



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

SUMMER 2013



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3





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OFL RALLY GETS ACTION FOR ELEVATOR WORKERS

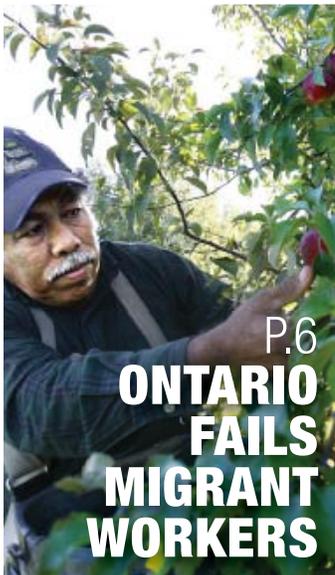
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Student activist Grace Guo joins Sid Ryan and Professor Simon Black in releasing the *People's Budget* White Paper

PHOTO: JOEL DUFF

LOOSENING AUSTERITY'S GRIP

ONTARIO BUDGET OFFERS MODEST RELIEF BUT NOT ENOUGH TO SHAKE OFF AUSTERITY

The OFL's *People's Budget* campaign helped to shift the public debate during the Ontario Budget process away from deficit reduction and spending cuts towards concern for equality and fairness. The result was a more favourable landscape for government negotiations with the NDP that helped to dull austerity cuts. However, despite modest improvements for working people, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne failed to distance her government from McGuinty's harmful—and widely discredited—austerity agenda.

On June 12, the Wynne Government's first budget passed with support from the NDP and a province-wide election was finally averted.

Throughout the budget process, the OFL mobilized community groups and individuals through the *People's Budget* campaign to change the conversation on austerity. Over six weeks, beginning in February, the OFL travelled to nine communities and received deputations from hundreds of people from all walks of life including, students, women, workers, seniors, newcomers, aboriginal people, racialized

communities and anti-poverty advocates. The message from the people of Ontario was clear: austerity is failing families and is deepening inequality.

On April 15, two weeks before the tabling of the Ontario Budget, the OFL released its *People's Budget* White Paper, along with a list of recommendations for a fairer budget. The three core demands were:

1. Increase the minimum wage and put in place a formula for determining regular future increases;
2. Establish an infrastructure fund to be used for the expansion of public transit, rebuilding aging infrastructure, and green infrastructure initiatives; and
3. Implement a fair taxation package that will include a range of tools to generate revenue.

The minority Liberal parliament provided a unique opportunity for MPPs at Queen's Park to cut across party lines and collaborate to deliver progressive change. As the government and opposition searched for the basis of an

agreement, the OFL encouraged them to look to the *People's Budget* for a road map – one that had been set out by the people of Ontario.

The NDP echoed the core themes of the *People's Budget* and put forward demands to end corporate loopholes, create jobs for youth, increase the earning exemption for social assistance recipients, slash auto insurance by 15 percent, invest in home care, and introduce budgetary accountability measures. Desperate to avoid an election, the Liberals incorporated most of these demands into the budget.

After weeks of negotiations, the 2013 budget offered some modest improvements, including delivering on one of the core *People's Budget* priorities – investing in infrastructure. Other positive steps included social assistance reform, a commitment to youth job creation, and funding for employment standards enforcement.

Despite modest improvements for some of the province's most vulnerable, the 2013 budget failed to break from McGuinty's austerity mould. In the face of mounting evidence that austerity



PHOTO: JOEL DUFF

OFL President Sid Ryan presents the White Paper to Finance Minister Charles Sousa at a private pre-Budget meeting

measures are exacerbating inequality and protracting economic recovery around the world, the Wynne budget held the line on a one percent cap on growth in program spending and contained no substantial measures to generate revenue through fair taxation. Per capita spending on public services in Ontario is already the lowest among all the provinces, but the Liberal government continues to pursue a short-sighted plan to cut the deficit on the backs of working people.

The hundreds of thousands of Ontarians living at or near the poverty line were left waiting for wage relief. The budget failed to deliver on a minimum wage increase and instead simply established an advisory panel made up of workers, business and youth to report back in six months.

Overall, this budget missed an opportunity to

alleviate poverty, address inequality, and spur economic growth through fair taxation.

However, the message of the *People's Budget* has begun to take hold and even Finance Minister Charles Sousa couldn't avoid the OFL messaging, when calling this a budget "for the people."

With income inequality on the rise and poverty rates persisting, much work remains to be done to move beyond austerity in Ontario. The *Peoples' Budget* campaign has been an inspiring and fruitful process for envisioning the steps it would take to build a more just and equal Ontario. The OFL will continue to work with our partners to build on the energy and momentum generated by

this campaign and advocate for positive and progressive alternatives to the austerity agenda.

BUDGET GAINS:

- \$35 billion over 3 years to rebuild aging infrastructure and create jobs;
- \$295 million over 2 years for youth jobs strategy;
- \$260 million this year for home care;
- \$3 million annually for enforcement of employment standards;
- Modest reforms to social assistance; and
- Minimum wage advisory panel.

BUDGET BAD NEWS:

- Continued austerity;
- 1% cap on spending growth;
- No revenue generation or fair taxation measures; and
- Continued wage freezes for public sector workers.

SOCIAL MEDIA CORNER

E-NEWSLETTER

Sign up for the OFL's new e-blast updates by visiting <http://ofl.nationbuilder.com/signmeup>

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

The Ontario Federation of Labour represents 54 unions and one million workers. It is Canada's largest provincial labour federation.

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Royal Bank of Canada CEO Gord Nixon was on the hot seat for contracting out jobs to foreign workers

ONTARIO FAILS MIGRANT WORKERS

EXPLOITATION AND SCANDAL BELEAGUERS TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

Ontario's shameful treatment of migrant workers has been making headlines this year after scandal, exploitation and abuse have attracted unprecedented public exposure.

