

THE ONTARIO

2015 OFL Convention
Play-By-Play on Pages 10-13

WE WANT



ACTION REPORT

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR
VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1
WINTER 2016



MEET THE OFL OFFICERS

President



Chris Buckley

Secretary-Treasurer



Patty Coates

Executive Vice-President



Ahmad Gaied

ACTION 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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ACTION REPORT ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

**VOL. 6 NO. 1
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PHOTO: HAMILTON SPECTATOR ARCHIVES

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CLOSING THE GAP





PHOTO: PETER BOYLE

@CHRISBUCKLEYOFL

Sisters and Brothers,

At our November 2015 Convention, the delegates of the Ontario Federation of Labour elected a new leadership team to pull Ontario's labour movement together in unprecedented unity and solidarity. The timing couldn't have been more critical.

The Ontario government is in the throws of a full-scale review of provincial labour laws and Ontario's persistent gender wage gap. Workers have a lot on the line.

It has been 20 years since Ontario's labour laws were re-opened and that was under the nasty Conservative government of Mike Harris, when many of the gains made during the province's first-ever NDP government were rolled back and plans for pay equity were shelved.

Since then, a steady decline of good jobs has occurred alongside the global erosion of workers' rights.

A quarter-million jobs have completely vanished from Ontario and fully half of all Ontarians have seen little or no improvement in their incomes, while the top 10 percent are making off like bandits. When I look at the fact that one third of Ontario's workforce is earning at or near the minimum wage, I feel sick for the future. We cannot sacrifice youth and young families on the altar of deficit reduction and corporate tax giveaways. It is time for a real plan to create meaningful jobs to support current and future workers.

We have to make Ontario a land of opportunity, where every job is a pathway out of poverty.

Our 2015 Biennial Convention gave the OFL new officers and Executive Board an incredible mandate to put a laser focus on changing labour laws in this province for unionized and non-unionized workers, but we can't do it alone. When we asked you for your support in leading Ontario's house of labour, we made a pledge to make it our top priority to lead the fight for a united, inclusive and activist labour movement that is the strongest this province has ever seen.

Our decision to re-name the "President's Report" the "OFL Action Report" is an important start.

We believe that our labour movement transcends the elected leadership. This is a movement of the hard-working women and men who have dedicated themselves to trade union values and to a boarder commitment to equity, social justice and human rights. This report will become a record of our collective work as we strive to bind our movement together in the common struggle to improve the lives of everyone in Ontario.

I know that I speak for Patty Coates, Ahmad Gaied and the OFL staff when I say that there is no greater honour than to serve as the officers and staff of your Ontario Federation of Labour. We are committed to working with each and every affiliate, labour council, member, and community ally to make this province one that we can be proud of. We have had enough of the cuts and inequality. Fighting together, we are going to create the Ontario We Want.

In solidarity,

Chris Buckley,
President of the Ontario Federation of Labour

Sign up for the OFL's new e-blast updates by texting the word "OFL" to 647-496-5602



Follow & Retweet the OFL on Twitter at:
@OFLabour and **@ChrisBuckleyOFL**



THE OFL POISES TO LAUNCH PROVINCE-WIDE CAMPAIGN FOR FAIRNESS AT WORK

A plan is coming together to put action behind the OFL Convention resolution to launch a province-wide campaign to make Ontario's labour laws and employment standards fair for every worker. The OFL Executive Board will be launching a comprehensive campaign strategy will take the success of the 2014 #StopHudak campaign to a whole new level. Anchored on the creation of "local organizing hubs," the plan is designed to build regional capacity like never before and allow the labour movement to concentrate organizing efforts in every region, while also putting pressure on key ridings and Members of Provincial Parliament.

The OFL campaign represents labour's response to a damaged job market that has locked 50 percent of the workforce into precarious employment and 1.7 million Ontarians in jobs earning at or near the minimum wage. The OFL has recognized that this dynamic, combined with declining union density, means that low-wage jobs are often pulling workplace standards down faster than collective bargaining victories can pull them up.

The OFL campaign will seize a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change Ontario's outmoded labour laws. The Ontario government has launching a sweeping review of both the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Labour Relations Act*. While the "Changing Workplace Review" has the power to lift employment standards for every worker and provide easier access to unionization, the OFL has recognized that success will only come if trade unionists stand shoulder-to-shoulder with low-wage workers, migrant workers and allies to launch a united campaign that is designed to lift every worker out of poverty.

What presents itself as an organizing necessity for unionized workers doubles as a powerful opportunity for the labour movement to re-assert its relevance to the current and future workers.

Under the banner of "Fight for \$15 and Fairness," the OFL has joined a broad-based workers' coalition that is fighting to lift the minimum wage above the poverty line, legislate paid sick days and vacation, end split shifts and prevent employers from exploiting temp agencies to keep workers in permanent precariousness. This is one half of a dual

track plan to advocate for improved protections for vulnerable workers while also expanding opportunities for them to benefit from union security. To that end, the OFL and its allies are proposing a series of improvements to the *Labour Relations Act* that would eliminate the barriers to unionization, guarantee a first contract, secure union successor rights and prevent employers from using scab labour and other means to undermine union representation.

The OFL's campaign will be designed to be an intensive membership outreach and mobilization effort that will develop the knowledge and organizing capacity of rank-and-file members.

The creation of local organizing hubs will connect union members across affiliates and sectors so they can better mobilize in their workplaces and in their communities right across the province.

