

NEWS FROM CUPE ONTARIO

Winter 2019



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Fred Hahn
President



Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

POLITICAL PULSE

News from CUPE Ontario

With more than 270,000 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.

CUPE Ontario

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Greetings from Fred and Candace

Friends,

Last fall, in leadership meetings across Ontario, we spoke about the Ford Conservatives moving aggressively to institute exactly the reckless and wide-ranging cuts and restructuring that we are witnessing today. In only a few months, we've seen an ever-growing number of cuts to funding and proposed restructuring of public services.

From health care to education, municipal government to universities and social services, in every sector that our members provide important public services, there are real concerns about service and job cuts, downsizing and privatization.

We sounded the alarm bell, and now we are seeing the fire. But as the Conservatives try to move ahead with dismantling the social services that Ontarians rely on, CUPE Ontario is hard at work building the resistance with our locals, our communities, and our coalition partners.

We are not in this struggle alone. With a great number of partners, we are building the resistance to the Conservatives' slash and burn policies.

Our active engagement with the Ontario Health Coalition against massive restructuring is in full swing, our defense of the working conditions and wages of child care workers is on track and our members are aggressively encouraging MPPs at Queen's Park to pass Bill 13, a law that would require long-term care homes to provide a minimum 4-hour hands-on level of care to our seniors.

And we are working hard on campaigns to fight the rising tide of hate, white-supremacy and racism that is integral to our fightback against the Ford Conservatives. As hate and racism is used to divide working people from each other, it is critical we take on this work in an overt and focused way.

In solidarity,

and

Fred Hahn
President

Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

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Bryan Keith

Secretary-Treasurer for CUPE Local 4705 and Northern Rep for CUPE Ontario

Fighting Everyday For Public Services In Northern Ontario



Born and raised in the small town of Kirkland Lake, Bryan Keith moved south to Sudbury when he was eight years old. Today, he represents 1700 municipal workers in ten bargaining units across

Northern Ontario. In 2018, he was elected the Northern Ontario Representative on the CUPE Ontario Executive Board and proudly advocates for members across the North.

“We’re vast in landscape with few people-but at the same time, when we get behind something, it’s pretty impressive”, says Bryan. Outside of his union work, Bryan is the co-parent of three kids - two pre-teen daughters and a six-year-old son. Their youngest son Braydan has been diagnosed on the autism spectrum, but under the Liberal government, just getting the diagnosis was a challenge.

“We were on the waiting list for over a year to see a pediatrician”. Bryan remembers, “When the new government kicked in and stopped the funding, they said no children diagnosed after May 31, 2017 would receive direct funding, and Braydan was diagnosed just three

weeks after that date”. The new Conservative Autism Program has moved to a direct-funding only model that falls well short of providing the real supports and therapy needed by many children with autism. “In the North, it costs 40 dollars an hour to get the services we need. At 20 hours a week that’s about 3,000 dollars a month”, Bryan says, “For our son, the lifetime maximum is \$140,000 until he reaches the age of 18. However, because of the new breakdown in the Conservatives program, the new maximum we can receive for this treatment is \$5,000 per year. That covers just three months of therapy a year for our child.”

Indeed, under the Conservatives plan, programs that are in place to fund and provide treatment are being eliminated. Combined with a hiring freeze in schools, education workers are sounding the alarm that there is not adequate funding to support students with autism who are being forced out of direct, not for profit, services in the community and into Ontario’s classrooms.

Despite forcing families like Bryan’s to find and pay for services on their own, Bryan will continue his resistance to the Ford Conservative agenda, and as a CUPE Ontario Rep., he is determined to be brave and bold as he fights to save public services for working families in the North, and all across Ontario.



Doug Ford’s new health care legislation will privatize & impose mega-mergers on health care

RALLY
Queen’s Park
April 30 12 pm

TAKE ACTION Improve Public Health Care
TELL DOUG FORD: No to Cuts & Privatization

CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION

International Women's Day

Harmful Ford Policies Inspire a Huge Celebration in Toronto



On Saturday, March 9th, 2019, CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn, proudly joined members of the CUPE Ontario Women's Committee as part of our delegation at the celebration of International Women's Day. On this day, CUPE Ontario celebrates the achievements of women, including women in our union, and recommits to taking on the fight for gender equity. Women face political, social, and economic struggles that lead to their continued marginalization. It is by taking on these fights that we build the resistance required to achieve a more equitable society for us all.