The Royal Bank of Canada generated a fierce public backlash when the company's plans to replace 50 experienced Canadian workers with temporary foreign workers was revealed by a disgruntled employee who was asked to train his own replacement. The ensuing public pressure forced the bank to guarantee employment for the displaced workers and put out a public statement committing to stop the outsourcing of work that Canadian workers are qualified to perform. While these measures are important steps towards redressing the immediate scandal, they have brought public attention to the corporate abuse of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and the exploitation of Labour Market Opinions.

On May 15, 2013, the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) released Federal and Provincial Report Cards on Migrant Workers, exposing

gaps in provincial legislation, enforcement and information. The report cards gave Ontario the shamefully low grades for putting the province's 120,000 migrant workers at "great risk with little recourse to justice." Ontario received a "C-" for its lack of legal protection for migrant workers, a "D" for failing to educate vulnerable workers about their rights and a "D-" for failing to provide migrant workers with access to permanent residence.

The increase in migrant workers in Ontario is no accident. The Ontario government has embraced the federal strategy for expansion of the TFWP in every sector, but with a particular emphasis on low-skilled migrant workers. For example, in 2008 Ontario brought in 60,000 migrant workers while, at the same time, the Ontario economy lost over 164,000 jobs.

At the federal level, 75 percent of the new jobs created in Canada in 2010 and 2011 were filled by temporary foreign workers despite the fact that 1.4 million Canadian residents were unemployed.

Even though the TFWP is a federal program, in practical terms it is run by employers and provides a flexible labour force, brings wages down and enhances corporate profits at the expense of workers' rights and immigration status. The OFL is calling for effective legislation to monitor employers and protect workers from abuse.

"Ontario has more migrant workers than any other province and yet we continue to treat them as an expendable work force," said OFL President Sid Ryan. "In 2009, four migrant workers plunged to their deaths from a West Toronto high-rise and in 2012 ten migrant farm workers were killed in a horrific accident near Hampstead. These tragedies are a chilling wake-up call about the risks that vulnerable workers face when they lack legal protection, proper training and knowledge of their rights."

The OFL is drafting a Bill of Rights for Migrant Workers to call for fair pathways to permanent residency and citizenship for migrant workers, automatic access to information about human rights and labour protections, decent living conditions and the right to collectively bargain.

JOBS GRANT IGNORES VULNERABLE WORKERS

In the 2013 Federal Budget, the Harper government announced that it would be diverting \$300 million in funding away from existing Labour Market Agreements to a new Canada Jobs Grant program. This is a shift away from supporting vulnerable workers, such as women, immigrants, and older workers who need literacy training and upgrading support, towards further investment in what the federal government calls “high-demand jobs.”



The current Labour Market Agreement commits to a transfer of \$500 million a year from the federal government to the province, which provides resources for training unemployed workers who are not eligible for Employment Insurance and workers with low levels of skills and literacy. This agreement is set to expire on March 31, 2014. The new Canada Jobs Grant will provide a sum of \$15,000 per employee available for employers to provide training (\$5,000 from federal government, \$5,000 from provincial government, and \$5,000 from the employer). It is for “short duration training” and there is no guarantee that it will not go towards existing training programs. Shockingly, even though the program is not set to start until 2014, the Harper government has already spent millions advertising the program on television.

The provincial government has also expressed concern that this diversion of funding risks leaving underrepresented groups behind and that the province should retain flexibility in addressing labour market issues.

The OFL attended a roundtable with MPP Kellie Leitch to express our concerns about these changes on June 13, 2013.



Conservatives attack union security to drive wages down

HARPER, HUDAK INTENSIFY ATTACK ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

Harper and Hudak are ratcheting up their legislative attack on workers' rights. At the federal level, on June 5 Conservative MP Blaine Calkins introduced Bill C-525, an act to change certification and revocation rules for federally regulated workers. It does so by eliminating card-check certification and by setting a dangerous new precedent for certification and de-certification votes that would impede workers seeking to join a union.

The Bill makes it more difficult to get a certification vote, increasing the threshold from 35 to 45 percent support. Even worse, to win a vote, the union would need support from a majority of all workers in the bargaining unit – not only of those who cast a ballot. In de-certification votes, the Bill would also require a majority of all workers in the bargaining unit to vote in favour of keeping the union. This means that every worker who does not cast a ballot counts as a vote against the union. These rules for de-certification are unprecedented in Canada.

These anti-union reforms are backed by Merit Canada, an organization that represents non-union employers in the construction sector. In a speech at the Economic Club of Canada on May 27 Terrance Oakey, President of Merit Canada, touted Bill C-525 and intimated that new legislation is in the works that will limit union spending on political action by allowing workers to withhold their dues. This type of legislation is an affront to democracy and workers' rights in this country.

Bill C-525 is a thinly veiled attempt to dismantle workplace democracy and

undermine union action. Card-check certification ensures that workers who want to unionize can do so without undue employer influence and intimidation.

Hudak's Progressive Conservatives also intensified their anti-union attack in May by introducing three pieces of legislation aimed at weakening unions at Queen's Park. All three bills were introduced by MP Russ Hiebert who has been one the PC's main proponents of anti-union measures. First, Bill 62 seeks to remove card-check certification across the board in Ontario. Second, Bill 63 threatens the independence of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. Finally, Bill 64 is packed full of anti-union measures, including proposals to outlaw “closed shop” arrangements, limit union political action, and impose onerous reporting requirements on unions that are not applied to similar organizations. Hiebert is also proposing to repeal the Rand Formula and replacing it with an individual arrangement whereby workers would choose not to belong to the union or be members of the bargaining unit.

As we head into the summer, this barrage of anti-union legislation highlights the importance of continuing to build momentum in our efforts to protect workers' rights in Ontario. This is an important moment for both defending union security and revitalizing the labour movement. Here in Ontario we need to build on our strong history of supporting workers rights to ensure these proposals are defeated and that the labour movement is strengthened, not weakened, in the months ahead.



