ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES

DECEMBER 4-6, 2015
SHERATON CENTRE HOTEL
TORONTO, ONTARIO
WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

DINO CHIODO: Welcome to the Ontario Regional Council right here in Toronto at the Sheraton Centre. Welcome to each and every one of you. We are going to get our Council under way, but before we do get started, what I would like to do is I would like to ask everybody to please stand for a moment of silence for those that have passed away since the last time that we met; at the same time, those that are suffering from occupational disease and those that are having challenges in their workplace with regards to illnesses or injuries and even outside of their workplaces. Please give them a moment of your time.

--- Moment of silence

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. So, brothers and sisters, before we get started, what we would like to do, in your kits, we do have the past minutes from last Council. We would like to have a motion on the floor, so we can pass those minutes.

Throughout the order of the conference, you can bring up anything in the minutes. If there are any omissions or additions that have to be made, we will make sure we take care of that. But, we would like to get started by passing those minutes. Can I have a mover? So, moved. Any discussion?

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried. CARRIED

There are also staff reports that are going to be in your kits. Please take the opportunity to look through the staff reports. And, again, throughout the conference there will be opportunities, there will be times where we will be able to debate and discuss items that are going on throughout those staff reports. We will be able to give people opportunities to speak on them, and then we will pass those reports at the appropriate time later on in the Council.

INTRODUCTION OF RETIRED WORKERS, GUESTS, ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

DINO CHIODO: I would like to stand and recognize retirees and the Retirees Executive Board that are here with us today. They are an amazing group of individuals. These are some men and women that do a tremendous amount of work within our organization. They are the first ones to go to demonstrations, forums, participate. And, in saying that, they created a solid foundation for this organization on an ongoing premise.

What I would like to do now is I would like to recognize the retirees that are in the room. If they could please stand up to be recognized by the members of the Ontario Regional Council?

Thank you very much. And, in saying that, today is going to be a special day, because we will have a number of retirees that are going to be walking through. They will have a rally at this Ontario Regional Council. This is the first time that we will be doing that here and that will take part at 1:30.

So, we have about 420 retirees, which is a great testament to them being involved, wanting to be involved and being active. And, they are going to be walking through this Council Chamber. And, in saying that, this is just an opportunity for them to have some space, to be able to express themselves and talk about some of the issues that are important to them.

We will be designating two individuals to speak at the mic. And, in saying that, they were looking for a vehicle to be able to express themselves, resolutions at a bargaining and political action conference. And, unfortunately, Unifor doesn’t have that in its Constitution. And, by extension of that, we wanted to make sure we could recognize them, because we will not forget our retirees and we will not leave them behind. Thank you very much.
I would like to recognize some special guests that are here with us today. I would like to recognize Buzz Hargrove. I know he is in the room. I am just not sure where, if he is down here yet. But, he was a past president of one of our former organizations in the CAW. Buzz was one of the longest-serving presidents for the CAW. And, I would like to welcome Buzz Hargrove here with us at this conference.

I would also like to recognize Ken Lewenza, Sr., who was also one of the founding members of putting this organization, this great organization of Unifor together, and having the vision with Brother Dave Coles in order to do that. So, I would like to recognize Ken Lewenza and thanks for being here as well.

Brother Dave Coles unfortunately wasn’t able to make it, but we do want to commend him with his foresight as he was able to make sure that he could put this, or help put this great organization together as well.

In saying that, I would like to also recognize Chris Buckley, the newly-elected President of the Ontario Federation of Labour in the house from the Local 222 Oshawa GM group. He was the Chair of the GM Master Bargaining Committee and does a tremendous amount of work. And, we will be hearing from him a little later on this afternoon.

And, I will recognize more individuals as they come into the room later on throughout the process, brothers and sisters.

I would like to take the opportunity right now, because of their hard work and dedication, giving them the opportunity to be elected, but at the same time represent this great union of ours, Unifor, I would like to recognize all the National Executive Board members that are in the room. And, again, I won’t be going through them, because I don’t know all of them that are here. I don’t know who has come in. But, at the same time, I would like to ask the National Executive Board members that are in the room to please stand up and be recognized by your peers. To the National Executive Board.

So, we have enjoyed a number of great Ontario Regional Councils over the last few years. And, at the same time, we are going to have another tremendous Ontario Regional Council. There’s going to be a lot of great speakers. There’s going to be a lot of great presentations.