The first phase of the campaign will begin to roll out very quickly over winter months and is designed to influence every stage of Ontario's Changing Workplaces Review.

Sign up for campaign updates by texting the word "OFL" to **647-496-5602**.



THOUSANDS RALLY IN HAMILTON TO DEFEND GOOD JOBS, PENSIONS AND CANADIAN MANUFACTURING

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) joined thousands of workers and community members at a Hamilton rally on Saturday, January 30, 2016 to support good jobs, pensions and Canadian manufacturing. The rally coincided with an aggressive legal action launched by U.S. Steel that sought to give the foreign multinational corporation priority over the 20,000 retirees from the company's bankrupt plants in Hamilton and

Nanticoke. It also came at a time when over 100 Hamilton steelworkers have been locked out for almost three years as Max Aicher North America (MANA) continues to use replacement workers to try to grind the union down.

"The battle being waged by workers in Hamilton and Nanticoke to save Canadian jobs and manufacturing is being played out in communities across the country. So, in a very real way,

when we mobilize with workers in Hamilton and Nanticoke, we are standing up for workers in every town and city," said OFL President Chris Buckley. "Ontarians want a fair economy that allows everyone to thrive and prosper."

While the OFL fights alongside these Steelworkers, it is fighting to make good jobs, workers' rights and Canadian economic interests the law of the land.



All three OFL officers joined NDP Leaders Tom Mulcair and Andrea Horwath, as well as CLC President Hassan Yussuff, in solidarity with United Steelworkers Local 1005 and 8782. See the back page for more photos from Hamilton. Photo: Joel Duff



All three OFL officers joined 500 activists for an impressive “parade of cuts” outside the Queen’s Park Legislature at the conclusion of the budget consultations. Photo: Joel Duff

ONTARIO BUDGET TALKS MET WITH PROTEST: HOSPITAL CUTS, HYDRO-PRIVATIZATION AND INEQUALITY AMONG TOP CONCERNS

When Members of Provincial Parliament traveled the province to conduct their pre-budget consultations in six cities, they were met with boisterous protest against the devastating effects of austerity and privatization on Ontario’s citizens, hospitals and social programs.

The Ontario Federation of Labour and the Ontario Common Front joined the Ontario Health Coalition to call on Ontario’s budget committee to chart a new course for Ontario that leaves no one behind.

“From Windsor to Ottawa to Thunder Bay, we are seeing the harmful effects of austerity in every community. Hospital cuts, hydro privatization, mounting student debt, precarious jobs and Canada’s lowest social program funding are taking their toll in every neighbourhood,” said Patty Coates, Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labour. “Ontarians are calling on the Wynne Government to abandon its austerity agenda and lay out a

plan for restoring public services, growing our economy, expanding Ontario’s revenue base and lifting standards for everyone. The next

The next Ontario Budget shouldn’t be constrained by government cuts and privatization, it should create an Ontario in which everyone prospers.

- OFL Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates

Ontario budget shouldn’t be constrained by government cuts, it should create an Ontario in which everyone prospers.”

One of the OFL Officers traveled to each of the six pre-budget consultations and all three officers joined the hundreds who protested

the final consultation in Toronto on February 1, 2016. Affiliates from across all sectors mobilized alongside community members, patients and students at each of the rally stops and their message resonated loudly in the local media.

“Nine consecutive years of real-dollar cuts have plunged Ontario to the bottom of the country in hospital funding. Patients are being left on stretchers in hallways, surgeries are being cancelled and vital health services are being privatized, subject to user fees, or moved out of town,” said Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “It is beyond time that these devastating hospital cuts be stopped. The Ontario government must restore our public hospital funding to at least the average of all the other provinces in Canada.”

The OFL presented a comprehensive oral and written submission to the province’s budget committee during the Toronto consultations.



OFL Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates joined hundreds at the Ottawa protest. Locked-out PSAC workers joined the rally. Photo: Joel Duff



OFL Executive Vice-President Ahmad Gaied joins Labour Council Vice-President Joe Krmpotich at the rally in Sault Ste. Marie. Photo: Unknown



Ahmad Gaied and Ontario Health Coalition Executive Director Natalie Mehra kicked off the provincial protests in Hamilton. Photo: Joel Duff



Windsor and District Labour Council President Brian Hogan protested the budget talks in a town ravaged by hospital cuts. Photo: Joel Duff



OFL CALLS ON ONTARIO TO FUND HISTORIC ANTI-RACISM SECRETARIAT

The OFL has joined the Ontario NDP in calling on the Ontario government to ensure the Anti-Racism Secretariat outlined in the *Human Rights Code Amendment Act* is properly funded and that the mandate to advance racial justice is a prerequisite throughout Ontario.

This demand was featured in the OFL's pre-budget submission and was a centrepiece of President Chris Buckley's oral presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on February 2, 2016.

The OFL called attention to the fact that Indigenous people, Ontarians with disabilities, members of racial minorities and women experience higher rates of unemployment than other people in our province. In addition, not only do we recognize that people in these groups experience more discrimination than other people in finding employment, they also struggle in retaining employment and career advancement. As a result, they are underrepresented in most areas of employment, especially in senior and management positions, and they are overrepresented in those areas of employment that provide low pay and little chance for advancement. The burden imposed on the people in these groups and on the communities in which they live is unacceptable and yet, some provinces, like Ontario, have abandoned their employment equity legislation.

