



SIXTY YEARS
BUILDING JUSTICE
FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY
AND WINNING FOR
WORKERS

ACTION PLAN

AS ADOPTED AT THE 2024 CONVENTION



CUPE Ontario Action Plan 2024

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So much of the work of oppression is policing the imagination.
-Saidiya Hartman

Introduction

1. The convergence of multiple crises, including the escalating climate emergency, the deepening chasm of economic inequality, persistent social injustice, the erosion of democratic values, escalating geopolitical tensions, and the dangerous attacks by far-right groups and their links to mainstream politics, presents an unprecedented challenge to working people here in Canada, and worldwide. These interconnected crises are not isolated events, but rather symptoms of a system that prioritizes corporate profits over human well-being and planetary health.
2. CUPE Ontario members, representing a diverse cross-section of sectors and communities, are on the frontlines of these crises. We experience firsthand the devastating impacts of the climate crisis, the precarity of low-wage jobs, the persistent discrimination faced by marginalized groups, the chronic austerity of public services, and the assault on our democratic rights. We understand that these challenges cannot be solved in isolation but require a comprehensive and transformative approach that addresses the root causes of injustice and inequality.
3. This action plan serves as a roadmap for our union to mobilize our collective power, build solidarity with allies across movements, and demand bold action from our elected officials. We will not be passive observers in the face of these crises, but rather active agents of change, advocating for policies that protect our planet, uplift our communities, and secure a just and equitable future for all working people. This plan outlines our strategic priorities, key demands, and concrete actions to achieve these goals. Through education, organizing, advocacy, and direct action, we will harness the power of our collective voice to build a more resilient, inclusive, and democratic society.

Political Landscape

4. The political climate in Ontario is rooted in the Ford Conservative government's ongoing public service austerity and underfunding, their steadfast pursuit of privatization, and the criminalization of dissent and protest.
5. These policies erode vital public services, exacerbate precarious working conditions, and stifle democratic participation. Public services are either facing budget cuts or


The Ford conservative government's response to protests has been increasingly heavy-handed, putting a chill on the right to demonstrate and express dissent.

increasingly being handed over to private corporations and public sector workers face a challenging bargaining climate marked by fiscal restraint. Simultaneously, the Ford Conservative government's response to protests has been increasingly heavy-handed, putting a chill on the right to

demonstrate and express dissent.

6. Alongside these challenges, the cost-of-living crisis continues to escalate with housing affordability remaining out of reach. Record inflation coupled with declining real wages are making it increasingly difficult for working people to make ends meet. Meanwhile, the devastating impacts of the climate crisis are becoming more evident each year, with extreme weather events, wildfires, and floods becoming more frequent and severe. Additionally, the rise of hate and intolerance further threatens our social fabric, creating an environment of fear and division. Historically exploited peoples and communities, including Indigenous peoples, Black and racialized groups, 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and gender diverse) individuals, and religious minorities, are facing increased discrimination and violence.
7. However, amidst these challenges, a powerful movement is emerging. Workers and communities are uniting, refusing to accept the status quo. We are witnessing a renewed commitment to collective action, a demand for social justice, and a determination to build a better future for all. Workers are organizing and speaking out against unfair working conditions, inadequate funding, and the erosion of public services. Community groups are mobilizing to address affordability, advocate for climate action, and combat hate and intolerance.
8. Much of what we are facing in Ontario is also occurring outside our borders. Across the world, 2024 is a year of democratic paradox. A staggering 49% of the world's population, in 64 countries, will have elections this year; however, the rise of far-right and fascist forces threatens the very foundation of democracy. Political leaders such as Viktor Orbán the Prime Minister of Hungary, Marine Le Pen the leader of France's National Rally party, and Giorgia Meloni the Prime Minister of Italy, embody the extreme right-wing on central issues such as immigration and human rights, and are increasing in popularity. Federal Conservative leader, Pierre Poilievre, is our version in Canada.
9. Our present moment can seem inevitable and our capacity to respond can feel inadequate. But we must channel the frustration and anger we feel into actively imagining new possibilities and strengthened bonds of solidarity.

10. As the world continues to watch the genocide unfold in Gaza, we also bear witness to the inspiring and courageous response of the Palestinian people. Like so many unions across the globe, CUPE Ontario is answering the call of solidarity from both the Palestinian people and Palestinian trade unions.
11. The recent Palestinian solidarity encampments in over 20 countries across the world, including here in Ontario are a prime example of the growing refusal to accept the status quo. These solidarity movements have rejected complacency and complicity and, instead, continue to apply pressure to power. The encampments aren't just places where demands are made and rejected, they're also spaces where people come together, make collective decisions, and actively practice solidarity. They offer a glimpse of alternative ways of living and a vision for new, more just worlds.
12. Their tactics and spirit echo the labour movement's historical struggles and are a testament to the enduring power of collective action. Just as striking workers occupy factories, disrupt business as usual, and form picket lines to demand better conditions, the students' encampments are a physical manifestation of dissent, disrupting the complacency of university administrations and demanding action on Palestine. By occupying space and impeding the flow of everyday life, both movements highlight the power of collective action and the necessity of disruption to achieve their goals. The students' encampments are a contemporary extension of the labour movement's legacy of using direct action to challenge power structures and advocate for justice, ultimately enacting new possibilities.
13. The violence enacted against the Palestinian people is a continuation of the violence against the people of Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, West Papua New Guinea, Haiti, Myanmar, Tigray, Yemen, the Kanaks of New Caledonia, and the Indigenous people of Turtle Island. This violence is part of the larger criminalization of opposition that is increasingly common. It is an attempt to acclimatize us to unreasonable suffering.
14. We must not become desensitized to this resurging trend. We cannot allow the normalization of state violence and oppression to become the new ordinary. From cop cities to the violence enacted on the Wet'suwet'en nation and other Indigenous land defenders to police violence on strike lines as seen at CUPE Local 3903, the militarization and criminalization of daily life must be met with an organized and fierce opposition.
15. Our struggles at home, and abroad, are both interconnected and require a collective response which ultimately dismantles the systems that enable such atrocities. Only