This year in particular, women face a huge fight against the agenda of Ford's Conservatives. This government's agenda of cuts and privatization hurt us all, but much of this agenda has a disproportionate impact on women. Cutting promised increases over the next two years to rape crisis centre funding means inadequate supports for survivors of sexual violence. A \$15 million dollar cut from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which helps fund initiatives like the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, means that child care advocates have less support.



Even more wide ranging in its effects on women, the cancellation of the \$15 minimum wage increase means that our most vulnerable workers, the majority of whom are women, have less economic freedom. Make no mistake about it, Ontario's most marginalized are being disproportionately hurt by Ford's cuts.





CUPE Long Term Care Workers Lobby MPPs to Pass Time To Care Act



A large contingent of CUPE Long Term Care Workers from across Ontario, along with CUPE Ontario leadership, descended on Queen's Park at the end of February to lobby MPPs on the importance of passing Bill 13 - The Time to Care Act.

Their goal was to spend the day meeting with MPPs of all parties and impress on them the importance of offering proper care for our seniors.

This legislation was introduced by the NDP, and would see the government of Ontario require a minimum of four hours of daily, hands-on care for residents in long-term care facilities. This is a minimum care standard to ensure long term care residents have the supports they need to live in dignity. Members were able to attend almost 40 meetings with MPPs of all parties. In a rare one-on-one, Candace Rennick, Secretary/Treasurer of CUPE Ontario, was able to confront Premier Doug Ford directly on the importance of this legislation.

Lobbying will continue as members reach out and follow up with MPPs, in their communities, to make sure this important piece of legislation passes, and long term care residents are guaranteed the compassion they deserve.

Congratulations to the hard working members for giving up their personal time to be bold, be brave and take the resistance directly to the politicians.



OCHU/CUPE Report Shows Ontario's Hospital Bed Crisis Will Deepen Under Ford

A recent report has found that Doug Ford's election promise to end hallway medicine in Ontario is at odds with his government's promised tax cuts, public service spending cuts and balanced budget. Following the election of Ford's Progressive Conservative government, CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions crunched the numbers on three Ford proposals and assessed the impact on hospitals.

OCHU's report, *Hallway Medicine: It Can Be Fixed*, looked at the implications of Ford's promised \$7 billion tax plan, balanced budget commitment and 4 per cent public service "efficiency" program, and found that far from ending hallway medicine, the bed crisis will actually deepen under Ford. In fact, Ontario's hospitals, which are funded and staffed at levels well below other provinces, would see an overall loss of 2,467 to 3,712 more beds and between 8,560 to 16,418 jobs.



"It was important we raise the contradiction in the Progressive Conservatives' promises with local communities. The government cannot achieve its promise to end hallway medicine and still cut public sector spending by four per cent," says OCHU president Michael Hurley, "Ontario hospitals are already dealing with overcapacity and years of underfunding. They will not be able to maintain the quality of patient care in the face of demographic pressures without these investments."

The OCHU/CUPE research makes several recommendations for ending hallway medicine including: funding hospitals at their actual costs; opening acute, complex continuing care and long-term care beds to deal with overcrowding; investing in mental health and addictions; and stepping away from restructuring and privatization.

CUPE Ontario Proudly Stands in Solidarity With Postal Workers

Two hundred and seventy thousand CUPE members, represented in the province by CUPE Ontario, were proud to support Canada's postal workers this winter as they fought the breach of their right to collective bargaining, violated by the passing of return-to-work legislation passed by the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau.

At the end of November, 2018, instead of encouraging the management at Canada Post to negotiate a fair collective agreement that protects the rights and safety of workers, Justin Trudeau came down firmly on the side of the employer. This decision by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour creates a dangerous precedent, but CUPE members will not stand idly by as the government violates workers' Charter rights. We will always stand in solidarity with 3 million other unionized workers across Canada to defend the rights of Canadians to free collective bargaining.



PICTURE: CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn, and CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick proudly joined members of CUPE Ontario and union allies to picket the Gateway Postal Facility in Mississauga.

Ford Promised No Job Losses, But Government Changes to Education Include More Than \$309 Million in Hidden Cuts

Major cuts to funding for staff who support students in Ontario schools are buried in a recent announcement on changes to education. Representatives of CUPE exposed \$309 million in cuts after their analysis of the background documents that were released as part of an announcement by Minister of Education Lisa Thompson.



