

# CUPE ONTARIO CONVENTION 2018

## Action Plan



**BE BOLD. BE BRAVE. DEMAND BETTER.**



# **Be Bold. Be Brave. Demand Better**

## 2018 CUPE Ontario Action Plan

### **Introduction**

1. CUPE Ontario's Action Plan aims to accomplish several goals. The idea of the Action Plan was born in the early 2000's and while it has changed over the years, its fundamental objectives remain the same. The significance of the Action Plan is to communicate our principles, where we find ourselves, and where we want to go as leaders in the labour movement. It outlines the challenges we face from within our union and from outside forces and outlines a plan of action that we will take together as a union to respond to the issues that lie ahead.
2. Convention is the highest decision-making body of the union, and resolutions inform and shape the path for our union. While we strive to hear as many resolutions as possible, unfortunately some may not make it to the floor of convention. Consequently, the normal practice of resolution debate that follows is not heard by the full delegation, nor are they voted on. The unresolved resolutions are then referred to the Executive Board to be dealt with.
3. All our sector and equality committees provide input into the Action Plan before it reaches convention. The Action Plan is debated over three days and can be amended on the floor of convention. This provides an additional opportunity for all our members to have their voices heard and have input into the direction of our union.
4. At the end of convention, our Action Plan is adopted and will inform all of our work, from our rank and file members, to our locals, and to our elected officers.

### **Background**

5. On the eve of a provincial election, workers in this province have a stark choice to make in deciding what the next chapter in the lives of Ontarians looks like. Following almost fifteen years of a Liberal government and a decade after the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, the working-class continues to be sold out. For example, continued austerity, slashing of public services, privatization of public assets, deregulation, and tax policies favouring corporations and the rich have led to working-class disenfranchisement and disillusionment. The corporate class embraces these measures, as they increase their own profit. The wealthy either do not understand or do not care about the impacts that these measures have on us as workers. Whether through job loss, unpredictable hours, or stagnant wages, advances for the wealthy

come at a price for workers. The rich will not help workers if it hurts their bottom line. It is up to workers to stand together and help ourselves.

6. CUPE Ontario fights for better wages, working conditions, and benefits for all our members. And our work does not stop there. Our goal is to be at the centre of the struggle to improve the lives of the entire working-class, both within and outside of the workplace, either unionized or not. We recognize that we need to build strong communities capable of resisting those wishing to tear us down.
7. The reality is that working-class problems do not stop at the workplace, and neither should we. In order to build a better Ontario, our solidarity work must extend beyond our union walls to include other social justice issues.
8. We are the largest union in the province and country, which strategically positions us to take on this effort. Our membership is diverse, and we have access to resources to help amplify our voices. As a public sector union, our steadfast determination in demanding a robust and healthy public sector is imperative in this fight.
9. We must march alongside, and work hand-in-hand, with other social movements to strengthen our collective power. We must be bold in our vision to change this province. We must be brave in the tactics that we use to achieve this goal. We must demand better from the politicians who serve us and expect them to fight for our interests. We will work with our members to enhance their skills and build political power. We will grow our union in order to build our power, including organizing precarious workers. We will Be Bold, Be Brave, and Demand Better.

#### **CUPE Ontario will:**

10. Continue to build our union using the newly launched “Stronger Together” model of one-on-one conversations. We will include all union members, including equity seeking members, in our conversations and campaigns to foster inclusivity and build power in our union.
11. Continue to facilitate political and activist training at CUPE Ontario events, building on the work done at our Political Action Conference. This will help in our work towards increasing the militancy of our actions. Building our union movement with an eye towards militancy will lay the groundwork for a possible general strike if ever needed or called for.
12. Work with coalition partners and social justice movements to amplify our collective power.
13. Continue to provide political, strategic, and campaign support to locals to assist them in our bargaining goals.

14. Work with CUPE National to organize precarious workers and organize wall-to-wall within workplaces to grow our union and increase union density. Develop a plan to revitalize and rebuild our district CUPE councils which help us work across sectors and across geographies to advance our interests.
15. Support nationalization of major industry, including public utilities, natural resources, and transportation.
16. Work with our sectors and continue to fight back against privatization in all its forms, including: wholesale privatization, the sale of public assets, public-private partnerships (P3s), municipal divestment towards not-for-profit delivery, increased demands, and “studies” that call for contracting out of our work, shared services, commissioning, alternative financing and procurement (AFP), as well as social impact bonds (SIBs). We will work with our sectors to bring back in-house services that have been contracted out.
17. Continue to work with our sectors to build pension knowledge and advocacy capacity within our membership. This will be accomplished through educational opportunities and campaigns to defend defined benefit pension plans, including advocacy to expand access to a workplace pension plan for our members.

## The Social, Economic, and Political Landscape

18. Ontario has seen the rise of far-right **social, economic, and political** forces that have used their influence to hurt Ontarians. Their tactics devalue and dehumanize those who are most marginalized, including racialized, Indigenous, and low-income workers. These far-right forces are actively hurting our members and impacting them both inside and outside of the workplace. CUPE Ontario has a duty to respond to these forces.