ELEVATOR NEGOTIATIONS HIT GROUND FLOOR

EMPLOYER INDIFFERENCE PUTS PUBLIC SAFETY AT RISK

Over one month after Ontario's elevator mechanics were forced on strike by an employer coalition with a near monopoly on elevator operation, virtually every one of the province's 50,000 elevators are out of compliance with provincial safety standards and roughly 75 percent are estimated to be in some form of disrepair. The 1,400 striking workers, members of the International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC), are a silent army that keeps our province moving. They ensure that the 50,000 elevators in workplaces, apartments, hotels, hospitals and schools are running smoothly and safely.

Despite the fact that the IUEC Locals 50, 90 and 96 have offered to continue to keep elevators safe and operational throughout bargaining, employers have flatly refused. In the meantime, these four big companies—Kone, Otis, Schindler and ThyssenKrupp—are protracting the dispute by using scab labour and managers to perform the work of the specially trained and licensed elevator mechanics. Replacement workers are far from able to keep up with all maintenance and repairs across the province and there is concern that they are not trained up to mandatory standards. In other words, the employers are creating a safety crisis.

Contemptibly, it has also been brought to

the attention of the union that the employer is dispatching replacement workers primarily to the financial district and not to priority buildings, such as hospitals and nursing homes. This was corroborated recently in The Toronto Star, which reported that Oxford Properties, which owns numerous office towers downtown, stated that all of their elevators were fully operational, while hospitals and a long-term care home in the Annex and other neighbourhoods have been facing long response times for repairs.

REPORT SCAB LABOUR:

Reporting all incidents of scab labour to the union's Scab Hotline: **1-800-562-1429**

REPORT SAFETY HAZARDS:

Report elevator problems or safety hazards: **1-877-682-8772** or **media@tssa.org**

The Technical Standards Safety Authority (TSSA), which is responsible for regulating the safety of elevating devices in Ontario and is accountable to the public, have yet to adequately intervene in the current situation. They have even stated that they "will allow elevators that have not had minor maintenance tasks completed to continue operating in order to minimize the impact on the public."

If you look below the surface, it is not surprising that the TSSA has taken this position because they are entangled in a conflict of interest. In a public statement the TSSA has stated that they have "no role in the current contract dispute," but the reality is that the organization is funded by employers and that one of its board members, Kevin Lavallee, is a chief negotiator for the National Elevator and Escalator Association. It is unacceptable that a chief negotiator for the employer is also on the board of the organization that is responsible for declaring whether or not elevators in this province are safe. The OFL has demanded that the Ministry of Labour ask Kevin Lavallee to step down from this position so that the TSSA's ability to act in the public interest is not compromised.

On June 6, the OFL organized a rally attended by hundreds of elevator workers and supporters amid the downtown high-rises of Toronto's financial district to call on the government to force the employer back to the bargaining table. Within hours of the action and extensive news coverage, the government ordered both sides back to the table. Both sides have been back in negotiations since June 11 and it is hoped that they will be able to reach a fair settlement for these valued workers.



Workers protest MP Joe Oliver's Toronto constituency office



USW National Director Ken Neumann calls for fair treatment of all workers

TWO PHOTOS: KIM HUME

RALLY TAKES ON HARPER'S LOW WAGE AGENDA

Dozens of community and labour activists converged on Conservative MP Joe Oliver's office on June 10 to demand an end to the Harper government's low-wage economic strategy and abuse of temporary foreign workers.

"The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is not a legitimate immigration policy," OFL President Sid Ryan told the crowd. "This program allows employers to drive down wages and benefits. It exploits vulnerable workers who end up trapped in low-wage jobs with little hope of ever becoming permanent residents despite their contribution to our economy and our communities."

The protest was part of the *Give Everyone A Chance for Canada's Future* campaign launched by the United Steelworkers (USW). The campaign aims to raise awareness of corporate abuses of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and the role it plays in the Harper government's low-wage economic model for Canada.

"The Harper government's recent changes to the TFWP amount to window dressing that will not address widespread abuse of the program," said USW National Director Ken Neumann. "By gutting the public sector, the Conservatives are ensuring there will be no

meaningful oversight and no real change to this wage-suppression program."

"Workers, whether they're immigrants or not, are under attack by the Harper government," said Abdi Dirshe, Director of Outreach of the iTaxiworkers Association that represents hundreds of immigrant workers. "The policies of the Harper government are undercutting the rights of workers and exposing vulnerable workers to exploitation."

The TFWP's expansion coupled with policies such as cuts to Employment Insurance are part of the Harper Conservatives' deliberate strategy to convert Canada into a low-wage economy.

Demonstrators denounced the Conservatives and their corporate allies for shirking their responsibility to invest in training programs at a time of high unemployment, particularly among youth and aboriginal communities.

"The Harper government has abandoned its responsibility to protect Canadians and ensure that highly vulnerable workers from abroad are not exploited," said Carolyn Egan, President of the United Steelworkers Toronto Area Council.

For more information on *Give Everyone A Chance for Canada's Future*, visit www.EveryonesChance.ca



IUEC Local 50 Business Representative Brad Farrell brings thanks to the OFL for support



Workers keep spirits up one month into strike

TWO PHOTOS: JOEL DUFF



South Asian women activists share the stage with OFL President Sid Ryan to show the connection between struggles for equity and justice

OFL AND ONTARIO COMMON FRONT HONOUR SOUTH ASIAN ACTIVISTS

In a packed reception hall in North Mississauga on June 1, the OFL and the Ontario Common Front hosted an amazing evening event to mark the close of South Asian Heritage Month with a celebration of community activism. Over 600 participants representing the diversity of the GTA population gathered to honour four award recipients whose contributions to social justice and human rights have strengthened ties within and between labour and community groups.

Since being formed in early 2012, the Ontario Common Front has brought together over 90 labour and community groups to challenge austerity and build a diverse coalition that is committed to lifting every Ontarian together.

The awards dinner was co-hosted by Gogi Bhandal from the Canadian Labour Congress and OFL Executive Vice-President Irwin Nanda, the OFL's first Executive Officer of South Asian descent.