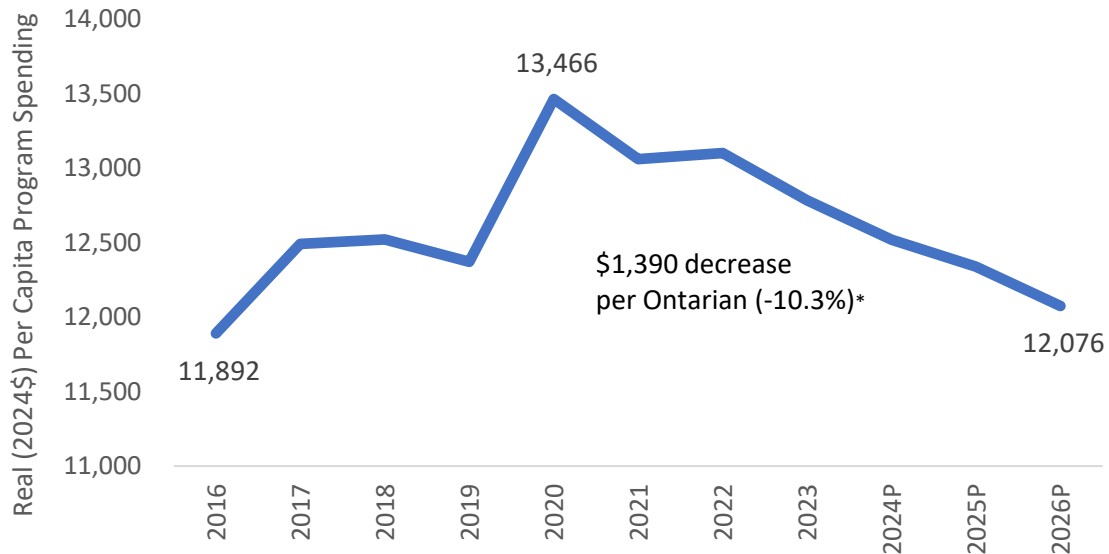
Like so many unions across the globe, CUPE Ontario is answering the call of solidarity from both the Palestinian people and Palestinian trade unions.

through unwavering solidarity and collective organizing can we reimagine a future where different possibilities await.

Affordability Crisis

16. At home, we remain steeped in an affordability crisis that, despite decreasing inflation, is as present as ever.
17. The average family's groceries bill has gone up \$4,131 relative to 2019. Yet, the only relief we've gotten from the Ford Conservative government is a gas tax cut worth about three dollars and nineteen cents for every tank of gas - barely more than the coins that fall between couch cushions.
18. While the unconstitutional Bill 124 has been reversed thanks to the militant organizing of CUPE Ontario and the broader labour movement, many workers have yet to be "[made] whole in light of the unconstitutionality of Bill 124" (as noted in CUPE Ontario's 2023 Action Plan paragraph #63). Additionally, declining real incomes have been a staple of the Ontario labour market for over 15 years. While our real wages decrease, top CEO wages continue to reach new heights and are now 246 times the average worker's wage.
19. Public service austerity continues unabated. After factoring inflation and population growth, public service funding in Ontario will decline -2.1% in 2024, -1.4% in 2025, and -2.1% in 2026. Program spending on public service will decrease by \$1,390 per Ontarian by 2026. Any pandemic lesson on the need and fragility of our public services has long been forgotten (or likely ignored) by those in power.

Planned Program Spending per Ontarian Decreases \$1,390 by 2026




Source: Ontario Public Accounts, Statistics Canada, and 2024 Budget
*\$23.1 billion annually

20. The issue dominating many headlines these days remains housing. According to recent Angus Reid polling, 85% of Ontarians think the Ford Conservatives are performing poorly on housing affordability. Yet, in all the headlines, op-eds, and think pieces, few speak of social and subsidized housing.
21. We are told we are in a 'housing crisis,' but for many, it's been this bad for ages. This isn't a crisis; it's capitalism at work which has been cultivated and maintained by landlords, developers, and their allies at all levels of government to maximize profits. Doug Ford treats housing like a commodity, not a right and this leads to prices that are sky-high and millions are left without a decent roof over their heads.
22. This won't be solved by the 'free market.' As long as shelter has a price, it's inherently out of reach for many. When the government refuses to build public housing, you guarantee entire communities will be left in the lurch.
23. The development we see everywhere isn't progress. It's wealthy investors extracting profit, flipping cheap housing, and remaking neighborhoods to attract the affluent. For many, especially Black and racialized communities, this so-called 'urban renewal' has meant nothing but destruction.
24. The rich continue to pillage all that should be held in common and hold contempt for those of us who dare to think otherwise.