But, at the same time, there has been no better success to the Ontario Regional Council and this new union of ours to be able to take down a person like Stephen Harper. So, I want to say thank you to each and every one of you. There was a tremendous amount of work that went into making sure that Stephen Harper did not have another opportunity to be the Prime Minister of this country of ours. But, at the same time, we have a lot of work ahead of us.

As we work with Justin Trudeau and the Liberal government, the majority government that is in place now, and again, it is not perfect, brothers and sisters, but it is a step in the right direction, especially when you have an individual in Justin Trudeau that reaches out to the Canadian Labour Congress President, Hassan Yussuff, to start having conversations, and already talking about repealing things like Bill C-377 and 525.

And, there will be a lot of discussion that will go on with regards to what we are seeing in front of us, especially through the challenges that we have at the federal and provincial government, so I won’t make too many remarks with reference to that.

But, I do want to congratulate each and every one of you, all of your locals for participating and make sure that we were successful in the last election. And, that is because of our hard work, our efforts, connecting with the community chapters, connecting with some of the niche organizations within our community, within our country. And, it is a testament to all of your hard work. Congratulations.

Over the last few years, I have had the opportunity to work with an amazing organization and group of people through the Ontario Regional Council. And, in saying that, I want to take the opportunity to be able to identify and introduce every one of them, because they are an amazing group of people. They do an amazing job elected in their positions.
But, again, have the foresight to be able to try, because there are always bumps in the road when you are putting a new organization together. But, they have the foresight to have discussion, talk and debate about what we do to make this Ontario Regional Council more progressive. And, they continue to do that and inspire me on a daily basis.

I will start out without our vice-chairperson, Candace Lavalley from Local 7-O. Our secretary-treasurer, Tullio DiPonti from Local 2458. Our members-at-large:
- From Local 4268, Debbie Montgomery.
- From Local 598, Anne Marie MacInnis.
- From Local 87M, K.H. Wong.
- From Local 27, Jim Reid.
- And, from Local 35-O, Maggie Harbert.

Please help me in giving them all a warm welcome for their effort and work and commitment to this Ontario Regional Council.

Sorry, I want to make sure, and I would be remiss if I didn’t say it. I apologize. Kari Jefford out of Local 229.

And, Ken Cole. I’m sorry. Ken Cole. Well, I’ve got a lot of them that I missed. It didn’t take long for that.

And, Tim McKinnon. I am sorry for that. Tim McKinnon out of Local 199. Thank you very much.

Kari is going to make me pay for that over the course of the next two days. Free drinks. Okay, so here we go.

So, again, over the course of this weekend, we’re going to have three standing committee elections. There are going to be standing committees that will be going on over the course of the next two days. In saying that, it is in your agenda when those standing committees are going to meet.

But, I do want to recognize that there will be three elections that will be held. Namely, there will be a position open for the LGBT Caucus, there will be one open for the Young Workers Caucus and one for the Aboriginal/Workers of Colour.

And, we get to the timeline with reference to talking about those elections, as we get closer, we will make sure we make that announcement again, so people can participate in that progress.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY FOR ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL SPONSORED EVENTS

I want to remind everybody also that is here today that we do have an anti-harassment policy that is in full effect for this Ontario Regional Council and also for all the meetings that are connected to this Council. I will be reading an anti-harassment statement adopted by your Ontario Regional Executive, and it will be read here on out for all ORC-sponsored events going forward.

At the same time inside of your kits, there will be an anti-harassment policy that you will be able to review in its entirety, and the names of the ombudspersons are there. We will be recognizing them. But, at the same time, they will have their phone number, their cell number that will be connected to that.

So, what I want to do is just go through the anti-harassment statement that we will be reading from now on at all ORC-sponsored events:

Unifor believes that every individual has the right to dignity, respect and fair treatment within the union and in the workplace. That is why Unifor has an anti-harassment policy. The policy calls on us to inform people at the start of every union function that we want to keep the session harassment-free. If we want to eradicate the problem of harassment in our workplace and in society at large, we must first set an example right here in the union. Harassment is not a joke. It creates feelings of unease, humiliation and discomfort, and Unifor finds any such behaviour unacceptable and intolerable.