### Social

19. White nationalist groups (also known as the alt-right) that promote white supremacy, like Ontario Proud, have seen a rapid ascent in Ontario. Ontario is not alone; other provinces have seen similar groups crop up, and we all should be rightfully worried. As engagement expert Matt Price observes, “the ‘Proud’ groups [are] joining the ranks of conservative political infrastructure alongside groups like the Manning Centre (training), Fraser Institute (policy) and Rebel Media (communications). These are parts of the conservative ecosystem that supports conservative parties and politicians at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.”<sup>1</sup> The social media memes the far-right posts may seem annoying, but in reality, they actively harm people who are marginalized.
20. While Ontario Proud may seem mild compared to other more prominent white nationalist groups, we must not ignore the fact that these groups bolster the work of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2017/07/05/Canada-Conservatives-Upping-Digital-Game/>

right-wing extremism in Ontario. White nationalist groups like the Soldiers of Odin, are increasingly prominent fixtures across Ontario, spreading hate to anyone who will listen. A recent study by criminologists at Simon Fraser University highlight that over 20 extremist groups in Ontario use violence to promote ideologies that are racist, homophobic, or nationalistic.<sup>2</sup> Despite this level of activity, Ontario has a dismal record of responding to these groups. In November 2017, James Sears, publisher of *Your Ward News* in East Toronto, was charged with willful promotion of hatred against women – the first time in Ontario's history this charge has ever been laid. Extremists also employ a variety of non-violent means to advance their goals; for example, John Beattie, founder of the Canadian Nazi Party, ran for deputy mayor in the most recent municipal election.<sup>3</sup> Nazis running for office serves to normalize their hate.

21. Rounding out this dangerous group is Professor of Psychology Jordan Peterson from the University of Toronto. Over the last twenty-four months, Peterson has become a Canadian celebrity figure within the alt-right. His fame has not come from his research but rather his stance on transgender rights, specifically his refusal to call students by their chosen gender pronoun. Peterson presents himself with a calm rational demeanor which may lead us to believe that his ideas are simply harmless. But in reality, Peterson's ideas are dangerous. Peterson routinely draws upon the anger of white men and whips them into a fever pitch, which has real-world implications for our communities.
22. The mobilization of the alt-right is a serious danger and threat to our society. Over the past sixteen months, we have witnessed the lethally violent outcomes of white nationalist ideologies. In early 2017, the shootings at the Quebec Mosque where six people were killed were linked to an alt-right group member. More recently, the Toronto van attack that killed ten people this past April, killing one CUPE member and severely injuring two other CUPE members, highlights that the radicalization of white males, whose anger is mobilized towards historically oppressed groups (religious, racial, sexual and gender minorities, and women) can be deadly. It is important to name these attacks for what they are: Islamophobic, xenophobic, transphobic, racist, and misogynistic.
23. While our members face violence from outside forces, such as the far-right, it is also important to acknowledge the work that we have to do within our own unions. CUPE Ontario is here to help do this work, with the ultimate aim of increasing the diversity and inclusivity of our union.

**CUPE Ontario will:**

24. Develop an anti-racism campaign to combat fascism, white supremacy, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Indigenous racism.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/cjccj.2016.0029>

<sup>3</sup> [http://nationalpost.com/news/canada\(canadian-nazi-party-founder-running-for-office-in-ontario-township](http://nationalpost.com/news/canada(canadian-nazi-party-founder-running-for-office-in-ontario-township)

25. Develop a workshop on environmental racism (i.e. treating racism with the same urgency as we do with other toxins such as asbestos) to be delivered at CUPE Ontario schools and sector conferences.
26. Develop a campaign focused on responding to the alt-right and white supremacy in our communities.
27. Collect data to understand the experiences of racialized members, and to educate locals about these experiences.
28. Actively encourage racialized and Indigenous members to attend CUPE Ontario conventions and educational workshops.
29. Continue to pursue the addition of equality seats on the CUPE National Executive.

## Economic

30. Our current economic system pits the working-class against each other, leaving us to fight over the scraps given to us by the capitalist class. Neoliberalism has allowed the capitalist class to flourish and has laid the groundwork for the resentment that the alt-right channels. The slogan of neoliberalism, “There is no alternative - TINA” was famously articulated by Conservative British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.<sup>4</sup> The phrase was meant to frame the market economy as the only option: an economy of smaller government, reduced social services, austerity budgets, privatization of public assets, free trade, and the gutting of trade unions. Various governments across the globe, including our own, operate under this economic logic. Working in concert with the banking industry and other multinationals, we are told there is no other economic alternative. Many of us have bought into the idea that we are individually responsible for our futures.
31. As union members, we know that there is strength in numbers, and we push forward with the understanding that our struggles are connected. Our collective agreements give us power to stand up to employers. But we can do more.
32. As taxpayers and as union members with political power, we can assert ourselves and push for an economic system that reflects how we want to see our communities. We understand the importance of taxes, but these taxes should be used to pay for the services we value, including healthcare, social services, education, and municipal services. Our members can be compensated fairly and look forward to retiring with dignity if resources are diverted from subsidizing corporations to supporting the working class.