The OFL is demanding immediate action to address systemic racism and discrimination and calling on the Government of Ontario to make employment equity a priority for all employers and for all levels of government.

COMMON FRONT REPORT SAYS HALF OF ALL ONTARIANS ARE CAUGHT IN A BACKSLIDE



An Ontario-wide coalition of more than 90 labour and community groups concerned with growing inequality released an alarming report that delivered a grim warning about the erosion of income transfer programs, social programs and a labour force that is leaving millions behind.

The Ontario Common Front released a comprehensive report, called “Backslide: Labour Force Restructuring, Austerity and Widening Inequality in Ontario,” that compiled national research painting a picture of the changing standard of living for Ontarians.



Photo: Toronto Star archives

“Ontario is dead last in funding for social programs and, by nearly every measure, it is trailing every other province in income equality and poverty reduction,” said report author, Natalie Mehra. “While it is hard to start a family anywhere in Canada, young families in Ontario are struggling with the largest student debt loads, the most expensive child care, the worst access to affordable housing and highest costs for health care – all at a time when good jobs are being replaced with precarious, part-time and temporary employment at unprecedented rates.”

This report documents three concurrent trends: a sea change in the labour force, the erosion of income transfer programs that protect people from falling through the cracks, and Canada’s worst cuts to social programs.

Consider the following report findings:

- Ontario’s involuntary part-time workforce has ballooned from 5% below the rest of the country to 8% more than other provinces;
- Ontario has experienced a 50% increase in the duration of unemployment, making it the second worst in Canada;
- 1.7 million Ontarians are now earning within \$4 of the minimum wage;
- The income disparity between the poorest 10% and the richest has nearly doubled;
- There has been a 38% increase in poverty in Ontario over the past 20 years and nearly one in five Ontario children live in poverty;
- Ontario funds all of its social programs at the lowest rate in Canada;
- University tuition fees have outpaced inflation by 601% and are the highest in Canada, while per student funding is dead last;
- Young Ontario families pay the highest child care costs in Canada; and
- Over the past five years, cuts in Ontario’s real-dollar per person funding for public services totaled more than \$7 billion.

“This report shows there is another way,” said Mehra. “If every other province is doing better than Ontario, we can make those choices too.”

Report author Natalie Mehra helped bring national attention to the issue of inequality with her first report in 2012.

CLOSING THE GAP

A WORKERS' AGENDA FOR PAY EQUITY

The OFL joined with anti-poverty groups and other pay equity advocates to echo the call of the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition's 2008 Framework for Action. The OFL made a submission to the Ontario Gender Wage Gap Strategy to call on the government to commit to a plan that would close Ontario's 31.5% gender pay gap by 2025, in a manner similar to that outlined for making Ontario accessible under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

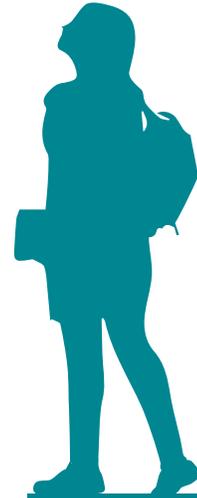
The OFL submission argued that it is essential that meaningful action-oriented steps be taken to end gender pay discrimination and inequality in Ontario.

To date, governments and businesses have resisted paying women's work what it is worth. The OFL argued that it is unacceptable to use uncertain economic times to entrench women's pay inequality and to make

matters worse for women by creating more precarious and low paid work, rather than full time, secure, stable employment, with benefits and opportunities for advancement.

Women have traditionally earned less than men, as documented by numerous studies on the matter spanning decades. Further studies confirm the continuing gap in wage differential between women and men – on average, women made 68.5 cents for every male dollar in 2011. Studying the effects of gender pay discrimination is an important element to drive awareness of the need for change and to uncover the structural and systemic root causes of the existent gaps. Targeted action aimed at closing the gender wage gap is long over due.

Download a copy of "Closing the Gap: A Workers' Agenda for Pay Equity": <http://ofl.ca/index.php/genderwagegap2016>



SIXTH ANNUAL MARCH 8TH PROJECT

OFL POSTERS & PINS TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2016

For over 100 years, March 8 has been recognized around the world as International Women's Day (IWD) and has been marked as a day to celebrate women, reaffirm women's rights and strive for full equality. As part of its celebration of IWD, the OFL has produced a beautiful poster and pewter pin that can be ordered by unions and community groups.

The OFL's 2016 March 8th Project materials were designed by acclaimed artist Giovannina Colalillo and carry an empowering theme that celebrates women's **Sisterhood, Solidarity and Strength**.

"In every workplace and in every community, women are bonding together to put equity on the agenda and to lift our sisters within our unions and in our communities," said Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates. "We aren't going backwards! This poster is bold and unequivocal. There is no doubt that women workers will be proudly showing sisterhood solidarity for years to come."

Unions or community groups that ordered more than 500 pins before the February 10, 2016 deadline will have their logo added to this year's poster. Those who missed the deadline can still order posters and pins, by submitting the form on the OFL website: www.ofl.ca/index.php/iwd2016

The pins are sold at cost, plus a \$0.25 contribution that will be donated to the Equal Pay Coalition.

Stay tuned for more information on International Women's Day events being organized in cities and towns across Ontario.