CUPE Ontario will:

25. Collaborate with allies to address the housing crisis, advocating for non-market-based solutions such as affordable social housing, government-owned public housing, land trust, and co-operatives; and we will work with CUPE National to develop language for the bargaining table on housing for workers.
26. Support measures that will ban profit driven evictions, amplify the need for rent and vacancy controls, transitional housing, create a housing help centre resource list for members experiencing eviction, and shelter system expansion.
27. Continue to highlight the need for our pension plans to be invested in affordable housing and divested from ventures exacerbating housing unaffordability.
28. Actively oppose Bill 23's creation of a province wide watered-down definition of "affordable housing", which is unlikely to be affordable to many Ontarians. We will push to ensure housing remains accessible for all and demand a definition of affordability that reflects the actual needs of Ontarians.
29. Continue our public awareness campaign to debunk the misconception that wages drive inflation, instead highlighting the detrimental role of corporate profits and greed in driving up prices, while emphasizing the impact of wealthy individuals evading their fair share of contributions.
30. Reinitiate a Tax Campaign to demand that the rich and corporations pay their fair share in taxes to raise the money we need to fund the services from which we all benefit. The campaign will highlight that workers have borne the brunt of inflation and instead that corporate profit is the primary driver of rising prices.
31. Ensure comprehensive understanding among our members regarding the impact of inflation on real wages and advocate for stronger demands during bargaining to mitigate further erosion of wages.
32. Work with sectors and bargaining councils to develop sectoral bargaining demands for wages, and implement community and member engagement strategies to achieve those demands, so that our members wages stop falling against inflation.
33. Challenge the government's narrative of a public safety crisis aimed at expanding police and carceral institutions, which perpetuate the criminalization of marginalized communities, including those experiencing homelessness.
34. Actively defend the right to protest and picket, recognizing these actions as essential elements of a thriving democracy and protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We condemn recent attempts by some municipal politicians to introduce



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anti-democratic motions that seek to limit these fundamental rights in response to peaceful protests. These harmful initiatives threaten to create a chilling effect on democratic participation and disproportionately impact marginalized communities.

35. Oppose any coercion of public sector workers to participate in the displacement of either progressive activists or unhoused individuals within Ontario, affirming their legal right to refuse work that jeopardizes their safety and that of others, even if instructed by their employer.
36. Persist in advocating for universal pensions, striving for a defined benefit pension plan indexed to inflation to ensure financial security for all workers.
37. Continue to oppose the expansion of Ontario's strong mayor powers, which are increasingly used to undermine democratic processes in municipal governance. We will advocate for a return to collaborative decision-making that respects the voices of elected officials and the communities they represent.

Deep Organizing

38. In part because of the affordability crisis, CUPE Ontario members and the labour movement at large have seen a renewed sense of militancy throughout our ranks. Since 2019, one in two unionized workers in Ontario have been on strike, which is unprecedented in recent history. We know that strikes build muscle memory and create a spirit in which workers recognize that to be treated well in the workplace, and be paid fairly, workers have to use our voice, we have to organize, and we have to be ready to withdraw our labour.
39. This spirit was embodied by the 55,000 school board workers who went on an illegal strike to defy the Ford Conservatives' use of the notwithstanding clause to remove their constitutional right to strike.
40. The example set by the school board workers continues to inspire our movement to engage in the deep organizing required to demand better for our workplaces and our communities. Countless union members have discussed how unions benefit the working class over their kitchen table. These conversations have led to record high union approval ratings.

41. The struggles and successes of workers across borders serve as an inspiration to us all. Since 2023, various workers around the world have organized and achieved major victories for better pay, benefits, and job security, including workers at Starbucks and Amazon in North America, garment workers in Cambodia, minimum wage workers in Chile and India, delivery workers in South Korea, and university lecturers in Nigeria.
42. As part of the working class, we face similar challenges and threats from capitalism. The pursuit of profit in capitalism prioritizes individual gain over collective well-being, leading to exploitation, inequality, environmental degradation, fragmentation, and financial instability. These threats highlight the need for a more equitable, sustainable, and socially responsible system that prioritizes well-being and environmental protection.

CUPE Ontario will:

43. Emphasize the active involvement of members and retirees to secure advancements for workers, with a focus on equity deserving workers.
44. Engage locals in robust, well-supported worker-driven campaigns, including strikes and solidarity actions, to challenge anti-worker politicians and governments.
45. Providing comprehensive strike support and resources to all members during challenging bargaining periods.
46. Continue our affiliation campaign to welcome more locals into CUPE Ontario, expanding our scope and enhancing our political influence.
47. Assist locals in internal organizing efforts, including representation votes, facilitating one-on-one discussions with members.
48. Encourage locals to obtain member contact details from employers to facilitate effective communication and strengthen our collective ability to advocate for our interests.
49. Promote available strike resources to locals pushing for better conditions at the bargaining table and planning strike actions.
50. Prioritize solidarity by promptly supporting strike actions and participating in strike lines.
51. Continue supporting coordinated bargaining conferences at both Provincial and National levels, and strongly encourage coordinated bargaining models by highlighting successful examples with real gains achieved through coordination and centralized bargaining.

Elections

52. Every day, we work to change the systems we live and work in. But our efforts are

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especially visible during elections. That's when many Ontarians start paying more attention to politics and how it affects their lives. This gives us a chance to share our views with a wider and attentive audience. As both providers and users of public services, we have a unique perspective on the importance of a government that values strong public services and we've seen firsthand the failures of a government that doesn't.

53. Currently, we are supposed to be 24 months away from a Provincial election,

and the Ford Conservative government's approval ratings remain strong although Ford's personal ratings are among the lowest in the country.

54. Rumors are circulating about a potential early Provincial election, but it seems more probable that we're approaching a Federal election. Pierre Poilievre, the leader of the Federal Conservatives, has tapped into public discontent effectively, packaging it into catchy phrases. Aware that voters oppose the policies he plans to enact, he relies on simplistic slogans.

55. Like many Conservatives nationwide, Poilievre is attempting to appeal to labour voters by presenting himself as a relatable person. However, behind this facade lies a career politician who serves the interests of the wealthy and corporations. His support for labour and the working class is deeply insincere; instead, he embodies the harmful policies akin to those of Donald Trump. If he were to succeed in becoming Prime Minister, he would certainly undermine workers' rights and human rights more broadly.

56. For instance, Poilievre has voted against card check, a measure that would simplify the unionization process for workers, and has expressed his intent to introduce right-to-work laws, which would undermine the labour movement by making it harder for unions to collect membership dues essential for funding collective bargaining. Additionally, he has opposed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which aimed to legislate Indigenous rights in Canada. Furthermore, he has consistently attacked trans rights, opposing policies aimed at protecting and supporting the transgender community.