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<sup>4</sup> Berlinski, Claire (8 November 2011). *There Is No Alternative: Why Margaret Thatcher Matters* (Second ed.). Basic Books

## **Political**

33. Being Bold, Brave and Demanding Better can lead to gains. Our members have shown their collective strength fighting for themselves and their communities on the picket line. Employers are tabling concessions, in the form of wage freezes, erosion of previously negotiated benefits, contracting out of our jobs, increased precarity, and two-tier proposals. Our members have been bold and brave in their response and managed to negotiate fair collective agreements.
34. Our workers are not alone. The recent teacher strikes in the United States are a good example of the working-class being stronger together. The teacher strikes have spread across multiple states, including West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Colorado. The teachers have effectively tapped into broader social justice concerns by drawing the connection between poverty wages with under resourced classrooms for students. This is reminiscent of the successful militant 2012 Chicago Teachers Union strike. Teachers in the United States have become emboldened, and this has led to community-wide gains.
35. In Ontario, we have two immediate opportunities to mobilize the power of our union and change the course of government to provide an alternative to neoliberalism. In 2018, both the provincial and municipal elections will take place. Both elections are vital opportunities for the working-class to assert our voice and be heard. We are one of the largest voting blocks in the province, and it is imperative that we elect governments that have the will to turn the page of neoliberalism and put the needs of workers first. We need a government that will put progressive policies, public services, the welfare of our communities, and the issues of those most marginalized in our society first.
36. To this end, our efforts cannot end at the ballot box. We must remain engaged in the political process no matter who is elected, and between elections. We must make sure those in power are held accountable to us, the working-class.

## **Provincial**

37. At the provincial level, we are a week away from an election where the choices are as clear as they are stark.
38. Doug Ford and the Progressive Conservatives have laid out a plan that will have dire consequences for the working-class. The plan is focused on reducing the size of the provincial government by at least four percent which would reduce government spending by about \$6 billion annually. This directly translates into an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 fewer jobs, which will directly impact our members and communities.<sup>5</sup> These

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.macleans.ca/economy/economicanalysis/to-balance-ontarios-budget-without-a-carbon-tax-the-pcs-will-need-deep-cuts-to-spending-and-jobs/>

workers spend their paycheques in the local economy and are the backbone of their community. By comparison, this is fast approaching his predecessor Tim Hudak's promise to fire 100,000 government workers.

39. Doug Ford will accelerate privatization. He has famously said he will "privatize and contract out everything that is not nailed down" – that he will "leave no stone unturned" in his search to privatize, which would include health, hydro, social and community services and education.<sup>6</sup> Handing over control of these critical public services to the private sector, who are only concerned about making a profit, would have dire consequences. Privatization will accelerate job losses, it will expand the divide between the rich and the rest of us, and equally as importantly, our communities will lose their voice in the direction of this province.
40. Doug Ford and the Conservatives masquerade as defenders of the working-class, but our memory is longer than their barely existent platform. Ford is a multi-millionaire who has spent his career privatizing work and cutting jobs (e.g. privatizing waste collection in Toronto), building his career on the backs of workers. Let us recall: In 2013, the Conservative party campaigned on cutting 100,000 public sector jobs, which would amount to one out of every six jobs in government. This devastating measure would have brought Ontario back into a recession.
41. They also advocated bringing in anti-union laws such as right-to-work laws (also known as right to work for less laws). The Conservatives stated that workers who benefit from a union wage should not be required "to become a member of a union or pay union dues as a condition of employment". This statement was modeled after 2011 legislation from the American Republican Governor Scott Walker who brought in right-to-work laws in Wisconsin. That legislation hurt teachers' pay. This had long-term implications, with median compensation 12.6 percent lower than it was before the Act was passed.<sup>7</sup> If elected, we can be confident that Doug Ford and the Conservatives would do the same thing in Ontario.
42. Doug Ford and the Conservatives are simply not an option for the working-class.
43. Another bad alternative is to continue with Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government. The Liberals have been in power for almost fifteen years and their record is shameful. They have perfected the art of incrementally beating down the working-class, only to repackage themselves and later come in to present themselves as a saviour.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/toronto-mayor-fords-drive-to-privatize-stalled-as-councillors-take-control/article4099571/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/economy/reports/2017/11/15/169146/attacks-public-sector-unions-harm-states-act-10-affected-education-wisconsin/>

44. Ontarians will not be fooled by fake progressive (a.k.a. fauxgressive) legislation that does nothing to repair the real damage done. In just the last twelve months, the Liberals have tabled two pieces of back-to-work legislation.
45. In real dollars, the average Ontarian's wage is lower now than when the Liberal government came into power. Austerity has devastated public services. For years now, this government has boasted that it spends the least per capita on public services compared to any other provincial government in Canada. A quick glance at any hospital will highlight at what cost this came - hallway medicine has become commonplace. The reduction in public services is even more egregious against the backdrop of growing inequality in Ontario.

### ***Hydro One***

46. The Liberal's fire sale of Hydro One and other public assets hand over more control of our economy to Bay Street. The havoc this has created means that people must make difficult choices, such as keeping the power on or buying food. These are choices no one should have to make. This is in stark contrast to the \$10.7 million severance package for the CEO of Hydro One. The Liberals privatized Hydro One, a revenue-generating asset, so that Bay Street could line their pockets. This does not serve the best interests of Ontarians.

### ***Taxes***

48. Taxes for the rich and corporations have been continuously cut, while the Liberal government claims that the cupboards are bare. Instead of corporate taxes paying for the majority of the public services we enjoy, personal income taxes make up the majority of the tax base. We are paying for more of our services than ever, while big corporations are able to exert political pressure to keep taking more and more out of the hands of Ontarians.
49. The economy is doing well with corporate profits at record highs and unemployment at record lows. This is an ideal backdrop to reintroduce an equitable tax system that makes corporations and the highest income earners, like Doug Ford, pay their fair share. However, unlike the Ontario NDP, this Liberal government refuses to generate revenue, and instead Ontarians will continue to fund tax cuts to corporations and the rich.

