportunity to hear about changes to Ontario's election finance laws and the new labour law reforms.

As the jam-packed conference wrapped up one delegate was overheard saying that this was the best conference she had ever attended.



## Skilled Trades Conference



Skilled trades members gathered in Niagara Falls at the beginning of February for CUPE Ontario's annual Trades Conference.

The conference brings together skilled trades people from across all sectors to focus exclusively on issues affecting their work. Top of the agenda was protecting the integrity of the skilled trades in Ontario against employer driven, and sometimes government supported, efforts to weaken the regulations requiring certified trades workers for particular work.

**Continued on next page...**



# Racial Justice & Human Rights Conference

## Building bridges. Building power.



Hamilton's first black city councillor, Matthew Green, MPP Cheri DiNovo and Toronto councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam were just a few of the speakers that inspired delegates at December's Racial Justice and Human Rights Conference.

Green, who has been the subject of a high-profile racial profiling occurrence with Hamilton police, spoke about injustices against Indigenous communities and need to stay vigilant in the pursuit of equality for everyone.

DiNovo and Wong-Tam spoke about the critical need to build a stronger political voice for equality and the importance of getting more women elected to office at

all levels of government.

Ahmad Gaied, Andria Babbington and Larry Rousseau, all members of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists led a panel discussion on breaking down systemic barriers within our locals and our workplaces. They focused on the need to mentor and empower racialized leaders and highlighted success stories within the labour movement.

The conference wrapped up with the swearing-in of newly elected members of the CUPE Ontario equality and international solidarity committees. Results can be found at: [cupe.on.ca/racial-justice-and-human-rights-conference-2017-committee-election-results/](https://cupe.on.ca/racial-justice-and-human-rights-conference-2017-committee-election-results/)

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## Trades conference continued...

Highlighting this year's Conference was the panel discussion featuring four veterans of Ontario's College of Trades:

Pat Dillon, Business Manager & Secretary Treasurer, Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario

John Poirier, Manager of Standards, Acting Manager of Compliance & Enforcement, Ontario College of Trades

Gord Falconer, Chief of Staff, International Association of Machinists (IAM) Canada.

Irene Harris, former CUPE Rep, OFL officer and board member at the College of Trades

Conference delegates passed a comprehensive Action Plan that will guide the work of the CUPE Ontario Trades Committee from now until the next conference.

Find out more about the Trades Committee at [cupe.on.ca/committees/trades/](https://cupe.on.ca/committees/trades/)



## Ontario PC Party implodes months before the provincial election

With the provincial election months away, Ontarians were stunned when Ontario Progressive Conservative (PC) Leader Patrick Brown was forced to resign as the party's leader over allegations of sexual misconduct.

Chaos ensued within the PC party. First with their caucus nominating North Bay MPP Vic Fedeli as Interim Leader, with members of the caucus, including Fideli himself publicly arguing with the party executive against holding a leadership race. Many political pundits speculated that there wasn't enough time to hold a proper race before the election.

Before the executive could make a decision, Party President Rick Dystra had to resign when sexual assault allegations against him came to light.

With an acting president in place, the executive decided to hold a leadership race. Party members will be voting by electronic ballot between March 2 and 8 with the final results to be announced on March 10.

Fedeli then announced he would not seek the leadership but instead devote his full attention to

"rooting out the rot" inside the PC party and pointed to uncertainty about the legitimacy of thousands of party memberships.

As the dust settles, there are now three declared candidates running for the leadership that will be decided in only a few weeks.

Doug Ford, a past Toronto city councillor campaign manager for his brother Rob Ford, who has a track record of supporting privatization and contracting out.

Christine Elliot, former PC MPP for Whitby and currently Ontario's Patient Ombudsperson, who was defeated by Patrick Brown in the last leadership race.

Carolyn Mulroney a New York City Hedge Fund Manager and daughter of a former Prime Minister with no election experience.

Whoever wins will have little time to establish their platform and introduce themselves to voters. So far, they all seem to be committed to pulling the party further to the right.

## New FAO Report confirms what people of Ontario already knew – sale of Hydro One was wrong

A new report from Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer (FAO) proves what the people of Ontario have always known, that the sale of Hydro One is bad for the province, says Fred Hahn, President of CUPE Ontario.

The report uncovered that though the sale of 53 per cent of the shares in Hydro One brought in \$9.2 billion in one-time cash, that money only improves government revenue until the end of this fiscal year.

The loss of the on-going revenue

from the sold off shares, and the end of annual payments-in-lieu of taxes, means that beginning in 2018-19 the government will lose \$1.1 billion in revenue and that will continue to deteriorate by hundreds of millions more each year from 2019 to 2025.

"The Liberals designed the sale of Hydro One so that voters see what appears to be positive numbers before the election and don't see the real financial losses until later," says Hahn. "It's a classic bait and switch and voters are not going to

be fooled.

"Rather than funding infrastructure through low interest loans the way our parents and grandparents' generations did, the Wynne government has chosen to make our children and grandchildren pay more. That's what privatization does," he says.

Had the province issued traditional debt to fund an identical amount of infrastructure investment, rather than selling Hydro One, the long-term provincial net debt would be lower within ten years.



# The countdown is on to win real improvements for seniors in long-term care

With only months until the legislature rises in the spring, there is only a narrow window of time left to get Bill 33 - The Time to Care Act, passed into law before the provincial election. Pressure needs to be increased on the Liberals to make sure they bring the bill forward for final reading.

Ontario seniors living in long-term care are suffering. The only care standard guarantees they have are that there will be one nurse on site in the home 24 hours-a-day, and that they will get two baths a week. If passed into law, the Time to Care Act will legislate a minimum of four hours of daily, hands-on care, which is exactly what experts say is needed.

Though Bill 33 received all party support at second

reading, the Liberals have not brought it back for final reading and CUPE Ontario is concerned that without increased pressure they won't.

**Don't be fooled by Liberal MPPs that say they are bringing in four hours of care so the bill isn't needed. The problem was in the fine print.**

- 1. There is no plan to legislate minimum care standards.**
- 2. There is no timeline for when it would happen.**
- 3. The calculations include time when workers are off sick or on vacation - not just when providing hands-on care.**

## Help make the Time to Care Act law in Ontario

- **Email your MPP at [TimetoCareOntario.ca](mailto:TimetoCareOntario.ca) and tell them to pass Bill 33 before the spring election.**
- **Tell your friends and family about Bill 33 and ask them to do the same.**



### Upcoming Events

|                        |                          |                         |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Feb 22 – 25</b>     | OUWCC Conference         | Ontario Regional Office |
| <b>Feb 26 – Mar 4</b>  | Spring School            | Toronto Sheraton Centre |
| <b>Mar 20 - 24</b>     | Library/OMECC Conference | Sheraton Parkway North  |
| <b>Mar 25 - 29</b>     | OSBCC Conference         | Sheraton Parkway North  |
| <b>Apr 4 - 8</b>       | SSWCC Conference         | Toronto Sheraton Centre |
| <b>May 30 - June 2</b> | CUPE Ontario Convention  | Toronto Sheraton Centre |