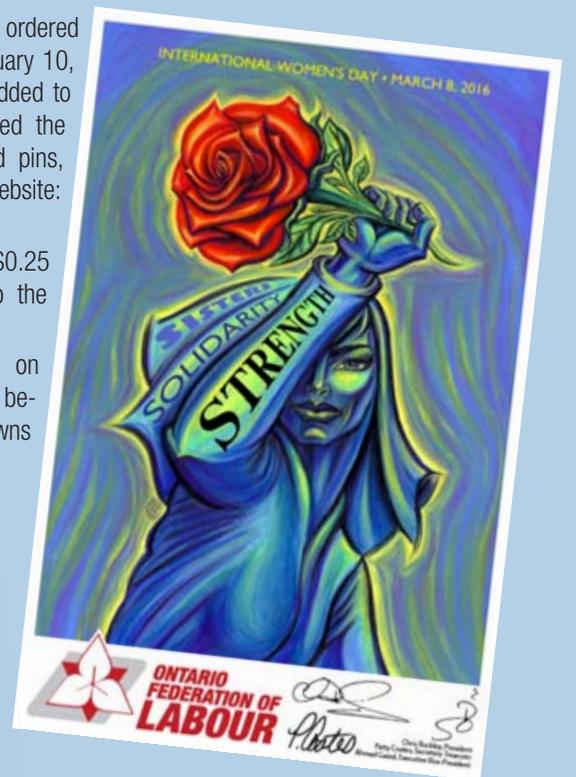




PHOTO: ARNIE DE VAAN

#FEDFORWARD TEAM ELECTED TO LEAD THE OFL

In a packed convention hall at Toronto's Sheraton Centre Hotel, 1539 delegates to the OFL 2015 Biennial Convention elected a new leadership team to take the helm of Ontario's house of labour. Chris Buckley (President), Patty Coates (Secretary-Treasurer) and Ahmad Gaied (Executive Vice-President) were elected to lead Ontario's labour movement.

The election was received with strong optimism for a united labour movement. Earlier in the fall, President Sid Ryan, Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison and Executive Vice-President Irwin Nanda each announced that they would not be seeking re-election, paving the way for new leadership and a platform of unity.

Former Unifor Local 222 President, Chris Buckley from Oshawa was unanimously elected OFL President and long-time OSSTF activist and former Barrie and District Labour Council President Patty Coates was elected without opposition as the OFL Secretary-Treasurer. After a three-way race for the position of OFL Executive Vice-President, Ahmad Gaied from UFCW Local 1000A was given a strong mandate to join the team of OFL Officers.

"Our job is to make sure that this Federation pulls together! Our goal is to unite our labour

movement across Ontario and that starts with unity at YOUR OFL," incoming President Chris Buckley belted out to thunderous applause from delegates. "We owe it to workers today

“Our job is to make sure that this Federation pulls together. Our goal is to unite our labour movement across Ontario and that starts with unity in YOUR OFL.

- OFL President Chris Buckley

and to our collective future to champion a province-wide campaign to reshape labour laws in the interest of every worker in Ontario.”

The “FedForward” team brought broad front-line experience to the job and ran on a platform of revitalizing and uniting labour movement in Ontario by working to bring workers and their unions together, and by advocating for progressive legislation, stronger labour rights, equality and good jobs.

“It is time for the labour movement to put past divisions behind us so that together we can move beyond defending the jobs we have, to start demanding the jobs we deserve, the services we need and the **Ontario We Want,**” said Buckley.

Follow the new OFL officers on twitter: **@ChrisBuckleyOFL**, **@Pattycoates** and **@AhmadGaiedOFL**

AMBITIOUS PLAN CALLS FOR BIG, BOLD IDEAS SUPPORTED BY ACTION

Much of the convention floor debate was focused on the most optimistic and forward-looking document in the delegate kit: the 2016-2017 OFL Action Plan. This sweeping road map for the “Ontario We Want” contained a whopping 60 recommendations in its humble 15 pages.

“The ‘Ontario We Want’ requires our collective action and the resolve to keep fighting until our demands are met,” the document begins. “The 2016-2017 Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Action Plan builds on the success of effective and collective political mobilization like the #StopHudak campaign, and applies what we have learned with the goal of replicating our success. Together, we will pursue big, bold ideas rooted in our shared values.”

At the centre of the plan was a pledge to mobilize a province-wide campaign for labour law reform. Delegates put their words into action with a convention rally that brought over 1,000 delegates to Queen’s Park to demand “\$15 and Fairness.”

OSSTF President Paul Elliott called the document “a great plan and a bold statement. Not only is it anchored on our values of fairness and equity, but it forges a solid platform for united action.”

Download a copy of the 2016-2017 Action Plan:

<http://ofl.ca/index.php/ofl-2016-2017-action-plan>

YOUNG WORKER PANEL TARGETS PRECARIOUS WORK

The OFL Young Workers’ Committee dedicated their forum time to what, in many ways, was the defining panel of the Convention.

The packed panel was moderated by Brynne Sinclair-Waters, from the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign. The panel was kicked off by Rabia Syed and Joshua Borja (Workers United), who spoke about Western Canada’s first successful Tim Hortons unionization in Winnipeg. They shared stories about harassment and intimidation in their workplace as they faced down an aggressive multi-national retail chain that was hellbent on keeping unions out of their locations. Workers who were sympathetic to the union were interrogated and fired, anti-union propaganda was distributed and workers were told that unionization would result in the closure of four retail outlets in Winnipeg. These actions were so egregious that they resulted in a Manitoba Labour Board decision to grant automatic certification to Workers United that secured a union foothold in the precarious fast-food retail sector.