### ***Public-Private Partnerships (P3s)***

50. P3s privatize the funding, construction, and operation of public works projects. They end up costing more than traditional forms of public sector financing, often on the backs of underpaid workers who construct these projects. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives have long viewed P3s as a cure-all to the actual hard work of governing, even though there is overwhelming evidence against these projects. The province's own

Auditor General has repeatedly, over multiple years, highlighted systemic problems with P3s and criticized the government for pursuing these projects. The criticism includes the higher costs of private financing, significant conflicts over maintenance contracts, and no evidence to justify projects going ahead as P3s.

51. The collapse of Carillion, a global privatization corporation, illustrates the risky nature of P3s and contracting out. Carillion was the lead company in the consortium that built the P3 Brampton Civic Hospital, a project the Ontario Auditor General estimated to have cost \$200 million more than if the province had borrowed to build it publicly.<sup>8</sup> A more recent auditor's report that 74 P3 projects cost the province \$8 billion more than if they had been procured publicly. Ontarians cannot afford these missteps.<sup>9</sup>
52. As we can see, Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals are not an option for the working-class.

## An Alternative Vision

53. The Ontario NDP's platform puts working-class interests first.
  - a. They will enhance labour law to help workers join a union, which is the quickest way into the middle class. They will introduce card check certification in all sectors of the economy, which allows employees to join a union when a majority of the workforce sign union cards, and they will introduce first contract arbitration. They will also fund ten paid days for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and increase vacation time for workers to three weeks per year.
  - b. They have outlined a series of universally provided programs that would expand public services and the social safety net, including child care, health care, pharma care and dental care.
  - c. They will cut hydro bills by 30 percent by repurchasing the privatized shares of Hydro One and bring it back into public ownership and control.
  - d. To do all this, they will ask those who have benefited most from this system to pay their fair share by raising the corporate tax rate to 13 percent and raising personal income taxes on the wealthiest, specifically those earning over \$220,000. They will also introduce a luxury tax for vehicles that cost more than \$90,000.
  - e. They will end wasteful P3s and other forms of privatization.
54. The universality of the social programs put forward by the Ontario NDP are in stark contrast to the 'means-tested' programs the Liberals often advanced. For example, universal programs are fairly applied to everyone and ideally are paid by progressive, equitable taxation. When programs are means-tested, there is pressure by

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en10/403en10.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/news/14\\_newsreleases/2014news\\_3.05.pdf](http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/news/14_newsreleases/2014news_3.05.pdf)

Conservatives to decrease the benefits or remove them altogether. The rich have no stake in making sure the programs are adequately funded or maintained. Additionally, people are often unaware of specific social programs they might use, or reluctant to seem more in need than others, or simply unable to fill out the necessary paperwork to prove eligibility.

55. There is a lot at stake in this provincial election. The need for change becomes more pressing every day as working-class exclusion produces cynicism. One of the effects it creates is an environment that threatens the fabric of our democracy, poisons our social bonds, and intensifies xenophobia, racism and anti-immigrant sentiments. The Ontario NDP and their platform of ‘Change for the Better’ is one that our union can mobilize around and build upon. It is an agenda that speaks to our collective working-class issues. **It is Bold, Brave and Demands Better.**

## Municipal

56. Less than six months after the provincial election, municipal elections will be held across Ontario. We will have a direct opportunity to vote for our employers through elections, school board trustees, and municipal representatives. Decisions made at these levels have a direct impact on CUPE members. For example, school board trustees have important powers regarding school closures and similarly, municipal councillors make important decisions about keeping work in-house or contracting it out. Electing progressive councillors and trustees will help make our communities better.

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

57. Work together with our locals, committees, and bargaining councils to make direct contact with CUPE’s 260,000+ members in Ontario to encourage them to vote on June 7th, and to elect an NDP government.
58. Fight back against precarity, two-tier proposals, aggressive bargaining from employers for concessions.
59. Continue to provide sector-based, political, strategic, campaign support to create a fair bargaining climate. This also means a focused effort to support CUPE Ontario members who are bargaining in sectors without the right to strike.
60. Resist any demands for concessions or two-tier contract provisions, and to defend our right to free collective bargaining, including our right to strike, as decided by National Executive Board Policy.
61. Continue to lobby for progressive taxation tools to allow municipalities to pay for the services they provide. Strongly oppose any privatization efforts, including P3s. Continue

to work with CUPE National against the Canadian Infrastructure Bank, which is working towards privatizing municipal infrastructure.

62. Support the work of solidarity flying squads in communities, organized with CUPE District Councils, that can work with the CUPE Ontario Executive Board, Labour Councils, other unions, and community allies. We will share additional strike-winning campaign strategies including digital tactics, deepening our community ties, work to rule, and championing the services we provide.
63. Continue to lobby for Hydro One to be brought back into public ownership and control.
64. Demand an increase in program spending that, at bare minimum, keeps up with the aging population, population growth, and inflation.
65. Advocate for corporations and the highest income earners to pay their fair share of tax.
66. Call on all levels of government to fund mental health services in Ontario. Lobby the government to implement solutions to the opioid crisis. Continue to campaign for an expansion of community support and services.
67. Continue to work with our coalition partners to demand universal social programs for all Ontarians.
68. Continue to mount pressure on the government to provide four hours of hands-on care for all long-term care residents.