Harassment can take a number of forms: sexual, racial, sexist or personal. It is any form of behaviour that is threatening or offensive to the person to whom it is being addressed. We have set up the same procedures to respond to alleged cases of harassment here at this union event as we would at any other union function. Complaints of harassment will be taken seriously and will be investigated immediately.
The designated ombudspersons for the function today and tomorrow will be Mohamad Alsadi and Lisa Kelly sitting up here at the front, so you could put the face to the name. At the same time within your kit, you will have their name and cell phone numbers. And, by extension to that, there will be a table outside of the chamber hall here that you will be able to go. There is a Women’s Committee table and, at the same time, an anti-harassment table that anybody could go and participate to talk about any issues that arise for them.

The representatives will make a speedy confidential and thorough investigation of the incident and will attempt to resolve the issue. If the complaint is found to be justified, actions will be taken against the harasser and a written report to be made to the appropriate officer. Actions could include but not is limited to apology, reprimand and possible expulsion from this union event.

So, thank you very much. And, again, this is zero tolerance over the course of this weekend. And, again, we want to make an example of making sure that we could read that statement out. And, again, I ask you to read the entire policy that is in your kit, if you have a few moments.

So, now we are getting into the 4th Ontario Regional Council. We have got some great speakers that are going to be before you. We have got some amazing presentations. There are some good prepared documents, which are all part of the kit that was presented to you.

And, in saying that, what we are asking is to make sure that you have the opportunity to collect that information and bring it back to your locals. If you need any other information, let us know, because the reality is, we want to make sure that you as the governing body of this organization can bring that information back, and show our members and individuals within our workplace how integral a role we play in making sure that this is a democratic process, and in saying that, making sure that we could give them the information and the regulations that we pass through this body, to make sure that all of our work is covered over the next year. So, if you could do that and bring that back to your membership, it would be very much appreciated, brothers and sisters.

Please note that Recommendations No. 1 and 2 will be reviewed today. Both will be heard after the retirees’ rally that will occur at approximately 1:30. So, those recommendations, we will be trying to get them at approximately 2:00 or 3:00 p.m., respectively.

And, again, there will be Recommendations No. 3, 4 and 5 that will be heard throughout the day Saturday in Council. And, times permitting, we may be able to go through some of the resolutions this afternoon. There will be resolutions report at approximately 10:45 or 11:00. But, by extension of that, if we can’t get through any resolutions formally today, we will make sure that we do address them tomorrow.

ABORIGINAL GREETING

DINO CHIODO: So, brothers and sisters, now to kick off the 4th Ontario Regional Council chair, please help me in welcoming Candace Lavalley to bring us an Aboriginal greeting. Candace.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Just give me a moment to get things going here. Meegwetch Creator Anish ne Cause Candace Lavalley. I am a First Nations Woman originally from Manitoba and I am president of Local 7-O, Seven Sacred Gifts Ojibway in Thunder Bay, which is an Aboriginal composite local.

I am honoured to have been invited here to open our Council with a smudge ceremony. We are here on Mississaugi First Nation land, and we thank them for letting us meet here today.

*May your hands be cleansed that they create beautiful things. May your feet be cleansed that they might take you where you most need to be. May your heart be cleansed that they might hear its messages clearly. May your throat be cleansed that you might speak rightly when words are needed. And, may your eyes be cleansed that you might see the signs of the wonders of this world. May this person and space be washed clean by the smoke from these fragrant plants and may that same smoke carry our prayers spiralling to the heavens. Meegwetch.*

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Candace, for the wonderful greetings and the opening of the 4th Ontario Regional Council. And, to kick things off as well, what we would like to do is we would like to show a video that talks about last year’s accomplishments and the events that we went through over the course of last year. So, if we could roll the video, please?
--- Whereupon a video was played

**DINO CHIODO:** Brothers and sisters, we are definitely making a difference. In saying that, I would like to now ask that a slide show be played. These are slides over 2015 that have gone on in different sectors of our union across the province.

--- Whereupon a slide show is played: Unifor Ontario Regional Council Year in Review

**DINO CHIODO:** Wow, if that doesn’t show how busy we have been over the course of the last year, I don’t know what does. But, what it tells me is that unions are definitely relevant. Unions can make a difference. And, unions are needed to continue to progress through issues of social justice, especially with making change.

