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Preparing for a Doug Ford Conservative Government – a message for CUPE members

The election results on June 7 were not what we wanted and are very concerning for all CUPE members and the public services we provide. With only 40 percent of the vote, Doug Ford and the Conservative Party now has a majority government in Ontario.

The race between the Conservatives and the NDP was close until the end. We had members and staff working hard on campaigns all across the province. Thanks to your hard work we elected many new strong NDP MPPs. Three of them – Joel Harden, Rima Berns-McGown and Sara Singh – were our own CUPE Ontario members. We also came so close in many other ridings.

We now have an official opposition that represents the needs of working people and our families. An opposition we can work with to protect our members from an agenda of job and service cuts.

We should all feel proud of our contributions in electing the most diverse caucus in the history of Queen's Park. We can feel confident that they will be effective in fighting for our jobs and the services we provide.

That said, we need to get prepared for the challenges ahead. Doug Ford has promised to cut more than \$10 billion a year from provincial revenue – money used to fund the services we provide. If he keeps this promise, we will see substantial cuts to our services and jobs, and serious concession bargaining. **We need to be ready to fight back.**

The thing we all need to remember is populist politicians like Doug Ford are vulnerable to public opinion. If we all come together at the first sign of attack – if we engage our community allies and the broader labour movement, we can stop the planned cuts and make sure the people in our communities get the services they need.

Your newly elected CUPE Ontario Executive Board is meeting first thing next week to begin to plan for the fight that lies ahead. Sector leaders and sector staff support teams will be meeting in the coming weeks to do the same.

The leaders of all of Ontario's major unions are meeting this week to map out the most effective ways for us to work together. And, we will all be reaching out to our coalition partners across the province to ensure we continue to work together.

Your role in all of this is crucial to our success. You are on the front lines. You will be the first to know if cuts have been planned in your workplace. You will be the first to hear about proposed job losses. You will be the first to get a sense that your employer is planning to put concessions on your bargaining table.

If we are going to succeed in stopping the cuts Premier Ford has planned, you cannot do it on our own. You will need the full force of our union, our community allies, and the broader labour movement. We must all be prepared to mobilize. We must all be prepared to step up and support locals that are under

Fred Hahn
President

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Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

attack. And you must let your staff rep and CUPE Ontario know the minute you see signs that your local is being targeted.

As we move forward under the new Ford government, it is more important than ever for your local to join your regional CUPE council and your local labour council. Protecting the public services that working people in our communities will take all of us coming together.

When Mike Harris came to power, CUPE members got active. Many of our union's great leaders come out of the fight backs at that time. As we move forward today, we can feel confident that the challenges ahead will activate even more of our members to help us stop Ford's agenda of cuts.

We know how to fight back against austerity. We did it under the Liberals and we will do it with Doug Ford and his Conservatives. This time, we are better prepared than we have ever been and together we will win.

In Solidarity,



Fred Hahn
President
CUPE Ontario



Joe Matasic
Regional Director, Ontario
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