57. In contrast to the Conservatives, the NDP has left a notable imprint on Canada through a series of impactful policies. Their initiatives forced the governing Liberals to usher in positive changes that resonate across generations.
58. Standout achievement include the NDP forcing the introduction of comprehensive dental care, addressing a critical gap in Canada's healthcare system, and ensuring that citizens have access to essential dental services. Additionally, the implementation of \$10-a-day childcare has been transformative, easing the financial burden on families and enabling more parents to participate in the workforce while ensuring quality early childhood education for their children. Furthermore, the NDP's commitment to fair taxation is evident in forcing the decision to raise the capital gains tax, a move aimed at ensuring that wealthier individuals contribute their fair share to society. And lastly, the introduction of federal anti-scab legislation underscores the NDP's dedication to protecting workers' rights and promoting fair labour practices.
59. These accomplishments reflect the NDP's broader commitment to social justice, economic fairness, and the well-being of all Canadians. Through their progressive policies and initiatives, the NDP has played a crucial role in shaping a more inclusive and equitable society for present and future generations.
60. As the largest union in the country and province, we have a responsibility to ensure that our members are well-informed about the upcoming elections. We will provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions and understand that the NDP is the only party that represents working people.

CUPE Ontario will:

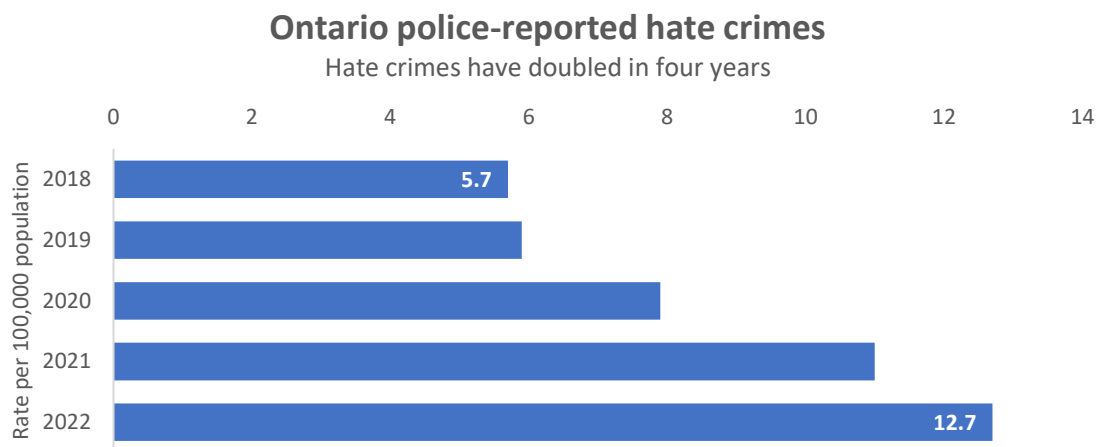
61. Work with CUPE National to use all available resources to prevent the Federal Conservatives from gaining power. In accordance with our National Convention's decision, we will strongly encourage CUPE members to vote in line with our collective interests and support the NDP.
62. Use the federal election as a strategic opportunity to enhance the skills and influence of our members. We will utilize this occasion to provide training and empowerment sessions, fostering the development of capacity and strength within CUPE Ontario.
63. Bolster electoral engagement among our members, encouraging them to participate not only as voters but also as active volunteers, further amplifying our impact on the political landscape. We will also vigorously advocate for the implementation of a proportional representation electoral system to ensure fair and equitable representation for all members.

64. Work to ensure that the issues of working-class people are reflected in the broader debate and provide analysis to ensure that voters can see through the spin and lies of the Federal Conservatives.
65. Work to identify, train, and support members to become NDP candidates and progressive municipal candidates. We believe it is essential to elect more working people into positions of power, and our union has a responsibility to nurture and support the talent and passion of our members to achieve this goal.
66. Encourage more members to become active within the NDP to infuse it with progressive values, ensuring that the party's policies and practices align with our own.
67. Encourage locals to sign solidarity pacts with one another and provide political and material support in negotiations, to help raise the floor for all workers.
68. While preserving existing bargaining structures in sectors with high union membership, such as the broader public sector, we will work to develop diverse and inclusive bargaining models, such as sectoral bargaining, to empower workers in sectors with low union density, ensuring meaningful access to unionization and collective bargaining.

Equity

69. Long-standing systemic inequalities have resulted in Indigenous, Black, racialized, and immigrant communities disproportionately experiencing financial insecurity, low incomes, and precarious employment. This vulnerability becomes even more pronounced during challenging economic times like the ones we are currently facing. Households with limited wealth, income, and job security are more susceptible to financial strain, further widening the gap between the haves and have-nots. We also know that these systemic inequalities are influenced by one's social location (such as race, gender, or immigration status).
70. Austerity measures, such as Doug Ford's cutbacks to public services, disproportionately harm marginalized communities, as they rely on these services for essential needs like healthcare, education, and social services. This intensifies existing inequalities and perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage.
71. Wealth acts as a buffer against economic shocks, but this buffer is unevenly distributed, leaving vulnerable communities exposed. Government budgets should prioritize providing support and resources to those most in need, effectively acting as a financial cushion during challenging times. However, the current provincial budget fails to address these crucial needs, exacerbating the precarious situation of marginalized communities.

