

CUPE National 2017

October 1st

Keeping up the fight for strong pensions



CUPE has been at the forefront of campaigns for strong pensions, but the union must remain vigilant in the face of continuing attacks on Canadians' retirement benefits, a standing-room only crowd at Sunday's pension forum

was told.

More Canadians than ever can now retire with security and dignity. Last year's federal-provincial agreement to expand CPP represents the biggest expansion in half a century, while CUPE's efforts helped convince the Trudeau Liberals to cancel Stephen Harper's move to raise the age of eligibility to 67 from 65.

On the negative side, CUPE members have faced employer attacks on pensions in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec. And delegates were urged to fight Bill C-27, which would open the door for federally-regulated employers to convert secure Defined Benefit (DB) pension plans into insecure Target Benefit (TB) plans.

Also at the forum, a presentation by CUPE Research raised concern about public sector pension investment in public-private partnerships. Delegates also heard from two trustees of the Health Care of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP). An industry leader in protecting defined benefit plans, HOOPP is more than fully funded, with \$1.22 of assets in hand for every dollar owed in pension benefits to retirees.

Retiring CUPE pension activist Helen Fetterly received a standing ovation after being acknowledged for her years of service in improving pension plans for CUPE members and all Canadians.

Education Sector



Workplace violence was the big issue for some 250 education workers who attended Sunday's CUPE sector council meeting.

Delegates heard from a CUPE health and safety specialist who discussed the challenges of combatting violence using the administrative and legislative tools

available. He strongly advised education workers to report every instance of violence, so that statistics actually reflect our members' experiences and allow the union to push for the legislative changes we need to ensure safe workplaces. In summarizing regional developments, reviewing victories and sharing strategies for fight-back campaigns in the sector, delegates also discussed some of the problems posed by P3s, and chronic underfunding of school boards.

Library Sector



During the library sector council meeting on Sunday, “Staff-less” libraries, de-professionalization, the use of public space, and the high rate of precarious work were some of the emerging issues discussed. Delegates also received an important update on the first phase of the CUPE National Library Workers’ Survey on Precarious Employment. This follows a 2014 survey that found CUPE’s library sector has the highest levels of precarity of all the union’s sectors.

These important findings can now be used to help library locals inform future bargaining, communications and campaign strategies for the sector.



Municipal Sector

CUPE’s municipal sector meeting focused on the dangers of the federal Liberal government’s infrastructure bank of privatization. The bank will broker privatized megaprojects with expensive private financing, leaving municipalities with less

money to provide vital public services.

The bank will also be shrouded in secrecy. Members learned about new research highlighting how little the public will have the right to know about the bank and its projects.

Members discussed the need for reliable public funding that keeps our infrastructure in public hands. Delegates also reported on success stories in organizing and contracting in, both priorities set at their last sector meeting.

Transportation Sector



At the transportation sector meeting on Sunday, automation and health and safety emerged as the big issues for CUPE members. Delegates received an update on the fight against privatisation in Quebec with the Réseau électrique métropolitain (REM) project. The REM project does not provide solutions to environmental or user concerns in the way a public transportation project would. The REM was described as a white elephant conceived on a false

pretense of financial performance.

In addition to automation, the forum addressed health and safety concerns including warnings about the upheavals that cannabis legalisation is likely to bring. Members can expect a full range of laws, regulations and policies to be passed on these issues. As unionists, we need to be ready to adapt and to prevent potential abusive procedures from employers.

Social Services Sector



A lively panel discussion on strategies for eliminating precarious work, featuring guest speakers from other sectors, was the primary focus of the social services sector council meeting. After delegates delivered regional reports and the group discussed the sector's Righteous Work, Just Pay campaign template, social services workers were joined by Brandon Haynes from CUPE 4948 (City of Toronto Library) and Kate Procopio from CUPE 23 Burnaby Civic).

Haynes played a video, created by CUPE 4948, that focused on how precarity impacts communities and the toll it takes on individual workers. Procopio related her local's experience encouraging precarious workers to get involved in the union.