And, in saying that, it is important to recognize the work that we have done as an Ontario Regional Council, but again, what all the locals across Ontario do. And, I think this is a fitting time to now call up a woman that does a tremendous amount of work on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council. She involves herself. She participates. She speaks her mind.

She talks about the issues that are important to unionized workers and non-unionized workers, and does a tremendous amount of work across this country in representing not only Ontario, but Canadians alike. Please help me welcome our director of Ontario, Katha Fortier.

**ONTARIO DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

**KATHA FORTIER:** Thanks, Dino. Friends, let me be very clear. Stephen Harper is no longer our Prime Minister and that is because of you. I have been waiting since October 19th to say that.

You canvassed and you donated. You volunteered and you voted. But, more importantly, you got your friends to vote, you got your family to vote, you got your neighbours to vote and you got your members to vote.

Despite rules making it harder to vote this year, 1 million more Ontarians voted than in the 2011 election and 1.7 million less of us voted for Stephen Harper. Voting on reserves increased 73 percent. Canadians elected a record 10 Aboriginal MPs and 46 MPs who are visible minorities. And, because it is 2015, half the cabinet is women.

Everything didn’t go as planned and we lost some amazing MPs, including our own Peggy Nash and Malcolm Allen. But, we did elect Tracey Ramsey, MP for Essex, who defeated a highly-detested Conservative incumbent, Jeff Watson. You have a lot to be proud of. We have a new country, and I thank you all for your contributions.

We will have a country that will finally respond to climate change. They have committed to become world leaders in this crisis and we are going to hold them to their promise. And, because if there is anything we know, we do have the responsibility to our kids and our grandkids to sustain our planet.

And, we are once again a country that welcomes refugees. The photo that was seen around the world of the drowned body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi woke many of us up. And, like many Canadians, our union took action, though Mohamad does tell me we were certainly in dialogue about Syrian refugees long before that.

Many of you may not know this, but our National President, Jerry Dias, put a call out to members in the GTA asking for 25 volunteers to assist in settling the five Unifor families that Unifor is sponsoring.

Now, this is a huge commitment. They will welcome the families from the time that they arrive. They will find them a place to live. They will assist them with all of the details of setting up a household and taking care of all of the practical matters that those families will need.

He asked for 25 volunteers. To date, we have 61. We have six volunteers from our active staff. We have six from our retired staff. We have four volunteers from Local 1980; two from Local 252; four from Local 707; ten from Local 87-M; five from Local 1285; two from Local 79-M; ten from Local 700; two from Local 333; three from Local 584; one from Local 112; one from Local 673 and Local 2002, and three from Local 1256.
I read out all of these local union numbers for a reason. And, I think it is so important that we understand that what we can do together is so much more than any one of our local unions can do alone. And, you should be all very proud of those that have had members that signed up for this very important work that you are going to be doing. And, again, there is still room for more volunteers. You can see Mohamad Alsadi, our Human Rights Director, if your local is interested.

This is really a project that will change lives, not only for the refugees, but for all of the people who help them, and we are incredibly proud of everyone who stepped up for this task.

There are some things that we all find positive and even hopeful in our new government, but there are also some red flags; TPP, Trans-Pacific Partnership. Before the election, Trudeau said he strongly supports free trade. But, he also said it should create good-paying jobs and increase opportunities for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

He also said Harper wasn’t transparent. I actually think everybody said that, but Trudeau did say that as well. And, he went on to promise to defend Canadian interests under TPP, including defending supply management, the auto sector and Canadian manufacturing.

Sisters and brothers, we do need to hold him to this commitment, but we need more. We need public hearings in communities where workers could be negatively affected. We need a commitment that Canada will remain a country that builds. And, above all, we need a commitment from the Trudeau government to fix the obvious flaws with the TPP.

We need to fix the huge flaws in the auto section that will reduce regional content requirements and phase out Canadian tariffs much faster than any other country, including the U.S., and threaten 20,000 Canadian auto jobs.

We need to get rid of the investor-state dispute settlement, which is actually an insult to our democracy. It gives corporations the right to sue governments in their own kangaroo court system over anything that harms their profits.

They must protect Canadians against sky-high monopoly drug prices. They must protect the integrity and accessibility of the Internet. And, they must protect Canadian content in the media.