### **Decent Work - Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 (Bill 148)**

69. In 2014 the provincial government announced that it would update the Labour Relations Act (LRA) and Employment Standards Act (ESA). Four years later, through the hard work of social justice groups, faith groups, the ONDP, and the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and the rest of the labour movement, the Liberal government introduced the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act and made some positive steps towards strengthening labour and employment standards, including increasing the minimum wage to \$14 an hour for most workers with the wage set to increase to \$15 January 1, 2019. However, there were many missed opportunities, the most egregious of which were: 1) to continue to deny workers an opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to unionize through card check certification; 2) not including anti-scab legislation; 3) exempting those most marginalized (e.g., agricultural workers and domestic workers) from the LRA; 4) the exclusion of liquor servers and young workers from the standard minimum wage.
70. While the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs legislation has passed, our advocacy remains steadfast. We will push to improve this legislation and also continue to focus our efforts

at organizing the unorganized. More broadly, the \$15 and Fairness campaign proved to be a focal point for many progressives in this fight. There is a wide umbrella of support, which includes the union movement, to improve the lives of all workers in all workplaces. Workers from across the province continue to campaign and demand fair, and ultimately, living wages no matter who is in power next week. By working with groups like \$15 and Fairness, we can push for better working conditions for all.

71. In this upcoming provincial election, there remains an opportunity to embrace a course correction and elect the Ontario NDP who will deliver what many progressives have been demanding for years: fully progressive labour and employment law that aims to increase union density and workers' rights.

**CUPE Ontario will:**

72. Continue to work with our allies both within and outside of the labour movement to solidify the gains already made in Bill 148, and leverage these gains for further improvements for the working-class in the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act.
73. Work with the Ontario Federation of Labour and the \$15 & Fairness campaign to ensure that on January 1, 2019 the minimum wage in Ontario is \$15 an hour for all workers, without exception.
74. Demand that everyone should be paid a living wage, including servers and young people.
75. Fight for card check certification so that all workers in the province may exercise their constitutional right to join a union. Push for a ban in allowing employers to hire replacement workers, a practice that undermines the fight for decent work.
76. Continue to work with our locals to ensure that the gains made in Bill 148 are referenced in our collective agreements.
77. Advocate for the removal of all exclusions from the Labour Relations Act.
78. Monitor the effects of technological changes and the fragmentation of work on our members.
79. Continue to work with our sectors to build pension knowledge and advocacy capacity within our membership. Promote and defend defined benefit pension plans including advocacy for more of our members to have access to a workplace pension plan.
80. Continue to focus on organizing the unorganized to grow our union.

81. Continue to work with the OFL and affiliates to regulate pensions and strengthen retirement security for all workers.
82. Continue to work with our Health & Safety Committee, and our sectors, to mount a campaign to mobilize our members against rising violence in our workplaces.
83. Continue to advocate for worker protection against violence at work, and unfair employer reprisals for organizing, or for demanding justice at work. All our efforts must highlight the reality that women, immigrants, and racialized workers are over-represented in many jobs with high rates of violence, that have unfortunately become far too normalized.

## **Social Movements**

84. The success of the \$15 and Fairness campaign is a good example of what is possible when labour allies itself with broader social movements. Throughout history, capitalism has attempted to reach beyond the workplace, and labour has responded accordingly. Unions have worked not only to improve the lives of its members but in coalition with social movements, we have worked to benefit the entire working-class. We can push back against employers and government alike, and broadly influence society with a lens of social justice.
85. The challenges ahead will require us to understand that capitalism is built upon interconnected exploitation, marginalization, and inequality. At all levels of our union we must use our resources to work with other groups for social justice. We must approach this work with an intersectional lens, understanding that oppressions reinforce each other and reproduce systems of inequality. Part of our everyday work should be improving the conditions of those who face multiple forms of oppressions. As Kimberly Crenshaw, noted legal scholar who coined the term intersectionality, has remarked, it is “women of colour [who have been] most impacted by deindustrialization, and by the de-funding of the public sector.”<sup>10</sup>
86. We must continue to engage with a wide diversity of social movements who advance the cause of social justice. In the past few years we have supported a variety of different social movements and looking forward, their diversity and needs will only increase. We need to find ourselves at the centre of these fights, using our resources to amplify our common message.

## **CUPE Ontario will:**

87. Continue to work with social movements, including among others: Black Lives Matter, Idle No More, No One Is Illegal, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Urban Alliance on Race Relations, Black Legal Action Centre, Me Too, Done Waiting, Leap Manifesto, and

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.law.columbia.edu/pt-br/news/2017/06/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality>

the Toronto Environmental Alliance to build community alliances and amplify their message of social, environmental, and economic justice.