Deena Ladd from the Workers’ Action Centre called on union members to champion the rights of every worker by fighting, not just for changes to the *Labour Relations Act* but, to improve the province’s *Employment Standards Act*.

The panel was closed off by two passionate speakers from the Toronto Airport Workers’ Council. Baggage handler and IAMAW LL2323 Vice-President Dan Janssen explained how airport workers have come



Dynamic Human Rights Panel challenged delegates to address the intersectionality of inequality. Photo: Peter Boyle

EQUITY IS THE BASIS FOR ACTION

Five remarkable activists spoke about intersectionality and being a good ally during the Human Rights panel that kicked off Convention.

Activist and journalist Desmond Cole moderated the panel, which included school board trustee Ausma Malik, Pam Dogra from ETFO, Jessica Burnie from OSSTF and Elaine White from Unifor.

They spoke of how multiple realities as women, racialized workers, people with disabilities and other equity-seekers overlap in the fight to end inequality. They called for equity and fairness to become a cornerstone of every campaign of the OFL in the fight for the Ontario We Want.

“We can’t do activism in isolation,” Panelist Pam Dogra (ETFO) told delegates. “We must build our movement through alliances because we cannot have a just society if it is only just for some.”



Panel moderator, Brynne Sinclair-Waters, frames the modern fight for workers rights as an issue of fairness. Photo: Peter Boyle

together to form a united campaign to demand that a workplace-wide “living wage” be established for every one of the 40,000 workers who work at Pearson International Airport. This campaign represents a united front against all of the scores of employers operating out of the airport and seeks to protect workers who are vulnerable to job loss each time a contract is flipped.

Fellow airport worker, Antonios Kourteridis from UNIFOR L2002, said: “We decided to raise one flag at our airport, that is the flag of labour. We can only win if we fight together.”

2015 Biennial CLIFF PILKEY AWARDS DINNER

The 2015 OFL Convention hosted the second Cliff Pilkey Awards Dinner to recognize present-day labour activists and honour the remarkable legacy of stalwart labour activist and past-OFL President, Cliff Pilkey.

Pilkey's contribution to the labour movement was enormous. He was a shrewd negotiator and a tough debater but he was also passionate and thoughtful. Cliff Pilkey was a labour leader who was way ahead of his time. He knew injustice when he saw it and he always stood true to his principles. He devoted his life to improving the lives of all working people and those most in need.

Recently retired ETFO Durham Region President Gerard O'Neill was honoured with the evening's most prestigious award, the Cliff Pilkey Labour Activist Award.

"Working people can grapple with big ideas and they can change the world. As trade unionists we have to be braver; we have to be more dynamic; we have to move our membership into action because the boss wants them sleeping," O'Neill told the boisterous gala-goers. "We believe in social justice and economic equality but we must turn those beliefs into the better world we imagine."



Gala host David Sparrow (ACTRA) opened the evening soirée with a hilarious and pointed monologue.



*We believe in
social justice and
economic equality but
we must turn those beliefs
into the better world we imagine.*

— Gerard O'Neill, OFL Cliff Pilkey
Labour Activist Award winner

CLIFF PILKEY WARDS DINNER



Cliff Pilkey Labour Activist Award winner Gerard O'Neill (ETF0) with Cliff's children, Allan Pilkey and Jackie Zaika.



2015 Scholarship recipient Leizl Anne Pineda with AIL Canadian Director of Industrial Relations Daryl Barnett.



OFL Young Workers Award winner Evan Johnston (CUPE) with Janice Folk-Dawson (Guelph & District Labour Council).



Olivia Chow Child Care Champion Award winner Jamie Kass (CUPW).



Bob Borch Human Rights Award winner Kim Martin (Unifor).



Andy King (USW) accepts Linda Jolley Lifetime Achievement Award for Health and Safety from Ken Neumann (USW Canada) and Marty Warren (USW District 6).



Heather Kelley (IAMAW) accepts OFL Cultural Award for CLIFF (Canadian Labour International Film Festival).

ALL PHOTOS ON THIS SPREAD: PETER BOYLE



Photo: Peter Boyle

FOR PRESIDENT CHRIS BUCKLEY, UNITY AND SOLIDARITY ARE PRIORITY NUMBER ONE

Chris Buckley was elected President of the OFL at the November 2015 Biennial Convention with a unanimous mandate to unite Ontario's labour movement around the shared goals of equality, good jobs, political influence and stronger labour rights.

"Today's job market is the most precarious in a century and workers cannot push back against austerity cuts, privatization and labour market restructuring if their unions – and their movement – is divided," said Buckley. "My number one priority is to rebuild our labour movement as a strong, united and progressive force that leaves no worker behind."

My number one priority is to rebuild our labour movement as a strong, united and progressive force that leaves no worker behind.

Chris has the experience for the job.

A lifelong trade unionist and social justice advocate, Chris has dedicated himself to improving the lives of every worker in Ontario. He is the former President of Unifor Local 222 in Oshawa and chair of the GM Master Bargaining Committee, where he led negotiations with General Motors through four rounds of talks. Chris spearheaded a 12-day blockade of the General Motors Canadian headquarters to stop the Oshawa truck plant closure and

provoke the government to make 'Made in Canada' a principle of public policy.