Rest assured Unifor will actively participate in the government’s review process. We will fight for a trade deal that works for Canadians instead of against us. And, if we can’t fix this bad deal that was negotiated in a panic by Harper in his desperate bid to get re-elected, then we will just have to throw it out and start over.

I would also like to congratulate the IPS Council. They released the report from their Auto Parts Task Force this week that was the result of meeting with leadership across the province. Under the direction of Shane Wark, assistant to the president, and their executive board, they have come up with some really solid recommendations that will support and strengthen their sector.

We also need the government to respond to challenges faced by our media sector. Canadians overwhelmingly want and support local programming and Canadian news. But, the CRTC has bowed to the will of the previous government and refused to implement any regulatory rules to compel cable giants like Bell and Shaw and Rogers to invest any of their profits at all into struggling TV stations.

We are seeing small market stations disappear and, recently, a series of layoffs for members of Local 79-M Bell Media division. The real strategy must be political and encourage the Liberals to regulate, not deregulate this industry.

I would also like to compliment our Media Industry Council on their lead role in the Journalisms Campaign. A strong democracy depends on sound independent media, and they made that connection. Campaigns like this that highlights the importance of the work that we do for our members are so critical, because in so many industries today, we need a public strategy and a government strategy to maintain good jobs.

Our school-bus drivers are in a terribly precarious industry. Despite the fact that they carry previous cargo, they are subject to government procurements, which is essentially contract flipping. And, even the Auditor General this week has come out saying how absolutely shameful that is and how they are not placing a priority on the safety of the kids that ride school buses.
Our taxis and our limo drivers are in competition with unregulated Uber. Taxi drivers always worked long hours. They played by the rules and they kept passengers safe and they have earned a living.

Sisters and brothers, Uber is nothing more than added technology in the race to the bottom. Imagine a workplace with essentially no rules, no guaranteed hours, no guaranteed pay. Your competition follows the law, but you have no laws to follow.

Tim Hudak has a bill on Uber. It just passed second reading. It would essentially allow Uber to continue exactly as they’re doing now. Well, there is one thing for sure that we know about Tim Hudak. If his name is on the bill, it sure as heck won’t be good for working people.

Our locked-out members, Local 1688 in Ottawa who drive airport cabs, are jammed right in the middle of this technological attack on an industry and their owners’ corporate greed. They want drivers who are making less to pay more. Our union is fully invested in this fight, and I want to thank those of you who came to Ottawa for the day of action on November 13th to stand in solidarity with them.

We have also got a lockout of our Garda workers in Ottawa; 135 members locked out since May 14th, after refusing a final offer from their employer that consisted of cuts to wages, cuts to benefits and cuts to their defined benefit pension plan.

The employer now refuses to negotiate and their workers have been made to the Quebec division where workers make significantly less and have no defined benefits. We have charges against this employer that will be heard this week. And, again, we off our solidarity to these members.

Two hundred members who work at Ontario Northland have been locked out by their employer since November 11th. They work in the rail and motor coach division in several communities, including North Bay and Cochrane.

Local 103 has been calling on the provincial government, who is essentially the employer, to voluntarily agree to binding arbitration and will do whatever we can to convince them to agree.

We have had some strikes and lockouts this year and I think it is important that we do recognize them. Most of us have never been on strike and it is likely we never will. For the very small minority that do, they set the stage for so many of us to bargain successfully.

Carmeuse Lime, members of Local 3264 in Ingersoll, were on strike from January 17th until April 25th. If you remember that period of time last year, I think it was probably the coldest picket line on record, but that crew had a wood stove that I think they could patent. It was amazing.

SGS Canada, Local 672, members in Lakefield were on strike from March 22nd until July 23rd.

Kaplan International, 40 English-as-a-Second-Language teachers, members of Local 40, struck their employer from May 11th till June 15th.

Woodbridge Foam, Local 112, shortest strike on record last year, June 4th to June 5th.

Our OLG members in three locations, Woodbine, Local 252 in Toronto; Brantford Casino, Local 504; and Sudbury Downs Local 598, were locked out by their employer from September 19th to October 10th. And, I know many of you in this room helped shut down Woodbine for a couple of days for these workers in their fight for pensions. And, I know that your solidarity was appreciated.

Welland Forge, Local 523, was on strike from October 1st till October 24th.