88. Continue to work with our coalition partners, including among others: Equal Pay Coalition, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Ontario Health Coalition, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, the Canadian Federation of Students, People for Education, Fix our Schools, TTC Riders, Keep Transit Public, Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change, Ontario Alliance Against School Closures, and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, to advance our shared goals.
89. Continue to demand environmental justice, which includes comprehensive and effective measures to combat climate change. Continue to campaign against privatization of public assets such as Hydro One to ensure that public ownership supports environmental justice.
90. Continue to support a Just Transition, which will require that any workers in industries impacted by climate change will have resources available to aid in a transition to a good sustainable job. This includes reinvigorating our work on the longstanding labour demand that we have full employment.
91. Continue to encourage our sectors to integrate environmental justice into all their work. We need to highlight that green jobs are public sector jobs. These jobs produce no carbon emissions and are the jobs of the future.
92. Continue the work of our Environmental Working Group for an additional year. This group will act as a focal point for CUPE Ontario's environmental demands and will continue its work implementing the Leap Manifesto which CUPE Ontario adopted at its convention in 2016.
93. Work with our Trades Committee to lobby the government to increase the profile of the trades as good jobs.

## **Equality**

94. Through our policies, practices and political organizing, CUPE Ontario will maintain opposition to the disproportionate effects of privatization and underfunding of public services on Black, Indigenous and other racialized workers, LGBTQ workers, workers with disabilities, young workers, as well as women facing intersecting equity issues.

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

95. Strongly encourage CUPE Ontario Committees to offer anti-racism workshops, with an expanded focus on anti-Black racism, at each committee's conference, including all sectoral conferences.

96. Actively promote racial equity within CUPE by sharing race-based survey results with all locals and updating educational tools.
97. Fight the rising tide of hate and intolerance in our communities by funding and participating in campaigns and partnering with allies to promote inclusivity and diversity.
98. Encourage our members to actively participate in upcoming elections to elect candidates that share CUPE values of inclusivity and promote public services.
99. Continue to promote Carnival and share the history and political significance of Carnival.
100. Work with International Solidarity Committee on common intersecting issues, such as raising awareness of issues facing migrant workers.
101. Recommend all locals read a land acknowledgement to recognize the traditional territory they occupy, following the Equality Statement at the beginning of all union meetings. This symbolic gesture is a first step toward truth and reconciliation.
102. Promote and participate in Orange Shirt Day (Phyllis' story) on September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, which recognizes Canada's history of residential schools. CUPE Ontario will also lobby and encourage the provincial government, all unions, allies, and CUPE locals to take part in the Orange Shirt Day to show our union's commitment to support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action to promote Orange Shirt Day.
103. Continue to encourage CUPE Ontario locals to participate in and support the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) Sisters in Spirit (SIS) vigils, held on or around October 4<sup>th</sup> of each year, in their communities. This vigil honours the lives of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and is a call to action to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.
104. Encourage all local leaders to participate in a blanket exercise to educate union leadership about the history of colonization in Canada.
105. Promote and encourage all members to lobby the government to make June 21<sup>st</sup> a national holiday to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures, and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples.
106. Work with Union Development to develop a course on empowering workers with disabilities to use their voice, self-advocate, and take on leadership roles within our union.

107. Work with Union Development to promote, review and update the “Creating Racial Justice” Workshop, so members can increase their knowledge on issues white supremacy and racism.
108. Continue the work started by the Sexual Violence Working Group to bring awareness of sexual violence issues in our workplaces and unions. This will include: developing model contract language and bylaws; processes for support from the point of first disclosure; tabulation of survey results collected; workshops and training to help members deal with reports of sexual violence when police are not involved; and considering how the ombudsman program could be used to support sexual violence survivors.
109. Work with CUPE National to lobby the Government of Canada to openly condemn the persecution and arrest of all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) activists in Uganda and provide protection and sanctuary to those fleeing the country without further traumatizing their victims.
110. Continue to work across all levels of our union as well as with allies at the Equal Pay Coalition to address the wage gap, with an understanding of interconnected and intersectional structure of inequality for women, Indigenous, Black, racialized, LGBTQ, immigrant, and disabled workers.
111. Ensure that all CUPE Ontario events are accessible to all of our members.
112. Continue to campaign through the Workers with Disabilities Committee for internal education on disability issues and push for increased accessibility and supportive legal frameworks.
113. Call for an end to violence against Black trans women and other racialized LGBTQ workers who face violence in their communities and at work.
114. Continue to build on our efforts to broaden CUPE members’ participation in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Pride events across the province and highlight the labour movement’s role in fighting for LGBTQ rights.
115. Continue to call on employers and on the Ontario government to provide gender-inclusive washrooms in public places and in workplaces.
116. Continue to work with the Pink Triangle Committee to advocate for broader and more inclusive sex-education programs in public schools, with an emphasis on education around non-traditional families, non-traditional relationships and non-traditional gender and sexual identities.