72. Moreover, in our current climate, equity-deserving groups face a growing threat from right-wing extremism, fueled by discriminatory rhetoric and policies that embolden hate.
73. Disturbingly, hate crimes in Ontario have more than doubled in just four years under the current government, creating a hostile and unsafe environment for marginalized communities. Of note, is the alarming rise in transphobic hate crimes which has created a climate of fear and insecurity for the trans community. Similarly, the surge in anti-Muslim racism and antisemitism is a deeply troubling trend, fueled by divisive rhetoric, misinformation, and fearmongering. These hateful acts, ranging from verbal harassment to physical violence, have had a devastating impact on individuals and the community as a whole. This alarming trend has resulted in Ontario having the worst per capita rate of hate crimes in the country. These attacks not only inflict emotional and physical harm but also undermine the economic security of equity deserving group, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage and exclusion.



74. The rise in hate crimes and the disproportionate impact of marginalization on certain groups have given rise to a form of marginalization that occurs when powerful individuals co-opt identity politics to maintain their dominance, shifting the focus from systemic inequalities to individual identities. This approach simplifies complex social problems, allowing those in power to avoid addressing the root causes of these issues. To combat this, we must prioritize collective action and solidarity to dismantle structural inequalities, rather than allowing identity politics to be manipulated by the elite for their own gain.

CUPE Ontario will:

75. Amplify the voices of marginalized workers, offering steadfast support against all forms of right-wing attacks, both inside and outside of the union.
76. Strengthen our internal efforts to dismantle systems of white supremacy within CUPE Ontario, utilizing our Anti-Racism Organizational Action Plan as a guiding framework for transformative change, and further our efforts to have locals adopt this necessary work.
77. Mobilize against threats and assaults targeting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, while advancing our anti-white supremacy initiatives rooted in the principles outlined in our guide "Recognize and Resist White Supremacy," developed by the Racial Justice Committee.
78. Collaborate with the OFL and coalition partners to urge the provincial government to address widespread pay equity violations in Ontario promptly. Additionally, advocate for the establishment of a dedicated fund to ensure equitable compensation for public sector workers.
79. Continue to push for increased national staffing resources to tackle the significant backlog in addressing pay equity issues across the province.
80. Advocate for the nationalization of essential human rights, such as access to water, housing, childcare, long-term care, and other critical services.
81. Provide support to sectors engaged in sectoral bargaining initiatives, enhancing their capacity to negotiate fair and equitable agreements.
82. Establish support mechanisms to preserve and enhance designated Francophone public services in communities reliant on them.
83. Remain vocal in acknowledging and addressing anti-Black racism as a pressing public health crisis.
84. Foster close collaboration with migrant and undocumented workers' movements to advocate for government action on legalization and decriminalization pathways for migrant workers.
85. Revitalize our focus on Pay Equity and Equal Pay for Equal Work, with leadership from the women's committee, recognizing economic equity as a core women's issue, while ensuring that the distinct impacts on racialized, Black, and Indigenous women are considered. This includes reengaging with advocacy groups like Equal Pay Ontario to strengthen laws and secure funding necessary for achieving equal pay. We will also work with sectors and bargaining councils to develop consistent proposals for coordinated bargaining, acknowledging the diverse circumstances of different workers. We will also collaborate with Union Education to provide enhanced training on Pay Equity legislation.

which will empower members to utilize various tools to secure additional wages beyond regular bargaining increases.

86. Continue to support CUPE National's safer union spaces initiative, pledging to combat sexual violence, harassment, and oppression through education, support, and bystander intervention training, both within and beyond our union.
87. Actively combat the harmful rhetoric and discriminatory actions targeting trans communities, including the attacks on trans kids in schools and the demonization of drag story time events in public spaces like libraries. We remain committed to advocating for inclusive spaces and policies that protect the rights and dignity of all trans individuals.
88. Relentlessly advocate for government action and accountability to ensure full implementation and enforcement of legal requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act for universal design and accommodation, upholding the rights and dignity of all persons with disabilities.
89. Intensify efforts to organize and engage young workers, while providing resources and guidance to local unions in fostering inclusive and supportive environments for this vital demographic.
90. Reaffirms its commitment to supporting Indigenous land back actions and advocating for the immediate provision of safe drinking water to all Indigenous communities, recognizing the inherent rights and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples.
91. Strengthen retiree organizing efforts, fostering active engagement and participation in union activities and campaigns to advocate for the needs and interests of all the working class.
92. Work with CUPE Union Education to ensure that smaller locals with a larger percentage of racialized workers are both aware of the educational opportunities available to members and locals. We also work with CUPE National to ensure these locals are properly supported.
93. Fight for the rights of international students who are often brought to Ontario under false pretenses, and subsequently abused, blamed, and threatened with deportation.
94. Demand for expansive gender-affirming coverage under OHIP and further urge locals to bargain gender-affirming coverage while gaps remain within OHIP.

Climate

95. In recent years, the climate crisis has become a divisive subject in both the province and the country. The Federal and Provincial Conservatives have made criticizing the carbon tax a key component of their election platform. However, they have yet to provide a concrete plan for addressing the climate crisis. This silence is particularly concerning, given the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on vulnerable communities in the Global South, including climate migrants, and racialized and low-income individuals in the global North.

The unwavering reliance on market solutions to address a market problem has emboldened corporations to remain passive. Rather than perpetuating this cycle, we advocate for robust government regulations that effectively limit carbon emissions.

96. Canada, like other Western governments which claim to lead the world in curbing carbon emissions are, in fact, escalating the climate catastrophe while at home we see the results of failure to act in increasing alarming ways, most recently with the wildfires sweeping across the country.

97. The unwavering reliance on market solutions to address a market problem

has emboldened corporations to remain passive. Rather than perpetuating this cycle, we advocate for robust government regulations that effectively limit carbon emissions. Examples of such regulations include energy efficiency standards, phasing out fossil fuels, setting stringent fuel economy standards, enacting emission limits, methane regulations, and implementing environmentally minded building codes. Relying on a regulatory system to deal with the climate crisis can prevent its weaponization as a political football and instead, recognize it for what it is: a profoundly urgent issue that requires immediate and significant action.

