

Latest Retirees Network News

More than 40 retirees represented locals and district councils across Ontario at our 2nd ever CUPE Ontario Semi-Annual Retirees Meeting on November 10th. (Important to note that this was the largest-ever gathering of CUPE retirees in Canada!)

Retirees at the meeting exchanged various successes (and barriers) in ramping up the capacity of CUPE retirees at each of our locals and at district councils. Some locals have begun tracking members as they transition to retirement. Many do not. However, extremely encouraging were reports from:

1. **Local 5167** (Hamilton city workers) sent their retiree rep who writes regularly for the local's newsletter and offered to share these articles with other Retirees Network members.
2. **Local 1281** (cultural, radio and university campus workers) is not yet tracking retiring members from 32 different employers. They have, however, elected a retiree rep to its membership committee, and district council rep and they also elect a retiree to represent the local's retirees at convention.
3. **Local 217** (London Library) sent two reps to the meeting in order to learn about what other locals are doing to engage their retirees.
4. **Local 870** (Rideau Veterans Hospital) sent a retiree rep to the meeting who reported that there are not, as yet, any avenues for retiree engagement in their local.
5. **Local 79** (city workers) have a longstanding Retirees Committee with its own budget and retired members sit on the local's committees and have voice (and no vote) and monthly membership meetings.
6. The **Local 4000** (Eastern Ontario Healthcare Workers) rep asked to connect with other retiree activists wanting to join him in pressing for climate justice and the fight to end private delivery of health and longterm care.
7. **Local 2316's** (Childrens' Aid) Retirees Committee Chair described his local's 1st training workshop aimed at assisting members as they transition to retirement. (This local's amended By-laws has the elected Retiree Committee Chair as a member of the local's Executive Committee. -see third column =>)
8. **Local 2191** (Community Living) is working on amending their By-laws based on the 2316 model.
9. Two **district councils (Niagara & Toronto)** have bylaws provisions for an elected Retiree Rep on each council's Executive Board.

- Retirees at the meeting were urged to seek delegate status from their local's for April's **CUPE Ontario convention**.

➔ Assistance from staff reps, sector chairs and all CUPE Ontario committees will be essential to meeting our goal of retiree convention caucus representation from 30 locals and district councils across the province.



- **Major Issues from Committee Work Plan:** CUPE Ontario's constitutional amendment at National to facilitate the mobilization of CUPE's retirees across the country was not considered clear enough by the convention's Constitution committee.

- **Work against Privatization:** As the pandemic lingers a growing number retirees are active on-line and joining cauldades to put a stop to profit-making in the public services. Healthcare services, for example, that a growing number of us are beginning to depend upon.

Our Retirees Network members receive all CUPE Ontario campaign alerts about healthcare actions in our communities.

- **Equality Work:** Both in the workplace and in our retirement as CUPE members are having to come to terms with age discrimination. We look forward to taking this forward to the upcoming human rights conference. While our province's

➔ Human Rights Code designates age as a specified protected ground for each of us to identify the subtle strands of agism is a different matter. The Supreme Court of Canada says that the age diversity that exists at work and in society needs to be reflected in our policies, programs, services, facilities so that physical, attitudinal, and systemic barriers are not created.

- **Strike Support Plan:** Retirees are regularly being alerted by email of strikes and joining (physically distanced) picket lines across the province.

- **Upcoming Conferences / Events:** ➔

The next semi-annual meeting of local and district council retirees will be held at the ORO on March 1st. Enthusiastic promotion of this meeting by staff reps, board members and sector chairs is encouraged and will be crucial to the meeting's success.

- **Concerns in the committee:** To effectively mobilize and activate retirees, CUPE locals need help in the regular collection of contact information for members retiring from the workplace. Here's another area

where assistance from our staff reps could be extremely helpful.

- **How Committee Work links to Action Plan:** Campaigns, strike support, political action work of CUPE Ontario all have an important resource in our retiree members. As detailed in para 3 above, confronting agism and its impacts in the workplace clearly intersects with the other work of each of our equality committees.

- **Immediate needs from CUPE Ontario to move Network work forward:** As noted above, promotion by staff of retiree activation continues to be key as we advance CUPE Ontario's mandate with regard to retiree members.



Fred Hahn, was an awesome keynote at the Retirees Meeting who skillfully alerted us to the extremely serious danger posed by Ford's gutting of key aspects of Ontario's employment standards act.

See for yourself: Both Fred's presentation and the Q&A from retiree delegates to the semi-annual meeting are [here](#).