

CUPE Ontario Convention 2019

**BE BOLD.
BE BRAVE.**

BUILD THE RESISTANCE.

CUPE MEMBERS LAUNCH THE RESISTANCE

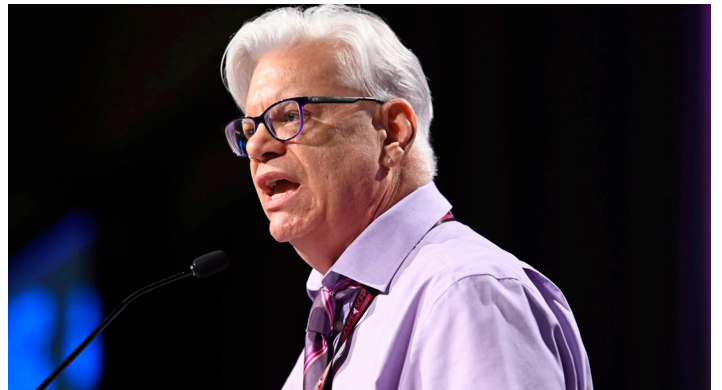
Delegates from across Ontario gather to plan fightback to Ford agenda

In his President's Report, Fred Hahn explained to delegates of CUPE Ontario's 56th annual Convention the vital importance of building the resistance. "We feel the impact of what Ford and his government are doing. It's because we care about each other—about public services—about our communities. The huge number and magnitude of the changes... is all about shock and awe. Literally every sector our members work in has been impacted. The Ford Conservatives are attacking all that we have built together."

Urging delegates not to believe the factual distortions of the government, Hahn said: "It's just a lie that any public sector worker's wage is to blame for the deficit in Ontario. Our members in CUPE make on average only \$40 thousand a year. No worker—in the public or private sector—is responsible for the deficit in Ontario—PERIOD."

Hahn also urged delegates to join the resistance against the rising tide of hate. "Hate crimes are an attack, not only on individuals and their communities, but on the very fabric of our society. They are a direct attack on our members and all working people. It's why our union must advance our work against racism and white supremacy."

In a rousing conclusion, Hahn called on members to make it their job to "build the resistance and fight back, right up until the day three years from now, when we send the Ford Conservatives packing. So let's get to it!"



Moving Forward Together

Candace Rennick, Secretary-Treasurer for CUPE Ontario, believes this is the Convention "where we will shape our vision for the future and decide how to move forward together to get there." Focusing on the talent and drive of CUPE members, Rennick said, "We have the expertise, we have the financial resources, we have strong partnerships with allies. So let's use this time together to chart a solid course of action. Let's commit to being there for each other, regardless of where you live or what sector you work in."

She closed with a reminder that our success benefits all Ontarians. "Let's show this government: not on our watch will we stand by and allow our public services and Charter rights to be decimated. Let's be bolder and braver, more organized, focused and disciplined. And together, let's get out there and take back the province for the people of Ontario. And know that CUPE Ontario will be with you every step of the way, with the support and resources needed to win this fight!"

Health & Safety Award



Nancy Simone, President of CUPE 2190, knows firsthand the health and safety risks facing child protection workers (CPWs) because she's been one for almost 30 years. CPWs are often the first responders when a child is in danger. Seeing children in pain can bring on many mental health issues and Simone has been fighting to see that employers address that. She was inspired by her father, a construction worker who once told her he was frequently fired for standing up for workplace safety. She uses her role as the full-time president of CUPE 2190 to bargain tirelessly for health and safety issues. "Our obligation must always be to protect the health and safety of workers and we must re-commit to making our workplaces safer for workers," she said in accepting the award.

Day 2 Highlights

- Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh speaks
- Rally to Build the Resistance—Queen's Park
- Sisters in Solidarity Award
- Racialized Workers Award

CUPE Members will lead the fight against Ford—Hancock



CUPE National President Mark Hancock’s speech highlighted the role that CUPE members in Ontario must play in the fight against right-wing governments. He outlined the devastating cuts the Ford government has already made to services in Ontario and reminded delegates that Ford’s cuts are wildly unpopular with the people of the province.

“They support us. They support public services,” he said. “That is why we are going to be there to fight the government’s cuts at every turn.”

CUPE ready to fight back—Fleury

Pledging resources for locals facing unprecedented attacks from the Ford government, National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury told Convention delegates that CUPE is ready to fight back.

Fleury emphasized the strength of CUPE’s National Strike, Defence, and General funds. In highlighting the resources available to help CUPE Ontario members resist Ford’s dismantling of public services, he challenged locals to consider working together through coordinated bargaining, pooling resources and merging smaller locals to build power and meet the fight ahead.



Striking Locals

Shortly after convention opened, members of four municipal locals in Cornwall and members of CUPE 3903 were recognized for their strike actions last year.

In Cornwall, members of Locals 234 (outside workers), 3251-01 (library workers) and 5734 (paramedics) struck on May 17, while Local 3251 (inside workers) followed suit a week later. Together they secured a negotiated settlement on June 8.

On March 5, about 3,000 members of CUPE 3903 began the longest strike in the history of Canadian post-secondary education. They held firm against York University for 143 days, before being forced back to work by Premier Doug Ford’s government on July 16.



International Solidarity Forum

Attendees at this year’s International Solidarity Forum heard about the work of CUPE’s Global Justice fund supporting trade unionists internationally. Rhea Gamana, the Toronto Chair of Anakbayan, discussed challenges facing Filipino workers under Duterte, including the jailing trade unionists. CUPE Local 1281’s Hind Awwad spoke about the global call for boycott, divestment and sanctions and the context for workers in the Palestinian territories. Rory Gill, President of CUPE Alberta, detailed a recent trip to Palestine where workers revealed it can be life threatening to bargain with your employer. Fred Hahn discussed a solidarity trip to the Philippines where workers are confronting the worldwide austerity and privatization agenda.