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MEDIA RELEASE

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## CUPE Ontario calls on parties to stop underfunding post-secondary education; striking workers bearing the brunt

**OTTAWA, Ont.** – Leaders from the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario joined striking Carleton University workers on the picket lines today to highlight the Ontario government's continued and severe underfunding of post-secondary education.

"These and other university workers should not bear the brunt of successive policies by the Liberal and Conservative governments that have led to Ontario being ranked second-last in provincial funding for post-secondary education," says Fred Hahn, Secretary-Treasurer of CUPE Ontario, the province's largest public sector union representing 20,000 university workers. "Universities work because our members work."

Hahn says that the Harris-Eves Conservative government made deep funding cuts to post-secondary education, cuts which the McGuinty Liberals have failed to reverse. "The Liberals and Conservatives are two sides of the same coin, said Hahn. "They have starved universities of funds, leading administrations to privatize services, contract out work, defer maintenance and short-change university workers when it comes to wages as Carleton University is doing today with these workers."

The 700 professional, office, technical and support staff represented by CUPE 2424 set up picket lines on Wednesday, September 5. Carleton's administration has offered a far less equitable wage proposal than the settlement they recently awarded faculty. The administration has forced CUPE workers to a strike deadline in every contract negotiation for the last 10 years.

"CUPE workers should not continue to be short-changed by the Carleton administration and backed against a wall every two years when it comes time to negotiate their contracts," said Janice Folk-Dawson, Chair of CUPE Ontario's University Workers Coordinating Committee (OUWCC). "Every worker at Carleton is equally important and our members deserve no less than any other."

With a provincial election slated for October 10, CUPE Ontario is pushing for a provincial government that will put people first and work to ensure that universities and other public services including schools, health care, social services and municipal services are adequately funded to meet the needs of Ontarians.

"We compared the track records of all three parties and only the NDP will ensure that universities have the funds they need," added Hahn.

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