98. In addition to regulations addressing corporate polluters, we must ensure adequate resources are available to people in support of a just transition to a low-carbon economy. This includes investments in job retraining and skill development, income support and strengthening social safety nets, community revitalization and economic diversification, affordable and accessible clean energy, and targeted support for vulnerable groups.
99. We must also reengage with our allies in the Ontario Electricity Coalition to bring all energy production, transmission, and distribution under public control, prioritizing the expansion of publicly owned and operated green energy production.

CUPE Ontario will:

100. Our union will actively oppose the arms trade and imperialist wars, recognizing their devastating impact on the climate and the disproportionate burden they place on communities in the Global South (including Africa, Asia, Central and South America). We will advocate for policies that promote peace, disarmament, and sustainable development, ensuring that the voices of those most affected by conflict and the climate crisis are heard and prioritized.
101. Advocate for proactive strategies that prioritize public services, communities, and workers in the fight against the climate crisis.
102. Encourage local unions to integrate equity and the climate crisis considerations into collective bargaining discussions by working with sectors and CUPE National on bargaining proposals.
103. Integrate Indigenous rights, democratic principles, and workers' rights as integral components of climate justice advocacy.
104. Collaborate with pension advocates to safeguard workers' retirement security by ensuring pension funds do not contribute to the climate crisis.
105. Working with allies such as Shift Action, advocate for pension plans to create climate action plans, set targets and timelines to divest from fossil fuels and publicly disclose those targets and timelines, and educate plan members on the importance of ethical and environmentally responsible investment of their deferred wages.
106. Vigorously campaign for amendments to the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act to ensure that every worker in Ontario has the Right to Refuse unsafe work due to extreme weather (including but not restricted to: extreme heat, extreme cold), wildfire smoke, flooding and, further that the Act specifically ensure the Employer's Duty to Accommodate employees when facing extreme climate barriers on the way to and from work such as flooding, ice storms and forest fires.
107. Formally endorse the Youth Climate Corps (YCC) initiative. Urge the Ontario government to collaborate with the federal government to establish and fund the YCC, with an initial federal investment of \$1 billion. We will also bring this initiative to CUPE National for their endorsement and advocacy at the Federal level.
108. Continue to implement environmentally friendly practices within our own organization, while understanding that our primary focus will be on advocating for strong regulations to hold corporate polluters accountable and supporting working people through a just transition to a green economy.

109. Deepen our collaboration with coalition partners actively working to combat the climate crisis, including the David Suzuki Foundation, Environmental Defence, Greenpeace, Wilderness Committee, Sierra Club, Ecojustice, Pembina Institute, and other like-minded organizations.
110. Explore a model of "environmental steward" implemented by UNISON, the UK's largest public sector union, to determine if a similar program could be established within CUPE.
111. Work closely to advocate for strong environmental policy from the Ontario NDP and advocate that this be a pillar of the next provincial election campaign.
112. Collaborate with CUPE National and the organizing department to look for opportunities to organize the renewable energy sector.
113. Collaborate with the constitutional review committee to assess the composition of the Climate Justice Committee and revise the mandate of the Pensions Committee in relation to climate justice. During this process the CUPE Ontario Executive Board will work closely with the Climate Justice Committee to ensure strong representation that connects climate justice work to the work of CUPE Ontario's various sectors, bargaining councils, and committees.
114. Work with our pension and climate committees and proactively engage with allies within the labour movement to build a powerful coalition advocating for pension plan fossil fuel divestment. We will leverage our collective influence to pressure pension fund managers to adopt responsible investment strategies that prioritize environmental sustainability.
115. Prepare a template letter that locals can use to pressure their employer to create and publicly disclose a workplace climate action plan and timetable, and to provide annual public updates on its success in reaching the proposed milestones.
116. Continue to work with our climate allies, in our fight against Bill 185, *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024*. The bill's focus on "cutting red tape" sacrifices crucial environmental protections and community input, paving the way for unsustainable development that benefits developers over Ontarians. It prioritizes fast-tracking construction over affordable housing, exacerbating the existing housing crisis by flooding the market with expensive units out of reach for most residents. Additionally, the legislation strips municipalities of local planning powers, undermining democratic decision-making and disregarding the unique needs and challenges of individual communities.

Tax Justice

117. In the recent budget, the government provided an update on its ongoing effort to overhaul the tax system, indicating that it has been consulting with various experts. Interestingly, these so-called "experts" seem to unanimously advocate for a shift away from taxing incomes (both corporate and personal) towards taxing consumption (such as sales tax). Shifting from progressive fair taxes to unfair regressive taxes is another way the rich put their hands on the scale of fairness and tilt it towards themselves.
118. However, our current affordability crisis presents a unique opportunity for us to push back and advocate for a different approach. Understanding how government taxation works is crucial in this fight. It enables us to assess our current situation, compare it to our past, and benchmark against other provinces. Such comparisons reveal a stark contrast: taxes on the wealthy and corporations were significantly higher in the past and in comparison, to other provinces.



119. To maintain and strengthen the essential public services that supported us during the pandemic and will become even more crucial as our population ages, we will need to increase taxes on the wealthy. It's vital that we actively respond to any proposed tax reforms and advocate for a system that reflects the desires of the vast majority of

Ontarians. This includes a wealth tax, supported by 89%, and higher taxes on the wealthy and corporations, favored by 80%.¹ Ultimately, any changes to our tax system must restore a sense of fairness, and prioritize the well-being of everyday citizens over the interests of the rich and powerful.

It's vital that we actively respond to any proposed tax reforms and advocate for a system that reflects the desires of the vast majority of Ontarians. This includes a wealth tax, supported by 89%, and higher taxes on the wealthy and corporations, favored by 80%.

