



TERRY DOWNEY

OFL EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

BIOGRAPHY

Terry Downey was elected Executive Vice-President at the OFL's 8th Biennial Convention in 2005. She is the first African-Canadian to serve as an OFL executive officer. Originally from Nova Scotia, Terry worked at the Ontario Human Rights Commission and was a member-activist in the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union (OPSEU) for 19 years before she commenced work with the Federation. Terry's areas of responsibility at the Ontario Federation of Labour are many and varied: health care, human rights, social services and special projects.

Terry is a fierce advocate for human rights issues. The demand for equity, inclusion and fairness is central to her OFL work and she takes particular pride in her work with three OFL committees: Human Rights, Persons with Disabilities, and Visible Minority (Workers of Colour). Terry has helped lead the fight for improvements to our publicly funded education system, in particular, seeking an overhaul of the woefully inadequate funding formula. The fight for education programs that foster diversity and promote equity, in both structure and curriculum, has been a key focus of Terry's activism.

From day one at the Federation, Terry has championed issues that directly affect the health care system and health care workers: fighting privatization and public private partnerships, demanding improvements to the long-term care and homecare systems; campaigning against needlestick injuries, opposing harmful restructuring and the undemocratic actions of Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN). Terry has made it a core of her ongoing work to push the provincial government to act on a chronically understaffed and under-resourced health care system.

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Building meaningful links between labour and community is a particular passion for Terry Downey. During the course of her 3 terms in office, she has played a leading role in developing joint projects and campaigns with a wide variety of community groups and organizations. Through her work with community health care and education advocates, organizations representing First Nations and racialized communities, as well as student and youth organizations, Terry has advanced the cause of working people by cementing the linkages between the struggles of labour and the struggles of all those who are marginalized in our society.

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