I want to recognize today that with us in the room is Casandra Robinson. Casandra Robinson is the founder of Operation Christmas Cheer. And, it has been operating -- I believe it’s the 11th year, this year.

And, essentially, it is the operation that brings Christmas to every worker walking the picket line every year. And, that includes groceries, gift cards and presents for their kids. Their operations require volunteers and co-ordination and activism.

And, I know that Casandra will be at the mic later because, of course, one thing they also require is donations. And, I am hoping that the local unions will consider supporting this very, very worthwhile cause to make sure that our brothers and sisters on the picket lines this Christmas have an actual Christmas with their family.
So, of course, it’s not all strikes and lockouts. We have had some really good news this year and some good news stories in our bargaining. Local 414 members who work at 19 different No Frills stores ratified an agreement that will see wages increase anywhere from 6 percent to as high as 9 percent for those at the bottom of the scale. Part-time workers, for the very first time, will have a prescription drug plan. And, this success, of course, follows the successful negotiations for Metro workers this past summer that covered 5,000 members.

And, I do want to congratulate all of those bargaining committee members including local president, Christine Connor, national staff representative and now our Retail Director, Keith Osborne, and Jenny Ahn, assistant to the president.

With the Walmart invasion in the last couple of decades, success in this sector has been harder and harder to come by, but this year, we certainly proved that they are possible.

I would also ask the delegates to visit the Local 414 website, because they have actually listed all of the Unifor retail stores, so you can actually choose to shop there and support your sisters and brothers. I know I have one attached to my condo. I don’t have to go far. And, our members are fabulous there and I am happy to shop there.

We talked about Air Canada at Canadian Council, but not everyone was at Canadian Council, so I think it is important we mention it again. We have 4,000 members of Local 2002 who work at Air Canada who are covered by the agreement that was ratified in June. And, Air Canada has been doing rather well, enjoying solid reliable profits in the last few years. With this agreement, for the next few years, so will our members.

This round of bargaining brought significant increases for workers who were just marginally above minimum wage, and increases at every single level of the pay grid. And, while it hasn’t made up for all of those years of bankruptcy-pressured negotiations that they went through, it’s a great start.

And, I congratulate Local 2002 president, Cheryl Robinson, staff representative, Leslie Dias, and Jenny Ahn, assistant to the president, and all of the bargaining committees of 2002 on their hard work.

We have also had a lot of good settlements in our hospital and our nursing-home sector this year. After two years of wage freezes, these workers are finally seeing increases to wages and benefits and have resisted all concessions.

My sincere congratulations to all of the bargaining committees, but I would like to mention a few of our service reps that actually take care of master bargaining rounds. We have got Robert Buchanan, Kelly-Anne Orr, Bill Gibson and Andy Savella.

And, I want to say that those are really large bargaining committees. They have representatives from every single bargaining unit that is at that table. And, I can tell you sometimes for the reps doing that, it can be a little bit like herding cats. And, they all do a terrific job of making sure everybody stays on track.

And, of course, also credit goes to the hard work of our Health Care Director, Corey Vermey, and assistant to the president, Deb Tveit. And, they do great work in this sector. And, also just while I’m briefly on the topic, our Health Care Council yesterday passed an incredible action plan that I know will be shared with the rest of the delegates in Ontario and Canada as we move along.

We have got some real challenges that stem from negotiating a new national accord, right down to making sure we have minimum standards in our nursing homes. And, I know those are things that they can count on the rest of our union to help them with.

It is impossible to actually talk about every set of bargaining that goes on in our union. We are just too big in Ontario. We have 160,000 members here. But, I do want to direct everybody’s attention to the staff reports. They are on every table. And, if everything goes as planned, there should be a report on every bargaining unit that we service in Ontario. And, you will have the opportunity to raise anything contained in that book or my report later.

We do have a lot of stuff going on in Ontario, some is good, some is bad, and some is a little of both. The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is schedule to start in 2017, first with large employers and then phased in over three years.

Our union supported the ORPP at every opportunity. I know many of you appeared in the hearings and public consultations across the province. We clearly want a universal plan that mirrors the CPP.
Employers wanted exemptions and they got it. In August, Ontario announced exemptions for a comparable pension plan, which would be a defined benefit plan with a minimum of at least .5 percent of earnings, or a defined contribution plan with a minimum contribution of 8 percent, with the employer contributing at least half. That is just not acceptable.