During his time as President of Local 222, Chris was a member of the CAW's rank-and-file national executive board, where he participated in the major decisions of the union. Chris was also a member of the committee tasked with overseeing the formation of Unifor and played a pivotal role in the transition to the new union.

Chris pledged to work with affiliates, activists, labour councils and equity seeking groups to build a strong OFL and a stronger labour movement in Ontario.

He has pledged to address the major issues facing labour today, including the gender wage gap, issues around precarious work, the changing jobs market, youth unemployment, and to mount a province-wide campaign to overhaul the province's labour laws for unionized and non-unionized workers.

Since taking office as OFL President, Chris has begun reaching out to every union in the province and mobilizing against inequality with the Ontario Common Front.



PATTY COATES AIR AND C



AHMAD GAI TO THE PRE

Photos (top and bottom): Peter Boyle

S KEEPS ONE FIST IN THE OTHER ON THE LEDGER

Hailing out of OSSTF District 17 in Barrie, Patty Coates has the chops for her new gig as OFL Secretary-Treasurer.

A long-time fighter for equity, labour council activist and community builder, Patty was elected to help rally the members – and the resources – of a united labour movement in Ontario.

She cited the current fight between Ontario's education workers, the province and school boards at a time of cuts to education as a case study in labour unity. "It is only when the fight of any worker becomes the fight of every worker that the labour movement will harness its full potential. We must marshal our resources to fight for good jobs and strong public services to make our economy work for everyone."

It is only when the fight of any worker becomes the fight of every worker that the labour movement will harness its true potential.

Patty is an educational assistant, a proud longtime member of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation of Ontario (OSSTF) and a passionate activist.

She served as the President of the Barrie and District Labour Council for eight years and previously held the position of Vice-President and council delegate. Under Patty's leadership, the labour council expanded its membership and activism, effectively reaching out to new local unions and members in the area.

She is known for her community-based activism, grassroots labour organizing and her mentorship of young women in the labour movement. She does it all while keeping one fist in the air and the other on the ledger.

ED SEEKS TO GIVE VOICE PRECARIOUS GENERATION

At 33 years old, Executive Vice-President, Ahmad Gaied, is the youngest officer in the 58-year history of the Ontario Federation of Labour. He is also a worker of colour and a proud member of the Muslim community in Toronto.

Ahmad is an ardent supporter of grassroots and worker-led initiatives to assist organizing non-unionized workers so that they can benefit from union representation.

A longtime activist and community advocate, Ahmad began his trade union activism as a chief steward at his No

Frills store in 2003 and rose through the ranks to the position of Member Engagement Representative for UFCW Canada Local 1000A.

"I started work at a Loblaws grocery store

when I was 17 years old and I got my first experience with the incredible power of the union," said Gaied. "I am part of the new generation of workers who are facing the most precarious labour market in our country's history. Labour must engage, inspire and mobilize youth and young workers to stop Ontario's race to the bottom."

I am part of the new generation of workers who are facing the most precarious labour market in our country's history.

Labour must engage and mobilize these workers to stop the race to the bottom.

Ahmad self-identifies as Canadian, Libyan, Arab and African. Ahmad speaks both English and Arabic, which he uses to build bridges within the community.

Since taking office, Ahmad has already begun reaching out to community and student allies. He has recently been appointed to represent the OFL on the Ontario Common Front.

OFFICERS RECEIVE A LITTLE DEVINE INTERVENTION

The new OFL Officers drafted seasoned Unifor strategist, Shannon Devine, to act as their lead advisor as they chart a new course for Ontario's labour movement.

Battle-tested through nearly a decade of strategic leadership at CAW and Unifor, Shannon is well positioned to guide the OFL through a period of intense renewal and growth.

Starting at the CAW in 2007, Shannon worked under three national presidents and led the communications department through several major rounds of bargaining, including the Big 3 during the 2008-2009 recession. She was an essential part of the ambitious New Union Project that led to the creation of Unifor—Canada's largest and newest private sector union.

Shannon headed up focus group testing, member and ally surveys and a variety of other tools to develop Unifor's identity and to ensure that the new union reflected the needs, hopes and dreams of workers across the country.

These skills will be an asset as the new OFL team takes on the challenge of rebuilding Ontario's house of labour, both inside and out.

As the OFL Executive Assistant, Shannon will advise the Officers and help manage the Federation, under the direction of the Officers, Executive Committee and Executive Board.

Reach Shannon Devine at:
(416) 302-1699
SDevine@ofl.ca
@progressivista



Photo: Joel Duff

KILL A WORKER,

GO TO JAIL

HISTORIC JAIL SENTENCE SENDS STRONG MESSAGE TO ONTARIO EMPLOYERS

OFL President Chris Buckley attended the Toronto Superior Court proceedings on January 11, 2016 to witness for himself the jail sentencing of Metron Construction Project Manager Vadim Kazenelson.

In a thronging media scrum after the verdict, Buckley called it a historic decision that would send a strong message to every employer in the province. Ontario Court Judge, the Honourable Ian MacDonnell, sentenced Kazenelson to three-and-a-half years in jail for each of four counts of criminal negligence causing death and one count causing bodily harm, following the tragic collapse of a swing stage at a Toronto high-rise on December 24, 2009. The sentences will be served concurrently.