"The alliances formed between labour groups and community organizations have been the

Common Front's defining feature. There is incredible activism taking place in communities and neighbourhoods across the province, but we need to do a better job of connecting those struggles, recognizing leadership and inspiring action," said Nanda. "These awards are a step towards recognizing a community that has made incredible contributions to the struggle to achieve equality for everyone."

Among the award recipients recognized at the event were the Helping Hands Workers' Advice Centre, the Brampton-Mississauga and District Labour Council, Dr. Ritika Goel and long-time CUPE activist Harminder Magon.

Helping Hands Workers' Advice Centre works in the community to provide free advocacy related to social, legal, employment and settlement services. Hardeep Kaur and Iqbal Samble took the stage with a host of volunteers to receive the award.

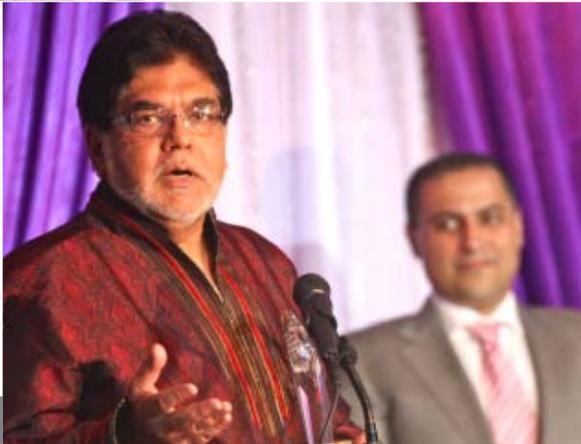
"Whether we are building a space needle or sewing a garment, we are all workers and

we deserve dignity and respect," said Helping Hands volunteer Iqbal Samble. "We cannot wait for governments to protect our interests, we must take action to create positive change."

The Brampton-Mississauga and District Labour Council was recognized for outstanding work in building strong community partnerships and a grass-roots movement for workers' rights and social justice.

President Motilal Sarjoo brought three labour activists up to receive their award together: "When fighting for fairness, equality and social justice, it is important that our movement models our values," said Sarjoo. "We are proud to see the Common Front honouring that work and inspiring all of us to learn from the examples that others set. It is a powerful basis of unity."

Dr. Ritika Goel received recognition for her work with Toronto's inner city people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Her work with migrants, refugees and people with precarious status has provided inspiration for



Clockwise from top: Award recipients Hardeep Kaur and Helping Hands team, Dr. Ritika Goel, BMDLC President Motilal Sarjoo and CUPE activist Harminster Magon

other young professionals on how to dedicate their careers to values they believe in.

"I have been recognized for my community health care advocacy before, but never from within my own community," said Dr. Goel. "It is an honour to encourage others to connect who they are with what they do."

A surprise addition to the evening, CUPE's National Anti-Racism Co-Ordinator Harminster Magon was recognized equally for his activism and for his mentorship of other racialized workers within the labour movement.

"I am truly touched and humbled by the tremendous recognition of activism within our community," said Magon. "When I accept this award, I do so for the activists who came before me and the many that continue to inspire me. None of this work can be accomplished alone."

The event was made possible through generous donations that demonstrated a deep community commitment to social justice and all proceeds were pledged towards supporting the ongoing work of the Ontario Common Front in building a community-based movement across the province.



Mixin' it up! Celebrating activism isn't all work and no play. Activists show their bangara dance moves BEFORE dinner is served



Unity in action! OFL Officers pose in front of an ice sculpture to celebrate the occasion

ALL PHOTOS ON THIS SPREAD: JOEL DUFF



Hundreds protest U.S. Steel lock-out at Fort Erie Works
 Inset: OFL Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison addresses the rally with Local 8782 President Bill Ferguson

PHOTO: JEREMY SALTER

PHOTO: LAWRENCE HAY

PHOTO: NANCY HUTCHISON

U.S. STEEL LOCKS OUT NANTICOKE WORKERS FOR 2ND TIME IN THREE YEARS

A steel plant once billed as the most efficient and productive in North America is sitting idle today, after its foreign owner locked workers out to try to force the union to accept deep concessions that would slash job security and decimate the livelihood of union retirees.

The gates of U.S. Steel's Lake Erie Works were locked precisely at 9 a.m. on Sunday, April 28 by private security guards. That was the deadline the company had set for its 1,000 workers if they did not accept the final contract offer.

"U.S. Steel has destroyed decades of constructive union-management relations in an effort to bulldoze workers and their families," said USW Local 8782 President Bill Ferguson. "The battle being waged on workers in Nanticoke is being played out in communities across the country. We see companies trying to drive living standards down in every country and

Canadian workers are next on their hit list."

This aggressive move by U.S. Steel marks the third time the company has locked out a portion of its workforce since it was allowed to buy out the former employer, Stelco Inc.

The previous Lake Erie lock-out lasted from August 2009 to April 2010 and was followed in November of that year by the 11-month lock-out of Hamilton workers. In those confrontations the issue was company demands to change the pension plans, forcing new workers into a defined contribution system and ending pension indexing for retirees. These measures will have a devastating impact on widows whose husbands' work generated decades of profit.

On May 25, hundreds of steelworkers and supporters rallied at the Fort Erie Works site to call on the Harper government to force foreign corporations to live up to their obligations to

Canadian workers and retirees.

"We have seen this story before," OFL Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison told the crowd of 500. "Prime Minister Stephen Harper has opened Canada's doors to the biggest and most ruthless multi-national corporations to strip mine our resources and our livelihoods. U.S. Steel is committing a crime of opportunity and the Harper government is complicit in every way."

"Harper's vision for Canada's future is a low-wage economy where retirees are forced to gamble with their income security on the stock market," said USW National Director Ken Neumann. "This foreign company bought a valuable asset that Canadian workers helped to build and now they are plundering it for their own gain. That's not the kind of foreign corporation we want in Canada."