“The government knows what damage these cuts will inflict on children and their families, so it has tried to conceal them amid all the hoopla that surrounded their announcement,” said Laura Walton, president of CUPE’s Ontario School Board Council of Unions, which represents 55,000 education workers across the province. “The Minister repeatedly assured us that not one teacher will lose their job – but much of the support that children get in school comes from other education workers, who are vital to the success of students in our public education system. These hidden cuts threaten that support.”

The changes announced today include the elimination of sections of the education grants – sections that are used to provide services for students in need.

Ford Conservative Cuts Include:

- \$235 million to fund special education to support children in need and at-risk students (included as part of Local Priorities Funding)
- \$63.6 million for extra staffing (Cost Adjustment Allocation)
- \$10 million in staffing for education workers (Human Resource Transition Supplement)

“The loss of this funding means a loss of the people on the front line – people who provide direct support and services to students,” said Walton.

She pointed out another significant cut that was revealed separately: the government’s changes to the funding ratios for early childhood educators (ECEs). “The ratio changes will force school boards to choose between hiring ECEs or making cuts elsewhere.”

CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn likened this announcement to “Pandora’s box – there is so much in there that is harmful, including increases in class sizes, changes to hiring practices, changes to the Health and Physical Education curriculum, and so much more. But there is no question that all of these important matters – when lumped into one announcement – are there to try to hide cuts to funding that will simply cause more turmoil in Ontario’s schools.

In the coming weeks and months, CUPE Ontario will hold Doug Ford’s government accountable for these cuts and we will fight alongside Ontario’s students, parents, and our allies for the high-quality education that our children deserve.

CUPE Ontario Joins With Migrant Workers to Unite Against Racism New Alliance Has Plans to Take Action With a Series of Events throughout 2019

It was a celebration at Nathan Philips Square in Toronto on March 21st as CUPE members, led by CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn and CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick, joined a large group of diverse workers, and pledged to fight the rise of discrimination and racism motivated by Right-Wing hate speech meant to divide us.

CUPE Ontario is proud to join with the newly formed Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, who organized the event, and strongly support their goal of forming strong partnerships, educating our communities, and taking direct action to fight racism. At the Rally, members were reminded that over 70% of migrant workers are denied access to basic services like healthcare and education, while CEO salaries have doubled. Members can continue to take bold action against racism with further events being held throughout 2019: May 1 - International Workers Day; June 16 - Fathers Day and Domestic Workers Day; September 2 - Labour day. As you can see, CUPE Ontario will continue to proudly unite with our coalition partners to fight hate speech, xenophobia and racism.



CUPE Ontario School Board Workers Join Allies Outside Ford Fundraiser.

On February 27, 2019, CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn and CUPE's Ontario Council of School Board Union's President Laura Walton, joined CUPE members and allies for a rally, outside Premier Ford's \$1,250 a plate fundraiser in Toronto. The rally, organized by

the Elementary Teachers of Toronto, brought attention to the growing cuts to education funding and made it clear to Ford Conservatives, and their wealthy supporters, that public education is not for sale.

As guests arrived for the fundraising dinner amidst a massive snow storm, hundreds rallied, forming an information picket that resulted in long line-ups of cars, forcing Ford supporters to wait a substantial amount of time before being able to get into the fundraiser.

When some participants tried to avoid the line and walk into the event, they were met by education workers, students, parents and other activists like those from the Ontario Autism Coalition, who took the opportunity to challenge the Ford government to stop the cuts in education funding and commit to a properly funded, publicly delivered education system.

While Mr. Ford called the event "The largest fundraiser in Canadian history", he also got a taste of what's to come if he continues his cuts and chaos in Ontario's public education system.

This past winter, the Ford government has directed school boards to implement a hiring freeze for education workers, cut funds supporting students with special needs, increase class sizes, halt funding that supports school board programs in priority communities and most recently announced funding changes that will result in at least \$309 million less in funding to Ontario's schools.

As this event shows, not even a massive snowstorm will stop CUPE Ontario education workers from working with teachers, community allies and other public education activists to build a resistance to cuts and privatization in public education.