Post-Secondary Education Sector

Oct 1, 2017

At the CUPE post-secondary sector council meeting delegates heard from CUPE locals 1870, 2500, 1334 and 1975 about how solidarity and member engagement lead to gains for members. Strategies to fight off pension plan changes included building solidarity with all campus locals; bringing younger members on board by using their contract to talk about trust; and engaging members with a "you talk, we listen" campaign. Choosing a strategic bargaining end date two years in advance helped custodians stave off attempts to contract out their work.

Delegates also heard from Cuban guest Avigail Pérez Llanes, Secretary General SNTAP, a national public workers union. Pérez thanked CUPE for our support and solidarity in helping Cubans fight against poverty and exploitation.

Energy Sector



The energy sector meeting addressed a range of issues affecting CUPE members across Canada.

At Hydro-Québec, the employer has introduced new customer service and over-time policies. Pension plans, health and safety and subcontracting will be at the center of discussions during

collective bargaining.

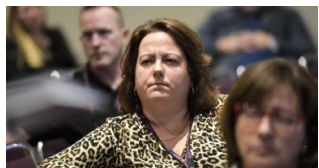
In Manitoba, employer pressure to reduce costs has affected workers' health and safety.

In Ontario, following the privatisation of Hydro One, the Liberals are now planning to sell municipal distribution services.

Finally, images of CUPE members helping our American neighbours during Hurricane Irma were shown and warmly applauded

<https://cupe.ca/event/cupe-national-convention-2017>

Emergency and Security Services Sector



Delegates attending Sunday's Emergency and Security Services Sector meeting learned from their counterparts across the country that workers in the sector—predominantly paramedics and dispatchers—face a number of common challenges, regardless of what province they're in.

Chief among them were collective bargaining in a context where there is effectively no right to strike, post-traumatic stress disorder, and efforts from firefighters to establish so-called “fire medics.” Delegates shared strategies their locals are using to address these challenges. In addition to current CUPE members, delegates heard from a representative of RCMP civilian employees who are working with CUPE to organize their work places.

Communications Sector



Taxation and regulation of on-demand streaming services such as Netflix was the major focus of discussion at the communications sector meeting on Sunday.

Bypass Internet platforms, which are generally owned by giant American companies, are a threat to Canadian content, productions and broadcasters, the forum was told. Delegates were urged to protest Minister Mélanie Joly's decision to exempt Netflix from having to pay GST or comply with Canadian norms.

Delegates also discussed the possible impact of NAFTA renegotiations on this sector. American negotiators are pushing Canada to reduce protective measures currently in place for the content and ownership of telecommunications companies.

This was the first official meeting of the communications sector on the eve of a national convention. The sector, created in December 2015, includes members from sub-sectors such as media, broadcasting, telecommunications, cinematography and post-production. Members are mostly from Quebec's private sector.

Child care Sector



Child care workers met at the CUPE sector council meetings on Sunday and discussed how many child care workers have poor wages, benefits and working conditions. With 25 per cent of all program staff across the country earning below \$14.00 per hour, decent work and wages for child care workers needs to be the foundation of any child care system.

The child care workforce is key to quality child care.

The *Child care for all* campaign follows up on *Rethink Child Care*, in which members shared their child care stories at Kitchen Table Discussions.

Under the new campaign, political action workshops will be held to teach CUPE members how to use their own child care stories to persuade and motivate others and advocate for political action on child care.

Health care Sector



Public solutions to protect and expand public health care, and a snapshot of challenges CUPE health sector members face at the provincial level, dominated discussion at a well-attended health care sector caucus. Priorities identified included campaigning to strengthen public hospitals and develop a system for public seniors/residential care and a national public drug plan.

A members' regional round table with representatives from several provinces highlighted regressive provincial government health reforms impacting health service delivery and patient care, CUPE collective agreements and union representation. They offered insights into fight-back and mobilizing strategies. Several provinces said that health care workplace violence health is on the rise.