CUPE ONTARIO CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY



TWO PHOTOS: JOSH BERSON

CUPE Ontario recognizes founding father, Keeley Cummings

The OFL executive officers joined delegates at the CUPE Ontario Convention in May to share a celebration of the union's 50 years of labour and social justice activism.

Founded through the merger of NUPSE and NUPE in 1963,

CUPE Ontario has grown from its humble beginnings to become the province's largest labour union, representing over 230,000.

"It's hard not to see the link between our history and the challenges we face today," said



A packed convention hall celebrates a history of activism

CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn. "As a union, our first struggles were for the right to organize and bargain collectively. This year we have faced repeated attacks on those rights at the hands of Harper, Hudak and McGuinty."

"CUPE Ontario's 50 years of principled activism defending working people and the most vulnerable has built a union that will continue to fight for decades to come," said Sid Ryan, former CUPE Ontario President of 17 years.



PHOTO: CAW CANADA

The leadership of CAW and CEP celebrate the official launch of the new union



Social media buzzes about new name

"UNIFOR" SIGNALS A NEW KIND OF UNION

May 30 will be a date to remember. It was the day thousands tuned in—some in person, many online—to find out the long-awaited name of the new union that was being borne out of the historic merger of CAW and CEP.

The word "Unifor" appeared on screen mid-way through a spectacular public event in Toronto. The new name appeared alongside a bold new logo—a shield housing a stylized letter "U" in the middle, reflecting the coming together of two unions. You could hear 200 participants in the room gasp, and then break into an uproar of applause. The most anticipated union renewal

project in Canadian labour history finally had a name and an identity. Unifor: the new Canadian union.

Unifor promises to be strong, principled, and inclusive. New approaches to membership will redefine who can be a union member and will radically change the trade union landscape. While Unifor will be a union built for workers, it will also be a union for the unemployed and the unorganized, women, retirees and young workers—a union for everyone. That's its biggest strength and its most promising goal. For info, visit www.NewUnionConvention.ca



TWO PHOTOS: JOEL DUFF

CAW Local 444 celebrates the merger

COMMON FRONT ASSEMBLY TO TACKLE AUSTERITY

Ontario's newest and largest coalition of labour and community activists has been gaining momentum since the launch of the Ontario Common Front early last year. The December 8 General Assembly attracted more than 250 activists from across the province and reflected a wide array of issues—from social justice to the environment and workers' rights.

The Common Front and its partners weighed in on the provincial budget by organizing actions and participating in the OFL's *People's Budget* but raising the minimum wage is now shaping up as the priority fight for the year ahead. Initiated by the Workers' Action Centre, the campaign to raise the minimum wage rightly identifies poverty wages as the most significant barrier facing the working poor. It also establishes a baseline wage for all working people and is a key measure in addressing inequality and pushing back austerity.



London Labour Council President Patti Dalton reports back to participants at the December 2012 Common Front General Assembly

PHOTO: JOEL DUFF

The central demand of the campaign is an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$14.00 an hour, in order to lift all working people above the poverty line. Part and parcel to this objective is the establishment of a fixed formula for adjusting the minimum wage annually at the rate of inflation. Combined, these measures would have a dramatic impact on Ontario's rising inequality and would provide stability to the working poor—all at no cost to the government.

To bring together the capacity and resources of the 90 community and labour groups in the coalition, the Common Front is gearing up for its third assembly on August 19 to take on the austerity agenda. Keynote speakers so far include Brigette DePape (*ShitHarperDid*), Melissa Elliot (Six Nations of the Grand River Territory), Pam Frache (former OFL researcher) and Deena Ladd (Workers' Action Centre).

Visit www.WeAreOntario.ca for more info.

MEDICARE ACTIVISTS PLAN SHADOW SUMMIT & MASS RALLY

From July 24 to 26, Premiers from across Canada will be going to Niagara-on-the-Lake for their final Council of the Federation meeting before the expiration of the National Health Accord in 2014. Given Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent attacks on medicare, it is clear that community mobilization will be vital for putting pressure on his government to come to the table with the provinces.

The OFL is putting the full weight of its support behind the Ontario Health Coalition and the Canadian Health Coalition as they organize to bring attention to this important issue.

Last month, the Harper Government cancelled funding for the Health Council of Canada, a council created out of the Accord negotiations in 2004 to track progress and quality in health care. This is just the latest step in the withdrawal of federal leadership on health care. In December 2011, the Harper government announced plans to cut

\$36 billion from federal money transfers to provinces for health care after the Accord expires.

The Harper Government's record is clear: it has done nothing to uphold universal public medicare and now intends to retreat from a strong role in upholding national standards, improving coverage for drugs, home care, community care, and ensuring stable and adequate funding for health care.

Canadians cannot afford to sit by as their government retreats from its role in providing and protecting vital social programs and public services that create equity and improve social progress.

On Wednesday, July 24 and Thursday, July 25, join the Shadow Summit on Medicare in Niagara-on-the-Lake and at 11:00 am on Thursday, July 25, join the mass rally to call on the Premiers to take action.

Tweet support using [#Stand4Medicare](https://twitter.com/Stand4Medicare) and visit www.OntarioHealthCoalition.ca for info.



OFL TO UNVEIL MONUMENT ON ANNIVERSARY OF JACK LAYTON'S PASSING

On August 22, the OFL will mark the second anniversary of the passing of Jack Layton by unveiling a beautiful bronze statue of the beloved NDP Leader riding a tandem bicycle. The statue will find a permanent home at the entrance of the newly minted Jack Layton Ferry Terminal on Queen's Quay at the foot of Bay Street in Toronto.

Stay tuned to the OFL website for details.