## **Social Services**

Through the leadership of the Social Services Workers' Coordinating Committee (SSWCC),

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

117. Build on the frontline activism of CUPE's social services locals to fight against cuts, program closures, higher workload affecting service delivery, and long waitlists for social services supports through the sharing and promotion of tool kits, research, and strategy.
118. Work with allies to continue to respond to broad, sweeping legislative changes, and changes to accreditation and regulation policies. We will also monitor and respond to pilot projects happening in the sector, surging violence in the workplace, the impacts of rapidly introduced new technology, and the complex effects of these changes on the users of our services as well as our members in the five sub-sectors within Social Services.
119. Campaign to close the gender wage gap, especially since the majority of members represented by the SSWCC are women who are in low-paid, precarious jobs. Continue to work with Ontario's Equal Pay Coalition and other allies to eliminate the gender pay gap by demanding action from the government to take all steps necessary identified through the consultations. We will encourage locals and members to participate in Equal Pay Day action, and will lobby for a dedicated source of funding for pay equity adjustments for public sector workers.
120. Engage in coordinated political action and increase cross-sectoral political action that will pressure provincial, federal, and municipal governments to increase funding tied to the expansion of public social services with less reliance on charity and foundation funding; introduce fair funding formulas, and implement key recommendations from inquest, auditor and safety recommendation reports.
121. Continue to highlight that Ontario provides less per-capita funding for all programs and services compared to any other province, and use this in the provincial and municipal election campaigns in 2018 to demand commitments from political parties and candidates to Change for the Better.
122. Strengthen relations and communication infrastructure with locals and members through outreach that includes greater opportunities for joint planning and strategizing via sector-wide conference calls and face-to-face meetings with not only leadership but rank-and-file members and activists.
123. Continue to support participation in Ministry and Employer Association working groups to bring worker's voices to the discussion to address systemic issues with the goal of broad implementation and escalating political pressure when movement and actions

slows to ensure the objectives of these groups are being met by all parties who participate.

124. The Social Services Sector remains committed to equality work in our union, our workplaces, and society as a whole, and we will continue to support CUPE Ontario Equality Committees and integrate their work with SSWCC events and work plans, including CUPE Ontario's Aboriginal Council, Injured Workers, and Occupational Health and Safety committees.

## **Municipalities**

Through the leadership of the Ontario Municipal Employees' Coordinating Committee (OMECC),

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

125. Continue to engage municipal locals in the fight against hydro privatization at both provincial and municipal levels.
126. Aggressively challenge municipalities attempting to privatize municipal services or engage in concession-based bargaining. OMECC will continue to educate and provide support to those municipalities facing core services review.
127. Create additional learning opportunities for municipal workers and allies to support the creation of progressive revenue tools to maintain and grow quality public services and good jobs.
128. Strengthen OMECC's area-level presence by building area networks that can regularly meet and work together to create local council watches. We will get involved in the 2018 municipal election, respond to privatization, and fight against concession bargaining threats.
129. Through OMECC and the HCWCC, continue to build on the success of the Cassellholme campaign to prevent municipal divestment from long term care facilities.
130. Continue to build on our success in bringing back in previously contracted-out municipal services, and champion additional re-municipalization efforts using models successfully used by our locals.
131. Work together with our allies to build support for public health.
132. Continue to educate, engage, and activate Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) members against benefit reductions.

## **Libraries**

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

133. Continue to campaign for internal capacity-building, member engagement, increased coordination, and strengthened solidarity amongst library workers to fight the growth of precarious, part-time work with no benefits or pensions in this sub-sector.
134. Continue to grow the library worker postcard campaign to raise the profile of library workers through positive, visible community actions with the goal to pressure municipal politicians to invest in libraries as community-building institutions across Ontario.
135. Continue to monitor and respond to potential privatization or other threats like staff-less libraries that will harm quality services and reduce the number of good jobs.

## **Paramedic Services**

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

136. Build on the CUPE Ambulance Committee of Ontario's (CACO) internal awareness campaign through brochures, campaign videos, and media releases to highlight the lifesaving emergency services provided by paramedics and communications officers as specially-trained, emergency health care professionals.
137. Continue to work with allies such as Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) to lobby the government and campaign for public safety and emergency care from appropriately trained Paramedic Services workers and stop the incursion of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association (OPFFA) into paramedic services.
138. Ensure that provincial and municipal levels of government support the expansion of community paramedicine programs that have shown results and gained public support.
139. Continue to oppose a regulatory college for paramedics.
140. Lobby the provincial government and the Ministry of Labour, to change the Ambulance Services Collective Bargaining Act.
141. Lobby the provincial government, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health, to change the Ambulance Base Pager System in Ontario to reduce startle response adverse effects for paramedics.
142. Work with the Public Services Health and Safety Association, paramedic unions, and other stakeholders to combat violence against paramedics.

143. Work with paramedic locals to establish coordinated bargaining within the paramedic sector.

## **Public Health**

144. Through the leadership of the Ontario Municipal Employees' Coordinating Committee (OMECC) and the Health Care Workers' Coordinating Committee (HCWCC),

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

145. Build on the previous Public Health Forums jointly organized by HCWCC and OMECC, strengthen our Public Health Working Group to mobilize underfunding of Public Health Units in Ontario.

146. Initiate a public campaign and internal mobilization to bring awareness of the importance of prevention-based health care and the vital programs and services offered in our communities by front line public health workers.

## **Universities**

Through the leadership of the Ontario University Workers' Coordinating Committee (OUWCC),

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

147. Develop a comprehensive campaign to combat the rise of precarious work on our campuses in various ways, including by bargaining benefits for part-time and casual workers, bringing food services back in-house, and strengthening campus alliances.

148. Develop a comprehensive campaign on mental health, including ensuring that mental health is dealt with as a health and safety issue, rather than as a human resources issue.

149. Develop and bargain common university policies and supports dealing with post-crisis clean up and infectious disease clean up.

150. Develop a comprehensive campaign on pensions including protecting pensions, expansion of the Canadian Pension Plan and Old Age Security and providing leadership on jointly sponsored pension plans.