CUPE Ontario will:

120. Advocate for a tax framework that mandates equitable contributions from corporations and the affluent segment of society, ensuring they fulfill their obligations to support public services and societal welfare.
121. Call for the implementation of a wealth tax targeting those who have significantly accumulated wealth.
122. Lobby for stringent measures to combat tax evasion through the exploitation of loopholes and offshore accounts, ensuring accountability and fairness in our tax system.
123. Advocate for the cessation of excessive tax breaks and concessions granted to businesses and wealthy individuals, redirecting resources towards initiatives that benefit the broader community.
124. Demand for tax allocation towards public services that foster equity in our communities, such as affordable housing and accessible transportation.

Tory Lip Service

125. The Ford government is desperate to look like a friend to workers despite offering nothing to help their material lives. Recently, the government has introduced five separate pieces of legislation, unironically titled, *Working for Workers*. They offer nothing of substance, and the real intent of this legislation is designed to capture news headlines and paint a picture of a government on the side of workers.
126. The bills are part of a larger attempt at damage control by a government which is trying to quickly pivot from the sting of Bill 124 having been found to be unconstitutional twice. Of course, public sector workers across this province will not be quick to forget the havoc that Bill 124 introduced into our lives by capping wages to one per cent at a

¹ https://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/tax_fairness_survey

time of historic inflation rates. Because of our collective work, including the broader labour movement, we successfully removed Bill 124 from the books.

127. But this is a part of a long history of attacking workers in the province. When Ford came into power in 2018, one of his first pieces of legislation was Bill 2, which legislated York University workers back to work. He also passed Bill 47, which dramatically rolled back worker protections, most notably eliminating paid sick days, stopping a minimum wage

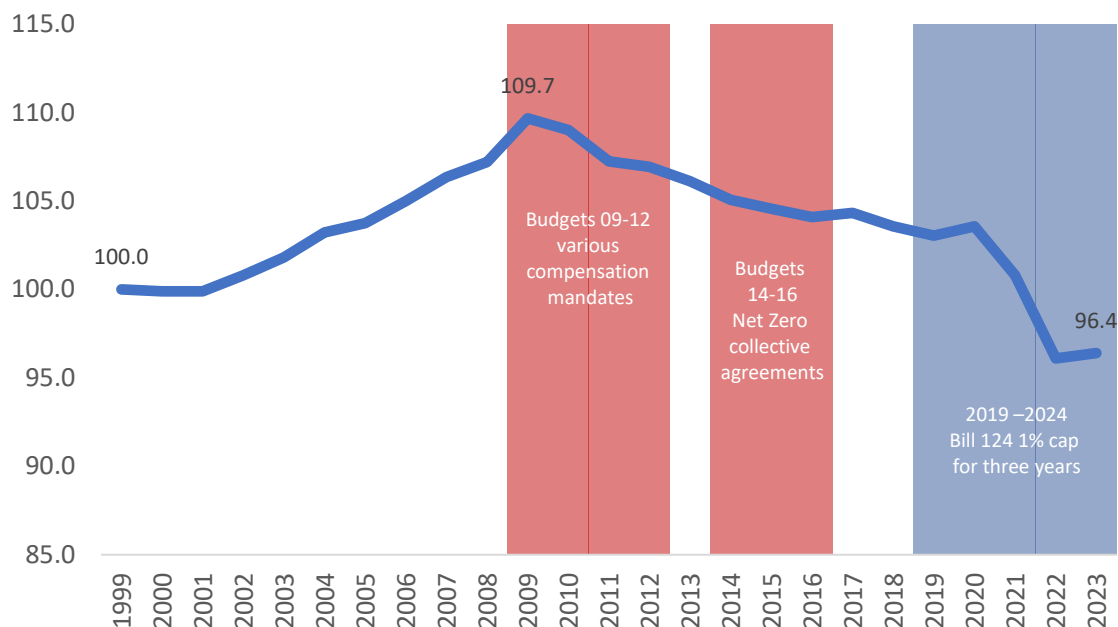
increase, and making it more difficult to unionize.

Ford's disdain for workers, both unionized and not, has been a centre piece of his government. However, his Liberal predecessors similarly trampled on collective bargaining rights with back-to-

128. Ford's disdain for workers, both unionized and not, has been a centre piece of his government. However, his Liberal predecessors similarly trampled on collective bargaining rights with back-to-work legislation.

129. Despicably, in 12 of the last 15 years, public sector workers in this province have had either a bargaining mandate or wage legislation imposed on us. Our decline in real wages over this time is a direct cause of the contempt of workers by both the Conservatives and Liberals.

Real Provincial Public Sector Wages vs Lib/PC Bargaining Mandates and Legislation



130. Thankfully, at this moment there is no bargaining mandate or legislation directly impacting our wages and it makes our current time ripe with possibilities. Polling on union approval ratings is also near all-time highs and record strike action has led to an increase in union militancy. The time is right to make up for 15 years of wage decline, to increase union density, and to strengthen our collective agreements to help deal with whatever unknown challenges workers may face such as with artificial intelligence.

CUPE Ontario will:


- 131. Participate in robust worker-driven campaigns of significant scale, encompassing strikes, solidarity actions, wildcat strikes, and resistance against legislation detrimental to workers.
- 132. Maintain support mechanisms and resources for all members during challenging bargaining situations, including strike assistance.
- 133. Collaborate with CUPE National to ensure that workers throughout the province can exercise their right to unionize and enhance their working conditions.
- 134. Provide assistance to local unions in their organizing and building worker power initiatives, particularly focusing on individual outreach to members.
- 135. Advocate for local unions to obtain membership contact details from employers, enabling effective one-on-one engagement and strengthening our worker movement.
- 136. Continue collaborative efforts with labour and community partners such as Justice for Workers and Justice for Migrant Workers to advance issues extending beyond workplace concerns, including broader social justice matters.
- 137. Promote existing strike resources for local unions planning strike actions.
- 138. Continue to support coordinated bargaining conferences at both Provincial and National levels.