PHOTO: JOEL DUFF

OFL Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison joins Solidarity and Pride committee in showing support for Elliot Lake Pride

SOLIDARITY IN PRIDE

Workers from across Ontario are gearing up to join the LGBTQ community in celebrating Pride in communities of every size. This year, Northern Ontario's Elliot Lake will be celebrating its first Pride festival under the theme of "Show Your Pride in Elliot Lake." "Pride events are not just a celebration of diversity, they are also a way

to help members of the LGBTQ community to connect with one another to find their inner strength," said OFL Vice-President for Solidarity and Pride, Stephen Seaborn. "When communities like Elliot Lake join in, it gives confidence to every LGBTQ worker that we will never go backwards." Visit the OFL website for events.



PHOTO: JOEL DUFF

OFL Officers and staff are joined by the Executive Council in wearing red for Equal Pay Day

FIGHTING FOR PAY EQUITY

Across Ontario, public and private sector workers took action to call on Premier Kathleen Wynne to declare April 9 Equal Pay Day. Despite decades of action, an average woman in Canada would have to work three extra months to match a man's average yearly pay—meaning her 2012 workload would finally end in early April, 2013.

Less than one month later, CUPE Local 966 won an historic pay equity settlement for 700 workers in long-term care facilities. The \$1.6 million victory finally brings justice to women who worked in Peel's homes for the elderly up until 2003. However, the employers continue to fight restitution for the period from 2003 until today.



PHOTO: CHIRS WILSON

PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President Larry Rousseau belts out passionate speech to CBTU

CANADIAN ROCKS CBTU CONVENTION

PSAC heavyweight Larry Rousseau brought the 800 delegates from 77 international unions to their feet at the May Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) Convention in Orlando, FL.

"Leadership calls on us to take on the challenges of our own personal internal struggles before taking on the task of fighting the struggles of humanity," Rousseau told the crowd.

Rousseau was one of 30 Canadian delegates who attended the CBTU's skill-building and agenda-setting convention to address the racialized impact of the austerity agenda.

OFL HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENTS

During this reporting period, the OFL issued the following human rights statements:

- April 10:
Day of Pink Anti-Bullying Day
- April 28:
Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job
- May 1:
South Asian Heritage Month
- May 17:
International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

Read the OFL statements at: www.OFL.ca



The Brampton-Mississauga and District Labour Council unveiled a stunning new monument to honour fallen workers. Local unions and mayors from the Peel Region attended the solemn event

PHOTO: JOEL DUFF



IBEW Local 353 Vice-President Jeff Irons joins Toronto & York Region Labour Council President John Cartwright at downtown ceremony

PHOTO: JOEL DUFF

DAY OF MOURNING FOR WORKERS KILLED OR INJURED ON THE JOB

Thousands of workers, friends and families gathered at ceremonies across the province on April 28 to commemorate workers who were killed or injured on the job. OFL executive officers and staff joined ceremonies in various regions to honour the occasion and call for the vigorous pursuit of Criminal Code convictions for corporate executives, directors and managers whose reckless or negligent actions compromise the health and safety of workers.

In Peel Region, the Brampton-Mississauga and District Labour Council unveiled a stunning new monument to honour fallen workers.



Hamilton and District Labour Council President Mary Long pays respects at fallen worker monument

OFL BRINGS COMMUNITY VOICES TO PREVENTION COUNCIL



PHOTO: JOEL DUJFF

Prevention Officer George Gritzotis hears from community about precarious work

This spring, the Ontario Ministry released a consultation paper on the development of a province-wide occupational health and safety strategy. The document specifically prioritizes the needs of vulnerable workers who have an increased risk of exposure to conditions that are hazardous to their health and safety.

“This opportunity can be a real game changer for workers all across this province” said OFL Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison. “Too many workers are put at risk every day and they can’t speak up because they fear for their livelihoods. The province must get serious about safety prevention and to do that they must hear directly from the workers affected.”

The OFL weighed in on the consultation with a substantive submission and by bringing the voices of vulnerable workers directly to

the Ministry’s Prevention Council through the Ontario Common Front.

On April 17, the OFL brought together 75 members of the Common Front with Chief Prevention Officer George Gritzotis to discuss front lines concerns facing vulnerable workers.

These vocal community advocates identified the risks that precarious workers face due to employer exploitation, lack of knowledge, fear of reprisal and even the possibility of deportation.

In its submission, the OFL called for the elimination of behaviour-based safety practices, the imposition of a “precautionary principle” approach in Ontario workplaces, an emphasis

on workplace inspection, greater safety enforcement and a comprehensive strategy for occupational disease prevention.



INJURED WORKERS’ DAY

June 1, 2013 marked the 30th anniversary of Injured Workers’ Day. All three OFL officers joined over 150 injured workers and advocates who brought their demand for justice to Queen’s Park.

Since 1996, the amount employers pay into the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) has dropped from \$3.20 per \$100 of payroll to \$2.26. Ontario’s Liberal government recently released a KPMG report aimed at further slashing this important program. Since that report’s release, the WSIB has increased the denial of new claims by nearly 50 percent, decreased the average benefit at final review by nearly 30 percent, cut the number of injured workers who receive a permanent impairment assessment by about 30 percent and laid off more than 300 WSIB staff.

Labour Minister Yasir Naqvi and NDP MPP Peter Tabuns attended the event to hear from injured workers, their families and their advocates about the need to lift injured workers out of poverty.