CUPE National Convention 2017

Bill Campbell and Lisa Wokal attended CUPE's 28th biennial convention from Sunday to Friday in Toronto, Ontario 2017-10-01 - 2017-10-06

<https://cupe.ca/event/cupe-national-convention-2017>

Sector Meetings were held on Sunday Afternoon and we received reports regarding Education in all provinces across Canada.

Workshops and forums were attended before, after and at lunch during the week as well attending the Convention from 8:30 to 6 pm. The days certainly were long.

It is highly recommended that any First time attendees attend the New Delegates meeting on the morning of first day of the convention. It is extremely helpful in understanding Convention Procedures. Cupe Ontario held meetings on several days, Health and Safety and the OSBCC, Communicators, many other forums occurred at the same times that we would have liked to attend.



Violence, Health & Safety, Underfunding, Missing Aboriginal Women were just some of the topics of discussion and resolutions. Precarious work -people not getting enough hours of work to make a living, the trend to hate peoples and unions, misspending and transparency of the governments

We heard again and again how violence in the workplace is a concern for all from Education, Transportation, Health & all Sectors across Canada and the employers are not willing to take a stand to make our jobs safe.

How, many governments and employers are embracing privatization, whether it is this new Canada Infrastructure Bank where the private investors will expect and demand a high return on their investments at the cost of municipalities and tax payers, to P3s (Private Public Partnerships) where we will not own our hospitals, schools, nor roads. Everyone know how expensive the 407is, now think of how that will affect our way of life.

We are happy to announce that the Resolution Strike Pay from the First Day was presented to National by CUPE Ontario as determined as a by our Brothers and Sisters at the CUPE ONTARIO Convention. It was discussed and debated on and passed. Delegates voted to approve by a count of 797 for and 712 against. Effective Immediately CUPE members will receive strike pay for the first day when they participate on the picket lines.

We attended a demonstration outside the OCHU offices to say NO TO VIOLENCE in any workplace. It is not in anyone's job description that they must expect to be victims of violence when they go to work.

Guest Speakers, their topics stress that we need to be aware and vigilant and stand up for what is right to protect our way of life.

CUPE convention erupted in cheers as newly-elected NDP leader, Jagmeet Singh entered the hall on the final morning. The first person of colour to lead a national political party, Jagmeet soundly won the party leadership on the first ballot, and it was easy to see why as he immediately connected with the thousands of members in the room. [Watch online](#) "We're always going to have a special bond," he said when the room finally quieted. "This is and will always be my first convention after becoming leader. Thank you for that."

“I’m so excited about CUPE’s Bargaining Forward policy,” he said. “It’s more than just taking a firm stand against accepting concessions and two-tier proposals at the bargaining table. It’s a powerful acknowledgement that what you bargain impacts everyone around us, not just your members.”

Nesrine Malek, Sudanese Writer from London, England

Spoke on the State of the World and how two Events may have been allowed to happen by not speaking out about discrimination or controversial comments in our everyday lives.



Self-congratulatory complacency about rising hate is a serious problem that can lead to more “alt-right” disasters in the wake of the Brexit vote in Great Britain, the rise of Donald Trump, and rejuvenated white supremacist groups everywhere, guest speaker Nesrine Malik told delegates on Tuesday.

[Watch online](#)



Honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women

CUPE convention delegates marked October 4, a day that honours the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women, with two moving and powerful events.

Back to the future ...



Economist Armine Yalnizyan says we shouldn’t despair over tough times. While today’s precarious work economy looks more like the economy of 100 years ago, she argues, there is reason for optimism.

• [Watch online](#)

“There is renewed vigour for change and CUPE is on the forefront,” Yalnizyan told delegates in her guest speech to convention. “Movements to increase the minimum wage are succeeding. The election of Jagmeet Singh as leader of the NDP. These are signs of positive change.”

Today’s new digital monopolies mirror the robber baron economy of the early 1900s and are creating insecure jobs, she added. Less than 16 per cent of Canada’s private sector economy is unionized, labour rights have been stripped, and public sector unions are in the crosshairs.

“Labour needs more clout. We can’t build a resilient Canada if people are tethered to precarious jobs,” said Yalnizyan, who encouraged delegates to “seize the moment” to agitate for change.

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