Privatization

- 139. The escalating privatization of public services in Ontario jeopardizes the well-being of workers and the quality of essential services. Privatization undermines the public good, often leading to increased costs, diminished service quality, and job losses. We must actively resist the ongoing threat of privatization and contracting out.
- 140. The Ford Conservative government's relentless push for privatization and cuts to essential services, notably in the care sector, disproportionately affects women, racialized individuals, and marginalized communities. This not only harms the well-being

of the workers themselves, who already endure inadequate pay, limited benefits, and vulnerability to various forms of abuse, but also jeopardizes the quality and accessibility of care for all Ontarians. We must recognize that these attacks are part of a broader agenda that prioritizes profit over people.

141. We will continue to conduct research, engage the public, and take direct action to expose the hidden costs and negative consequences of privatization, emphasizing the importance of public services delivered by dedicated workers.
142. Furthermore, we must strengthen collective agreements to include provisions that protect against contracting out and safeguard worker rights.
143. The latest example of provincial privatization comes from the Ontario Infrastructure Bank's. While the government has renamed the bank to a less corporate sounding Building Ontario Fund (BOF), it still remains a harmful attempt to address the province's infrastructure needs. Established with the promise of attracting private investment, such as pension plans, the OIB has instead become a vehicle for privatizing public assets and saddling Ontarians with long-term debt.
144. The BOF's lack of transparency is deeply concerning. Projects are selected behind closed doors, with little public input or scrutiny. This lack of accountability raises questions about the BOF's priorities and whether they truly serve the public interest.
145. Moreover, the BOF's reliance on private financing is a costly approach. Private investors demand higher returns than public borrowing, meaning projects financed through the



Instead of prioritizing privatization, the government should focus on direct public investment in infrastructure as we have for generations. This would ensure projects are chosen based on public need, not private profit, and would avoid the unnecessary costs associated with private financing.

BOF's are ultimately more expensive for taxpayers. This increased cost burden is unacceptable, especially when Ontarians are already struggling with rising living expenses.

146. Instead of prioritizing privatization, the government should focus on direct public investment in infrastructure as we have for generations. This would ensure projects are chosen based on public need, not private profit, and would avoid the unnecessary costs associated with private financing.

CUPE Ontario will:

147. Combat the privatization of public services and advocate for the insourcing of work, including opposing non-traditional forms of privatization.

148. Initiate an overarching anti-privatization or pro-public services campaign that can become the home for all of the various work done against privatization and contracting out.
149. Collaborate with our labour and community allies to call for an end to austerity measures that undermine public services.
150. Urge for substantial investments in public services that align with Ontario's financial capabilities and the needs of its residents.
151. Vigorously oppose any efforts to privatize essential public services across all sectors.
152. Actively support sectors and locals to mount vigorous contracting IN campaigns to bring work back in house that had been previously privatized.
153. Continue working alongside our labour and community partners to pressure the government into enhancing labour and employment legislation in Ontario, including addressing discriminatory exclusions in both the Ontario Labour Relations Act and Employment Standards Act.
154. Collaborate with our Health and Safety and Violence in the Workplace committees to advocate for the enforcement of existing health and safety standards related to workplace violence. Additionally, we will support local workplace health and safety committees in challenging employers to prevent violence from being normalized as part of the job.
155. Advocate for expanded WSIB coverage, ensuring that injured or ill workers receive the necessary support and benefits. Furthermore, we will push for stronger enforcement of health and safety laws, holding employers accountable for maintaining safe workplaces. Additionally, we will champion mandatory in-person certification training for health and safety, recognizing that hands-on learning is crucial for ensuring workers have the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and their colleagues on the job.
156. Push for the establishment of clear criteria for pre-qualifying workers in high-stress occupations for mental stress injury claims, ensuring timely access to necessary support and treatment. We will collaborate with experts, researchers, and worker representatives to develop evidence-based policies that recognize the unique challenges faced by these workers and prioritize their mental well-being.
157. Explore strategies to address the challenges posed by technological advancements, particularly artificial intelligence, within public services, with a focus on developing bargaining language to safeguard jobs and the integrity of public services.
158. Continue our collaboration with the OFL and ONDP joint Artificial Intelligence (AI) task force to tackle the challenges AI poses to jobs and community well-being. This includes addressing how technology can perpetuate existing discrimination and biases.

159. Collaborate with sectors and local unions to demand retroactive compensation for workers affected by the unconstitutional aspects of Bill 124. Through collective and escalating action force, government to facilitate renewed negotiations for wage increases and allocate funding to support these adjustments.

Conclusion

160. This action plan is not merely a document; it is a declaration of our unwavering commitment to a future where the well-being of working people and the health of our planet are prioritized. We stand in solidarity with workers across sectors and movements, recognizing the interconnectedness of our struggles. Inspired by historical moments of collective action, like the envisioned United Auto Workers May Day general strike in 2028, we embrace the power of solidarity and unified action. This plan is a call to arms, a blueprint for transforming our vision into reality. By organizing, mobilizing, and advocating tirelessly, we will build a movement that is not only capable of weathering these crises, but of emerging from them stronger, more united, and more determined than ever before to create a just and equitable world for all.

If I Must Die

Refaat Alareer

If I must die,
you must live
to tell my story
to sell my things
to buy a piece of cloth
and some strings,
(make it white with a long tail)
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza
while looking heaven in the eye
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze —
and bid no one farewell
not even to his flesh
not even to himself —
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above,
and thinks for a moment an angel is there
bringing back love.

If I must die
let it bring hope,
let it be a story.