"I hope this verdict sends shivers down the spine of employers across Ontario. The message from this Ontario court echoes the campaign of the Ontario Federation of Labour: if you kill a worker, you will go jail," said Buckley. "No prison term or financial penalty can bring back the

workers who died or undo the pain felt by their families, but this sentence has the power to prevent other workers from suffering a similar fate."



OFL President Chris Buckley responds to crowd of reporters. Photo: Joel Duff

The OFL launched its "Kill a Worker, Go to Jail" campaign immediately following the Metron tragedy in 2009 to demand jail time for bosses whose criminal negligence results in a worker's death. The campaign paid off in 2012 when Metron Construction received Ontario's first criminal conviction since the *Criminal Code of Canada*

was amended in response to the 1992 Westray Mine Disaster. While the company was fined over a million dollars, the company's sole owner and director, Joel Swartz, escaped criminal conviction altogether. In June 2015, an Ontario Superior Court found the Metron Project Manager, Vadim Kazenelson, guilty of five counts of criminal negligence. At the sentencing hearing, Judge MacDonnell made clear that his decision to apply a significant term of imprisonment was meant to denounce the Metron manager's failure to prevent "manifestly dangerous conditions" and carry a strong message of general deterrence to other employers in the province.

"This jail sentence is a historic verdict and marks the first time an Ontario employer will face criminal consequences for negligence causing the death of a worker," said Buckley. "It means that employers can't chalk up a worker's life as the cost of doing business. The OFL won't stop campaigning until the employers who put workers lives at risk to earn another buck find themselves doing hard time in jail."



Metron accident survivor Dilshod Marupov was the only one of five workers to survive a 13 story plunge when a two-man scaffold collapsed under the weight of seven men.

The trauma—and his injuries—will be with him his entire life. Photo: CBC Archives



FORMAL OMBUDS COMPLAINT AGAINST THE WSIB MAKES FRONT PAGE NEWS

Following up on a bombshell report released last November, the OFL and the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups (ONIWG) filed a formal complaint with Ontario Ombudsman Barbara Finlay on Friday, January 29, 2016 calling for a full investigation into the practices of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). Backed by over 20 medical professionals and substantiated with 45 case examples, the submission alleges that the WSIB "systematically ignores the advice of medical professionals for the purpose of rejecting and limiting otherwise legitimate injury claims."

The complaint made front page news in an exclusive story in the *Toronto Star*. The pressure on the WSIB continued to ratchet up as the media firestorm made its way across the airwaves and culminated, on Sunday, February 1, 2016, with a *Toronto Star* editorial endorsement of the OFL/ONIWG complaint.

"Over 20 medical doctors, psychologists, chiropractors and physiotherapists have come forward and put their reputations on the line to expose the WSIB's intentionally ignorant and dangerously negligent treatment of injured workers," OFL President Chris Buckley told the media. "The

overwhelming evidence that we have collected suggests that the WSIB is ignoring the professional advice of treating physicians and putting injured workers on the street and in harm's way."

The complaint was built on evidence collected in the 2015 OFL/ONIWG report, "Prescription Over-Ruled: Report on How Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Systematically Ignores the Advice of Medical Professionals." It was submitted to the Ontario Ombuds office as a last resort, after concerns were dismissed by the senior management of the WSIB.

The collection of case examples document the WSIB's failure to heed medical advice regarding readiness to return to work, insufficient treatment, blaming 'pre-existing' conditions for ongoing illness, and using independent medical reviews which proclaim patients to be healed, despite the evidence of treating practitioners. Instead, the complaint accuses the WSIB of routinely rejecting the advice of treating physicians in favour of the contradictory diagnoses of "paper doctors," who review the claim file without ever examining the patient.

"Since we first exposed this issue three months ago, we have been overwhelmed by the sheer volume of doctors, injured workers and advocates who have come forward to share their experiences with a Kafkaesque WSIB bureaucracy that seems hell-bent on deeming injured workers healed when they are anything but," said Aidan Macdonald of the Injured Workers' Consultants Community Legal Clinic. "I suspect that behind every one of the courageous injured workers who came forward to share their story, there are a hundred others with exactly the same experience."

"When we are forced back to work too soon, we put ourselves at risk of re-injury, and many injured workers are driven to depression, poverty and even suicide," said Catherine Fenech of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups. "Every injured worker deserves all of the benefits and services that they are entitled to by law and, moreover, we deserve to be treated with dignity and respect."

Downloaded the complaint at www.OFL.ca

WORKPLACE SAFETY
Too sick to work

Advocates ask Ontario government watchdog to investigate WSIB

Ontario watchdog urged to investigate WSIB
Injured workers unfairly kicked off benefits are falling into desperate poverty, according to evidence submitted to Ontario's ombudsman.

Labour groups call for Ontario ombudsman to investigate safety board

THE OFL TEAM

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE OFFICERS:

Shannon Devine, Executive Assistant

OFL & ODRT DIRECTORS

Joel Duff, Communications Director

Vern Edwards, Health & Safety Director

Rob Halpin, Director of Research and Education & ODRT Project Coordinator

Laurie Hardwick, Organization Services Director

Carrol Anne Sceviour, Human Rights and Women's Director

Elizabeth Smith-VanBeek, Director of Administration

OFL & ODRT STAFF

Judy Chow, Executive Secretary (Secretary-Treasurer & Administration)

Paulette Hazel, Secretary

Brian Morgan, DocuTech Operator

Kathy Neumann, Executive Secretary (President and Exec. V.P.)