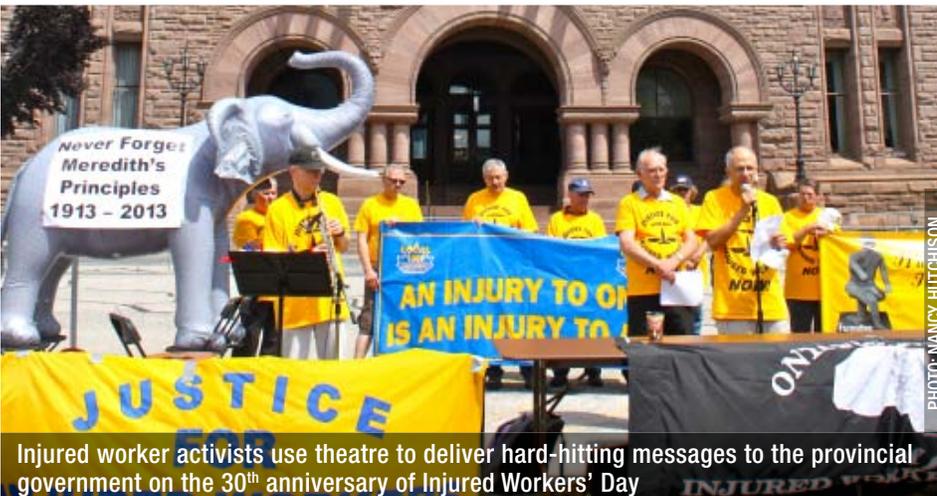


PHOTO: NANCY HUTCHISON

Injured worker activists use theatre to deliver hard-hitting messages to the provincial government on the 30th anniversary of Injured Workers’ Day

NEW OFL AFFILIATIONS

Since Spring 2013, the OFL has grown by over 8,559 members.

The OFL welcomes our new affiliates!

- ▶ CEP 37-ORABF 15 members
- ▶ CEP 132-ORABF .. 39 members
- ▶ CUPE 503 2,500
- ▶ CUPE 2225 238
- ▶ Workers United Canada Council (SEIU)..... 5,767 members

The labour movement just got stronger!

Add your voice.

OFL STAFF PROFILE

ANTONI SHELTON HELPS TO FORGE LABOUR AND COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

For the past four years, the OFL has been organizing mass mobilizations to oppose austerity and neo-liberalism, the likes of which the province has not seen since the mid-1990s. In that time, perhaps the Federation's most significant accomplishment has been the forging of a new alliance between labour and the community: the Ontario Common Front.

For over 30 years, Antoni has advocated, mobilized and taken direct action to further the cause of social justice and workers' rights. Not only has he defended the rights of workers and communities in Ontario, his work has taken him to South Africa, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Argentina, Chile, Northern Ireland, the West Bank, and Israel.

Antoni's grass-roots approach to political



PHOTO: JOEL DUFF

Brother Shelton delivers remarks to 250 delegates at last December's historic Ontario Common Front General Assembly

The linchpin behind this coalition of 90 groups is Antoni Shelton – a lifelong trade union activist and a staunch campaigner against racism and inequality. Antoni was drafted to the OFL team from CUPE Ontario early in 2012 when he assumed the role of the Director of Government Relations and Liaison to the President. Since then he has taken the lead in developing, resourcing and supporting Ontario's largest network of labour and community activism.

Antoni brings with him deep ties to the community and credibility to boot. Before serving the members of CUPE Ontario for twelve years, he headed up the Urban Alliance on Race Relations (UARR) and championed Aboriginal justice as a Special Assistant to the NDP Government's Minister Zanana Akande. Antoni also ran as an NDP candidate for York West in the 2007 Ontario election.

organizing has helped the OFL broaden its base and connect with new communities.

"Inequality is a form of violence that wreaks havoc on people's lives and tears communities apart. Institutionalized inequality is even worse because it is calculated and deliberate," said Antoni. "What makes institutional inequality so powerful the veil of anonymity. That is why it is so important that we name it, shame it and challenge it. The only way to do that is by working together."

As Tim Hudak and Stephen Harper ramp threats to union security and workers' rights, there is no question that labour's alliances with the community will become ever more vital in mobilizing public opposition to a low-wage economy and building a more just society. Thankfully, Antoni is working with a team of OFL staff who are dedicated to building that capacity.

FIVE NAMES ADDED TO OFL LABOUR HONOUR ROLL

Since 1984, the OFL has been awarding post-secondary scholarships in the name of retired or deceased labour activists who have made a significant contribution to the life and growth of the trade union movement in Ontario.

The OFL's recognition is intended to inspire current and future generations of activists to dedicate themselves to the labour movement and social change.

This year, the OFL is proud to announce five new inductees into its Labour Honour Roll:

Sister Brenda Carrigan, OECTA

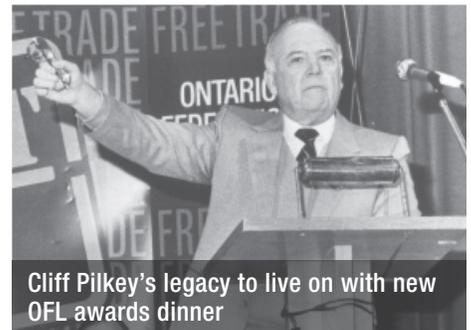
Sister Beverly McCloskey, CAW 222

Brother Jack Ostroski Sr., USW 2251 (Deceased)

Brother James Nugent, IAMAW

Brother Logan Sellathurai, CUPE Local One

The scholarship applications are currently being reviewed and this year's winners will be announced in the fall President's Report.



Cliff Pilkey's legacy to live on with new OFL awards dinner

AWARDS DINNER TO HONOUR SPIRIT OF CLIFF PILKEY

The OFL will be hosting its first Cliff Pilkey Awards Dinner, in honour of the former OFL President, during the upcoming 2013 Convention. The special ticketed gala will officially launch a new award for Labour Activist of the Year, along with other annual awards, including the Bob Borch Human Rights Award, Olivia Chow Child Care Activist Award, and the Young Worker Award.

Cliff Pilkey passed away last year in his 91st year but his legacy of principled human rights and social justice activism will live on in the hearts and minds of labour activists.

Stay tuned to the OFL website for nomination criteria and event information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER: LGBTQ PRIDE EVENTS

A provincial list of LGBTQ Pride events are posted on the home page of the OFL website at www.OFL.ca/index.php/LGBTQ-Pride-2013

JUN. 24: EQUITY WORKSHOP ON DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

The OFL will be hosting a workshop at 1:00 pm on June 24 on how threats to union security will impact workers from equity-seeking groups.