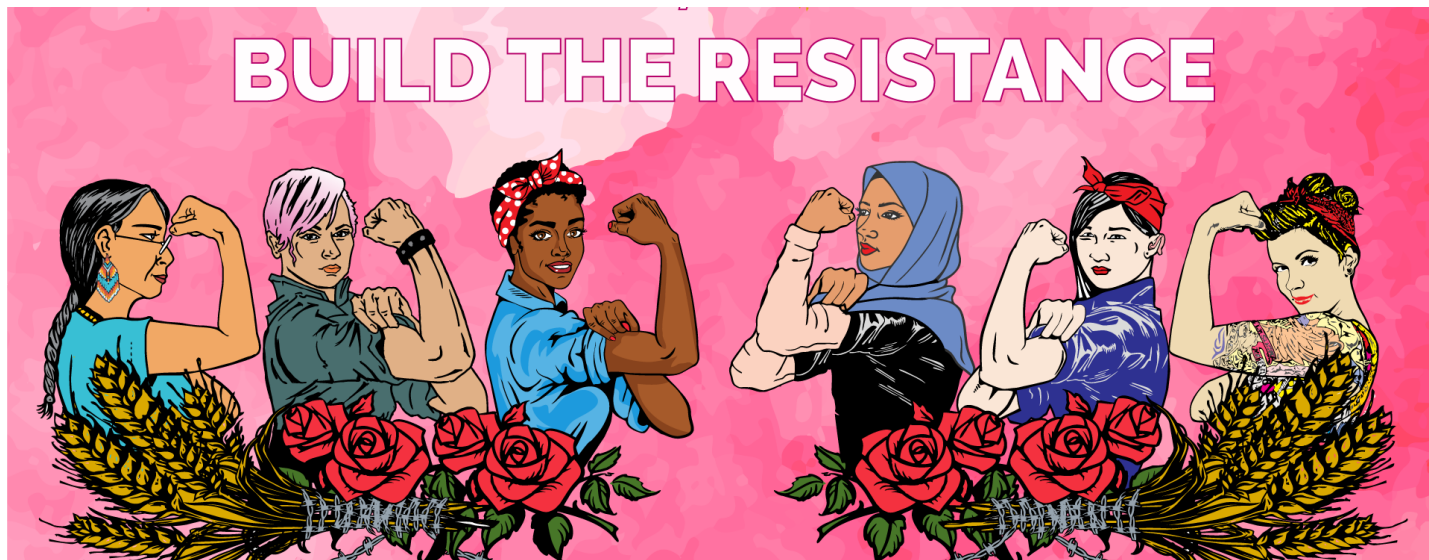


Workers with disabilities at Queen's Park

Bold Actions By The Disabilities Committee Will Continue at Upcoming Acessability Hearing on April 10th, 2019

On February 26th, 2019 the CUPE Ontario Workers with Disabilities Committee organized a Day at Queen's Park to discuss our priority issues, including AODA implementation and the Government's plan to redefine the definition of "Disability" for programs such as ODSP.

The Committee had very productive meetings with each of the two Opposition Party Accessibility Critics. As a result of this work, CUPE Ontario's Workers' with Disabilities Committee has been asked to make a presentation at Queen's Park on April 10th, 2019 when NDP MPP and Accessibility Critic (and former CUPE member) Brother Joel Harden hosts a day-long public hearing on accessibility issues.



The work of the CUPE Ontario Women's Committee is centred on achieving equity for all sisters in our union and in our communities. They do this by promoting women's equity, empowering women and fostering opportunity and advancement for women. Contact the Committee at CUPE.on.ca

2019 Trades Conference: Up For The challenge



The worst snowstorm of a hard winter could not stop, the CUPE Ontario's Trades Committee conference which took place in Hamilton, February 13th to 16th. CUPE Ontario president Fred Hahn and MPP Wayne Gates offered a rundown of the Ford government's record since taking office and urged CUPE Trades workers to work with allies inside and outside the union, to build a new model of mobilization. Delegates were taken through a presentation on the ramifications of Bill 47 (Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018) and its specific impacts on trades workers. As well, members were taken through a training on how to trades workers could connect with communities and their MPPs to voice their concerns

about what a decline in standards for trades would mean for Ontarians. Finally, a panel discussion with Vern Edwards (Ontario Federation of Labour), Gord Faulkner (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers) and Patrick Dillon (Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario) looked at the future for the trades after the wind-down of the College of Trades by the Ford Conservatives. CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick closed the conference, stressing the importance of solidarity in the face of Ford Conservatives.