151. Work with our locals to develop a sector-wide campaign that recognizes campus-specific issues around racism.

152. Work with the Canadian Federation of Students to ensure campuses are safe spaces free of racial violence and harassment, and demand institutional funding to create such spaces.

153. Continue to campaign against contracting out and outsourcing of building services.
154. Campaign to promote public sector apprenticeships.
155. Work with the Canadian Federation of Students and our campus coalitions to have direct action training on each of our campuses.
156. Seek to increase CUPE Ontario Region office accessibility including completing a full accessibility audit, ensuring fully accessible washrooms, and providing childcare services.
157. Continue to develop and enhance the coordinated bargaining campaign for the 23 collective agreements expiring in 2019.

## **School Board**

Through the leadership of the Ontario Council of School Board Unions (OSBCU),

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

158. Continue to raise community awareness of the critical importance of our members' work and build community allies to build support for bargaining.
159. Continue to work with community allies to fight school closures and further build the concept of schools being community hubs. Work with Union Development and CUPE National to expand union education in order to proactively equip locals with the ability to respond quickly to closures.
160. Continue to expose flaws in the funding formula and lobby with allies for a full and public review of the funding of education.
161. Continue to aggressively fight any attempt to contract out our members' work.
162. Continue to advocate for full funding for the work of our members during government budget planning and consultations.
163. Coordinate provincially designed campaigns and work with local leaders to deliver those campaigns with their members at a local level.
164. Continue to lobby CUPE National for sustained funding for provincial bargaining.
165. Identify and support candidates in the 2018 provincial, municipal, and trustee elections who will commit to fully funding our publicly delivered education system.

166. Build on our work through the Provincial Health and Safety Working Group to raise awareness of violence in the workplace and to develop a standard approach to the reporting of violence in schools – beyond lost-time injuries.
167. Work to ensure appropriate follow up and support for those who have experienced workplace violence (both directly or as a witness).
168. Engage members and locals actively in developing proposals for central bargaining and through local leaders to mobilize members to fight for improvements to our contracts.
169. Lobby the federal government to fix Employment Insurance for school board workers.
170. Through CUPE National, train member organizers to help organize non-unionized workers in the school system.

## **Home Care**

Through the leadership of the Health Care Workers' Coordinating Committee (HCWCC) and the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU),

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

171. Continue to work with allies like the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC), regional community organizations, key constituent groups, and other unions to highlight the harm of an increasingly privatized, underfunded, patchwork healthcare system, and show that demand exists for a properly funded public system.
172. Respond to the significant restructuring of healthcare in Ontario including changes through the Ministry of Health's 'Patient's First' strategy like self-directed funding and the reinstatement of the mandatory Personal Support Worker (PSW) registry.
173. Demand full-time employment, equitable income, benefits, pensions, and fair working conditions for home care, a group of exploited front-line workers who are often racialized immigrant women, working under stressful, precarious conditions. This also includes actively working to organize these workers.
174. Release a report of the experience of home care PSWs and those receiving care in the community and conduct a media tour with experts to press the province into instituting guaranteed hours of work.
175. Continue push back against the primarily complaint-based mandatory PSW registry that will begin spring of 2018 with limited 'consultation' from workers and unions.

## **Long Term Care**

Through the leadership of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) and the Health Care Workers' Coordinating Committee (HCWCC),

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

176. Demand that the Ontario Government address the escalating resident-on-resident violence in long term care homes.
177. Provide seniors with the care they require by passing into law the *Time to Care Act* (Bill 43) which calls for a legislated minimum standard of 4 hours of hands-on care for long term care residents. More frontline staff are urgently needed in long term care facilities.
178. Build upon and escalate the HCWCC's Time to Care campaign by releasing a report in communities across Ontario demonstrating how the underfunding of long term care is hurting residents in our facilities.
179. Organize town hall meetings in communities and rallies outside of long term care workplaces in support of this campaign.
180. Work with the University of Stirling to release the results of their study on violence against members in long term care.
181. Continue to organize lobby days at Queen's Park and in MPP offices until the *Time to Care Act* has been passed.

## **Hospitals**

Through the leadership of the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) and the Health Care Workers' Coordinating Committee (HCWCC),

### **CUPE Ontario will:**

182. Support the demand that all healthcare facilities should be funded for their real cost increases, which must include the impact of aging, population growth, utilization, and medical inflation (drugs, medical technologies, etc.).
183. Support OCHU and HCWCC's campaign to end violence against healthcare staff, including the demands that funding and staffing for Ontario hospitals and long term care facilities increase to the Canadian average.
184. Press for amendments to the Canadian Criminal Code to make assault against a healthcare worker (paramedic, homecare, hospital, long term care or community health) a more serious form of assault for the purpose of sentencing.

185. Support healthcare workers to have the same right to refuse unsafe work as other workers in the public sector.
186. Press for provincial legislation to protect any worker in any sector who reports the violence they have experienced at work or who speaks up about the problems of violence at work.
187. Support the demand for adequate compensation and payment for health and psychological services for workers who are the victims of violence.
188. Support the hospital locals to follow our members' work when it transfers through contracting-out or restructuring and press to continue to have hospital terms of employment apply in those circumstances.

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# CUPE ONTARIO CONVENTION 2018



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