

**SIXTY YEARS
BUILDING JUSTICE
FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY
AND WINNING FOR
WORKERS**



Action Plan a call to arms



Yesterday CUPE Ontario members debated the action plan that sets the direction of our union for the next year.



Over the last few years, members have found themselves on the frontlines of multiple crises. Rampant inequality, a cost of living crisis, chronic social injustices and the rise of the far-right are all challenges that can't be ignored. This year's action plan provides a path forward, using our collective power to fight back, mobilize and win.



The plan outlines strategic priorities, key demands, and concrete actions to address the many issues facing members. This includes tackling the affordability crisis and the climate crisis, organizing in our workplaces to demand better, tackling longstanding inequalities, fighting against privatization and demanding tax justice to ensure corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share. The plan also outlines our continued commitment to defeating Ford's Conservatives and ensuring Pierre Poilievre is stopped from becoming Canada's next prime minister.

In short, the action plan is a call to arms for members. By organizing, mobilizing, and advocating tirelessly, we will build a stronger, more united movement and a more just and equitable world for all.

**A mix of old and new:
CUPE Ontario's executive board**

Convention delegates and caucus members elected new members to CUPE Ontario's executive board.

The complete board:

Fred Hahn, President; Yolanda McClean, Secretary-Treasurer; Michael Hurley, First Vice-President & President of OCHU; Aubrey Gonsalves, Second Vice-President; Dawn Bellerose, Third Vice-President; Dash Lavender, Fourth Vice-President.

Members at large: Moe Alqasem; Marty Larocque, Lisa Barker; Lisa Skeete; Leslie Greene; Katherine Grzejszczak.

Equality Representatives: Krystina McLeod, Indigenous Workers; Vee Gandhi, Pink Triangle Workers; Nina Brown, Racialized Workers, Marilena Fox, Femmes, Brenda Cervantes, Workers with Disabilities; Alyssa McGee, Young Workers; Bryan Keith, Northern Ontario; Christine Couture, Francophone.

Bargaining Council: Sharon Richer, OCHU; Joe Tigani, OSBCU.

Sector Representatives: Debra Maxfield, Health; Krista Laing, Municipal; Colleen Ferreira, Universities; Juanita Forde, Social Services; Stephen Seaborn, Retirees. Tammy DeRocco was elected to the position of three-year trustee.



Solidarity with ATU 113

Delegates offered a rousing display of solidarity to ATU 113, whose bargaining team was invited to convention floor by CUPE 79. ATU 113 represents Toronto transit operators, who are in the hotel for negotiations with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). This round of bargaining is the first since the right to strike was restored to ATU 113 and CUPE 2.



Flanked by members of the bargaining team, ATU's Marvin Alfred showed CUPE Ontario some solidarity in return by telling them, "Thank you, CUPE! We've always known you have our backs, and we have yours. We will stick together and we'll win together!"

Advancing Francophone members' representation

In another historic move, members of CUPE Ontario's Francophone caucus met to choose the first representative to the newly established Francophone seat on the executive board.

Longtime board member Christine Couture was elected to that position, which she will hold for the next two years. Couture looks forward to representing the interests of CUPE Ontario's Francophone members, noting that "Ontario has the largest Francophone population of any province after Quebec. We need to do whatever we can to protect our heritage.

"Within our union, we can do that by ensuring that the role of Francophone members in CUPE Ontario is respected. It's not just a matter of making sure that everything has a French-language translation. This role is about validating our identity and valuing the role and contributions of Francophone members.



Fighting imperialism with global solidarity

The International Solidarity Forum on Thursday night was a sombre reminder of Canada’s and other imperialist Western countries’ role in perpetuating conflict and injustice overseas.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is abundant in natural resources but its wealth is extracted by powerful countries, said Patrick Kaketa Mpiana, founder of the Congolese Association of Ontario and one of the three panelists at the event.

He cited the example of the 1965 coup backed by U.S. and Belgium deposing left-wing prime minister Patrice Lumumba, to install a right-wing regime friendly to Western capital. Patrick said an ongoing genocide of millions of people has plagued the DRC since another U.S. intervention in the region in the 1990s.

Patrick decried the lack of attention by Western media to crimes in his country, a theme familiar to pro-Palestine activists in Canada. Pamela Arancibia, representing Labour4Palestine, said Palestinians have been raising alarms about occupation and apartheid for decades. She said Palestinians, like everyone else, have a right to self-determination, the right to resist, and to determine their own future.

The displacement of people was driven by “hyper-imperialism and climate change,” according to Syed Hussan from Migrant Workers Alliance for Change. Migrants are then marginalized again when they immigrate. He cited the plight – and resistance – of migrant workers in Canada, and argued that the best way to fight surging anti-immigrant racism was through wins that protect people’s rights, such as the permanent status for undocumented people.

First-ever Pink Triangle Advocacy award

In a significant moment for CUPE Ontario, President Fred Hahn took to the stage to present the union’s first-ever Pink Triangle Advocacy award. The honour was bestowed on Martine Stonehouse of CUPE 4400, recognizing her relentless dedication to 2SLGBTQI+ advocacy both in her workplace and on a national level.

Stonehouse has been a tireless advocate for change. In 2006, she launched a federal challenge to include ‘gender identity/expression’ added as a protected right under Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and to have sex reassignment surgery defined and covered under the Canada Health Act.

Upon receiving the award, Stonehouse expressed her gratitude, stating, “This award is not just about me. It’s about all of you at CUPE Ontario and it’s about CUPE’s unwavering support of all its members.” Her words underscored the collective effort and support in the union that drive such impactful initiatives forward.



Honoured for protecting injured workers

On the day before Injured Workers Day, CUPE Ontario recognized the outsized impact of Joseph Zollino to advocate on behalf of injured workers.

The Canadian Labour Congress estimates that early 350,000 workers filed lost-time claims in 2022.

Zollino, the WSIB representative for CUPE 4400, has represented members in accommodation meetings, assisted in reporting claims, and helped with appeals. His efforts have enabled countless injured workers to get back to work or receive compensation. “We must ensure injured workers are accommodated,” he said, standing proudly next to his father. “And we as brothers and sisters must welcome them back with open arms.”



Showing up for others in the fight



Lovepreet Singh from the Naujawan Support Network (NSN) delivered a powerful speech at the 2024 CUPE Ontario convention in Toronto.

NSN has been organizing immigrant students and workers in fighting for justice against bad bosses since 2021. They have faced down employers making everything from illegal wage deductions to threats to workers’ immigration applications.

“NSN has changed that by creating space for workers to come together, get to know each other, talk about our issues and show up in each other’s struggles,” said Singh.

Workers united in this organization have been able to score a string of material victories. This includes securing over \$750,000 from former employers attempting to evade their responsibility to pay workers. Their members work in a wide range of essential non-unionized workplaces including factories, trucking, warehouses, restaurants, construction and more.

“Employers used to believe they could silence us through violence or threats. They have completely lost their confidence in that,” said Singh.

Singh called on CUPE members to support NSN’s efforts by joining their meetings and public events, including a rally on Sunday, June 2 at 4pm in Chinguacousy Park in Brampton.