OCHU and HCWCC Anti-Violence Conference

The Ontario Council of Hospital Unions and CUPE Ontario's Health Care Workers Coordinating Committee held a joint conference on rising violence in healthcare workplaces on January 28-30th in Toronto. Speakers included Mark Hancock, CUPE National President; CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn, and CUPE Ontario Secretary/Treasurer Candace Rennick who presented delegates with research on workplace violence in health-care that showed an organizational culture exists which discounts reports of violence, especially for female workers. This was backed up by a poll of over 1000 CUPE long-term care workers, which will be released in the Spring of 2019 and shows an alarming number of members who have experienced violence in the workplace and fear reprisals if they report the incident. The coordinated campaign between OCHU and CUPE Ontario's Health Care Workers Coordinating Committee on violence in the workplace is critical and will continue throughout the year.



CUPE School Board Workers Convention

Over 350 delegates attended the Ontario School Board Council of Union's (OSBCU) Convention in Niagara Falls from January 29th-February 2nd. There was consensus that the Ford government has shown contempt to children with



autism and their parents, a contempt that now extends to all children in Ontario's public education system in the wake of a province-wide school board hiring freeze announcement. Delegates were taken through the reality of the Ford government's cuts to education and proposals around class sizes, seniority in teacher hiring and Full Day Kindergarten. The Ford Conservatives have vowed to enact 4 percent across-the-board cut for all ministries, which – translates into a cut of more than \$1 billion for the province's education system. Those cuts have begun to be implemented since the OSBCU's conference with recent announcements resulting in at least \$309 million in cuts, on top of more than \$100 million already implemented in our public education system. As well, increased class sizes

for students in Grade 4 through 12, will result in thousands of lost jobs in our schools, including those represented by CUPE. Delegates made plans to mobilize with members, union allies and communities against the cuts and chaos of the Ford Conservatives.



CUPE Ontario Submits Recommendations For the 2019 Budget

PETERBOROUGH, ON – Service cuts and privatization is a failed strategy that the people of Ontario have seen far too many times, CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick told a pre-budget committee hearing in Peterborough on January 28th, 2019.

“Doug Ford likes to talk about the provincial deficit, he even tried to redo the math to make it seem bigger than it is, but the fiscal prob-

lem in Ontario isn’t from spending, it’s a revenue problem,” Candace said. In her statement to the pre-budget committee she highlighted the public services Ontarians need. “Ontarians (however they voted) want assurance they can count on the quality, public services that are critical to their ability to get by in a world of rising costs and stagnant real incomes. To do this, the government must stop looking only at the expenditure side of the budget and concentrate on finding new revenues to support public services and achieve balance.”

CUPE Ontario’s proposal outlined potential sources of revenue that the province could pursue, including:

- Follow the example of Nova Scotia and PEI which have set the corporate tax rate at 16%. This would immediately inject \$5 billion dollars into Ontario’s budget;
- Make the wealthiest 1 per cent pay their fair share by adjusting the marginal tax rate on just the income they earn OVER the \$250,000 threshold to 32 per cent. This would inject another \$3.8 billion into the province;
- Enforce existing tax laws by requiring wealthy, multinational tech companies like Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google to pay sales tax, just like we do for every other corporation operating in Ontario.

CUPE Ontario’s submission also cited an Auditor General’s report that showed an \$8 billion loss to the province from privatization and contracting out as proof that these are not effective strategies for addressing the provinces finances. The Hydro One privatization alone is set to cost the province \$2.4 billion by 2024. “Failure to address the revenue side of the budget will make the fiscal problem worse,” said Candace. “It leaves the government without money to protect public services, and, in fact, forces more cuts to those services, like we’ve seen in the last two weeks proposed for our schools and universities.”

Candace concluded by highlighting key service expansions that would be possible with increased revenue, such as “the urgent need to increase the care time spent with our loved ones in Ontario’s long-term care homes to a minimum average of four hours of hands on care per resident per day.”

Upcoming Events

April 6	Rally for Education	Queen’s Park Toronto
April 12	OMECC Leadership Meeting	Sheraton Parkway Toronto
April 23	Sid Ryan: Book Launch	Lula Lounge Toronto
April 30	Protect Public Healthcare Rally	Queen’s Park Toronto
May 29	CUPE Ontario Convention	Toronto Sheraton Centre