Ethiraju Ramachandar, Secretary / Bookkeeper

Sylvia Stewart, Secretary

LABOUR & HUMAN RIGHTS DATES

Feb	Black History Month
Feb 20	World Day for Social Justice
Mar 8	International Women's Day
Mar 10	Bottle Water Free Day
Mar 21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Mar 27	Anniversary of the OFL (1957)
Apr 13	Day of Pink (Anti-Bullying Day)
Apr 20	Equal Pay Day
Apr 23	Anniversary of the CLC (1956)
Apr 28	Day of Mourning for Workers Killed or Injured on the Job
May	Asian Heritage Month
May 1	May Day
May 17	International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia
Jun 1-7	Sexual Harassment Awareness Week



OFL Labour Canvass turns out scores dedicated labour volunteers. Photo: Rob Halpin

OFL MOBILIZES BEHIND NIKI LUNDQUIST (NDP) FOR WHITBY-OSHAWA



Bracing itself for a potential NDP breakthrough in a long-held Tory riding of Whitby-Oshawa, the OFL called on affiliates to mobilize in support of labour candidate Niki Lundquist.

The Wynne Government called the by-election to replace Tory MPP Christine Elliott, who stepped down after losing her second bid to lead the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario. The region has become hotly contested after

local ETFO activist Jennifer French handily won an NDP seat from a Tory incumbent in the neighbouring riding of Oshawa.

Lundquist is a labour and human rights lawyer for Unifor with extensive experience fighting exploitative labour practices in Canada, as well as internationally. There is no question that she would be a powerful voice for labour in the Ontario legislature.

In many ways, the NDP is positioning the election as a referendum on the Wynne Government's sale of Ontario Hydro. Residents in the region are already struggling under excessive hydro costs and there is a strong movement under foot to protect the public asset.

The OFL held two well-attended labour canvasses that sent scores of union volunteers door knocking for the NDP. With the February 11 election day fast approaching, unions are putting on a final push to turn this Tory Blue seat into NDP Orange.



OFL Executive Vice-President Ahmad Gaied rallies the troops for a labour foot canvass of the riding. Photo: Unifor Communications

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB: BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS

Events will be held across Ontario throughout the month of February to recognize Black History Month. Contact your union to get involved.

FEB. 11: WHITBY-OSHAWA BY-ELECTION

Election day for the Whitby-Oshawa By-Election will require a big “get out the vote” push from labour volunteers across the region. Contact the campaign office of NDP Candidate Niki Lundquist to get involved: www.lundquistndp.ca

FEB. 14: WOMEN’S ANNUAL MEMORIAL MARCHES

This February 14, the OFL is calling on affiliates and activists to join in Women’s Annual Memorial Marches and demand a national inquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. Community marches are listed at: womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com/national

MAR. 8: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

Events will be held across Ontario around March 8 to recognize International Women’s Day (IWD). Contact your union to get involved in local activities.

MAR 11-12: \$15 & FAIRNESS PROVINCIAL STRATEGY MEETING

Join the provincial mobilizing network that is waging the \$15 and Fairness campaign for a two-day strategy meeting in Toronto to share information, pool our resources, hone our skills and develop

a common plan of action that will strengthen the fight for decent work everywhere.

For more information, email: Fightfor15andFairness@gmail.com

MAR. 21: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Events will be held across Ontario on March 21 to recognize the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Contact your union to get involved.

APR. 15: DAY OF ACTION FOR FIGHT FOR \$15 & FAIRNESS

Join the Facebook event page now and invite your friends, co-workers, family members. Interested in organizing an event in your community? Email us at Fightfor15andFairness@gmail.com.

APR. 19: EQUAL PAY DAY

The OFL and the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition are calling on labour and community activists to organize actions across the province to wear red on April 19, 2016 to promote “Equal Pay Day.”

Equal Pay Day flyers and background materials are available on the Equal Pay Coalition website, visit: www.equalpaycoalition.org

APR. 30: OFL’S LABOUR HONOUR ROLL NOMINEES

Each year, the OFL adds five retired or deceased trade unionists to the OFL Labour Honour Roll. These are activists who made a significant contribution to the trade union movement. The deadline

for nominations is April 30.

For information, please contact: Paulette Hazel at 416-443-7667 or PHazel@ofl.ca

MAY 1: MAY DAY ACTIONS

Airport workers in Toronto will organize a rally at Canada’s largest workplace. No One Is Illegal and allies will also host their annual march and rally to call for migrant justice. Stay tuned for details!

OCT. 7 - INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DECENT WORK

Save the date now for this important milestone where we’ll rally in response to the final recommendations made by the Changing Workplaces Review. Stay tuned for details.

OCT. 20-23: RISE UP! CLC HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

This conference will bring our movement’s diverse activists and allies together in a unique space that explores strategies and skills. Together we will empower and engage workers to build a stronger movement based on equity and inclusion, which reflects the changing demographics of the workforce. Stay tuned for details.

OCT. 23-25: CLC NATIONAL YOUNG WORKERS’ CONFERENCE

This conference will bring together young workers, youth activists, and allies to build young workers’ power to address the changing nature of work, empower young and new leadership in workplaces and unions, and lay the framework for a renewed and growing labour movement. Stay tuned for details.



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AND
FAIRNESS
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