To register, email OFL Director Carrol Anne Sceviour at CSceviour@ofl.ca

JUL. 24-25: SHADOW SUMMIT & MASS RALLY FOR MEDICARE

Canadian Premiers are going to Niagara-on-the-Lake in July for their last Council of the Federation meeting before the expiration of the National Health Accord in 2014. Attend the "Shadow Summit" on July 24 and 25 and help to mobilize for a mass rally on July 25.

For details: www.OntarioHealthCoalition.ca

AUG. 3: CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL

Toronto's Caribbean Carnival (formerly Caribana) is celebrating its 46th anniversary with a three-week cultural celebration. The festival will culminate with a grand parade on Saturday, August 3 and many unions will be represented.

AUG. 19: COMMON FRONT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Join the labour-community movement to challenge austerity, privatization and downloading the economic crisis onto working people.

This open assembly will take place at the Holiday Inn Yorkdale, 3450 Dufferin St., Toronto

For information, visit www.WeAreOntario.ca

To register, contact OFL Director Antoni Shelton: AShelton@ofl.ca

AUG. 22: UNVEILING OF OFL JACK LAYTON MONUMENT

On the second anniversary of the passing of NDP Leader Jack Layton, the OFL will unveil a bronze statue of the beloved politician.

Stay tuned to the OFL website for details.

AUG. 30-SEP. 1: FOUNDING CONFERENCE OF UNIFOR

The CAW and CEP will be hosting joint Conventions over Labour Day weekend to launch Canada's newest union, Unifor. This historic meeting will be held from August 30 to September 1, 2013 in Toronto.

For information or to book accommodations, visit:

www.newunionproject.ca/convention-2013

SEP.: TAKE BACK THE NIGHT EVENTS

Throughout September, Labour Councils and community groups across Ontario will host "Take Back the Night" events to empower women and challenge gender-based violence.

NOV. 23: OFL WORKERS OF COLOUR ASSEMBLY

The OFL will be hosting a Workers of Colour Assembly immediately preceding the 2013 Convention. For more information, contact: Paulette Hazel at PHazel@ofl.ca

NOV. 23-24: OFL YOUNG WORKERS ASSEMBLY

The OFL will be hosting a Young Workers Assembly immediately preceding the 2013 Convention. For more information, contact Paulette Hazel at PHazel@ofl.ca

NOV. 24-29: OFL 12TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION

The 12th Biennial Convention of the OFL will be held at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel from November 24-29, 2013. The convention call-out will be released on August 26, 2013.

DEADLINE FOR RESOLUTIONS: October 23
DEADLINE FOR CREDENTIALS: November 12

Stay tuned to the OFL website for details.

LABOUR & HUMAN RIGHTS DATES

Jun 21	National Aboriginal Day
Jun 27	National Multicultural Day
Aug 9	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
Sep 2	Labour Day
Sep 21	International Day of Peace
Oct 4	Sisters in Spirit Vigils
Oct 10	World Mental Health Day
Oct 17	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
Oct 24	Childcare and Early Childhood Educators Appreciation Day
Nov 25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women



Fall Training Seminars
Embassy Suites, Niagara Falls, ON
September 29 - October 4, 2013

Compensation Essentials \$750
Appeals and Dispute Resolution \$900
Occupational Disease \$900

Register:
Website: www.odrt.ca
Telephone: 1-800-668-9138



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Know your rights and how to use them

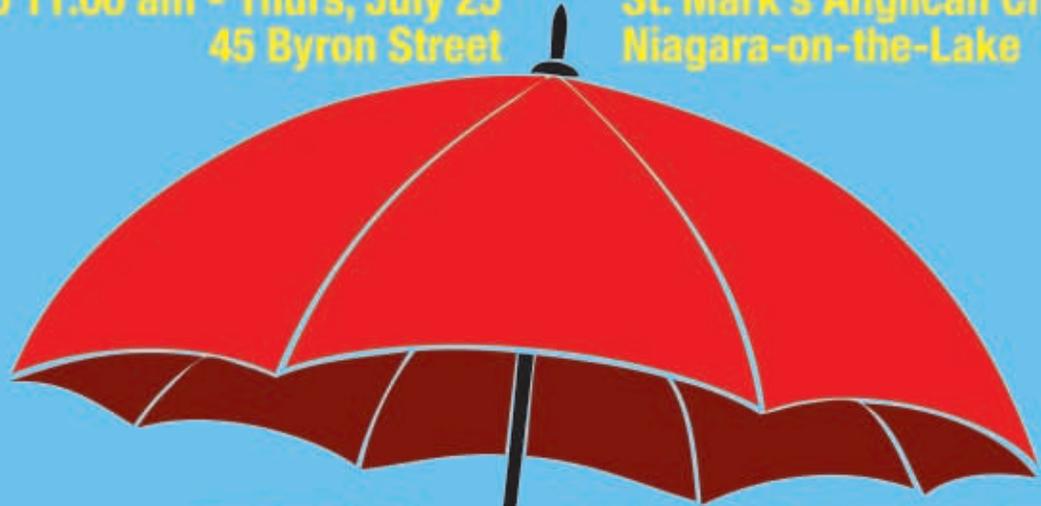
Register Today

When Canada's Premiers meet in Niagara-on-the-Lake
it will be their last chance to #Stand4Medicare

SHADOW SUMMIT + MASS RALLY

10:30 am to 5:00 pm - Wed, July 24
9:00 am to 11:00 am - Thurs, July 25
45 Byron Street

11:00 am - Thurs, July 25
St. Mark's Anglican Church
Niagara-on-the-Lake



TELL HARPER TO RENEW CANADA'S HEALTH ACCORD



Shadow
Summit
July 24

Rally
July 25

Bring a
red umbrella

#Stand4Medicare

Take a stand
for Medicare!
It's got us covered!



ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF
LABOUR

Join the Ontario Health Coalition, Canadian Health Coalition
and hundreds of community organizations and labour groups
Info: www.OntarioHealthCoalition.ca or www.HealthCoalition.ca