We can also expect that some employers are going to come to the bargaining table looking for offsets when they do have to make those contributions. We are not convinced that the ORPP will actually help the many Ontarians that need it most.

It remains to be seen what the federal Liberals will do with their promise to increase CPP. But, this will be one of our priorities when we lobby at Parliament Hill in February. Jo-Ann Hannah and our entire Pension and Benefits Department has been doing fantastic work, and we have strong evidence to defend the need for better retirement security.

Ontario has given us a rare opportunity to participate in the first Ontario Labour Law and Employment Standards Review in decades. The Changing Workplace Review finished public consultations in September. And, I do want to thank all of you who presented in cities across the province. Your stories were incorporated into the final Unifor written submission, 158 pages and 43 recommendations written by our amazing staff, Jim Stanford, Fred Wilson, Lewis Gottheil and Anthony Dale.

Of course, they had input from so many others. We had a team around this, John Aman, Sarah Blackstock, Lisa Kelly, Bill Murnaghan, Rolly Kiehne, and even some of our articling students put work into this. 158 pages is a lot, but it is actually a real thriller and it is full of brilliant ideas and the evidence to back them up. We are going to hear the details of that submission today that were based on the recommendations that you passed at our last ORC, by Jim Stanford later this afternoon.

Almost 40 of you have volunteered to join our Queen’s Park lobby next week. The MPPs will be receiving a preliminary report in a couple of months and it is critical that they understand our submission and understand our perspective.

We are also asking each of you to reach out to your community contacts to talk about our proposals and whenever possible, ask for endorsements on our submission. This is an occasion that doesn’t come along often. We have the opportunity to effect real change for workers, both those in a union and those outside a union.

At the same time, the province is in the early stages of a Gender Wage Gap Review. The mandate is to develop a strategy for closing the gap and considering if current legislation like the ESA and Human Rights and Pay Equity Acts are able to address that gap.

We know they’re not enough. We know that women participate in all parts of the workforce, but there are still barriers that prevent them from achieving their economic potential. Consultations are underway, and I know that many of you have appeared already or are scheduled to appear soon.

There are five cities left. In December, we still have Peterborough and Sudbury, and in January, London, St. Catharines and Brampton. So, if you are interested in doing a submission, please contact Lisa Kelly. She will definitely hook you up.

Our written submission is due on January 15th of 2016. And, like the Changing Workplace Review, we want to include your voices in that document. We know that for both of these reviews, many of the solutions will be the same and we will make sure that we make the connection. At our last Council, you passed a resolution on pay equity and I want to let you know that we are working on implementation. We have asked our staff to report on the status of pay equity committees, our pay equity plans, in each of their assignments.

And, where there isn’t a plan or the plan is badly outdated, we have asked them to reach to the local unions and advise them of some steps that they can take. We have also offered training for staff and, of course, we have PEL courses for any local unions that want to receive pay equity training.

And, as we do every December, we will recognize the National Day of Action and Remembrance on Violence against Women. Violence against women and girls is a devastating consequence of gender inequality. We know there is a direct link between sexism and violence, and both are unacceptable. So, let’s strengthen our resolve. Let’s recommit by our words and by our actions to eliminate violence against women in all its forms once and for all.
Let me turn to another project in our union. So, raise your hand if you have been to a Local Union Task Force meeting. All right. Probably not quite a fair question, because we have only had eight of our 21 meetings, but I know that many of you will plan to come.

I do have another question. This is direct from one of our research people. Have many of you have filled out the online members’ survey? Okay, a few of you have. How many commit to doing it before the end of the year? There, that’s better. Come on. We need our surveys filled out and we need our members to fill out those online surveys.

I have had the pleasure and the privilege of chairing all of the Ontario meetings on behalf of the National Executive Board. And, joining me, of course, for all of those meetings is our Local Union Task Force advisor, Ken Lewenza. Ken will actually travel to more than 50 cities across English Canada, in Ontario with myself; in Atlantic Canada with Lana Payne; and Western Canada with Joie Warnock.

And, I think at this point in Ken’s life, he is actually spending more time with me and Lana and Joie than he is with his own wife, and we should be getting a thank-you card I’m sure for that very soon. But, it is great to have a road trip with Ken, and I couldn’t ask for anybody that would be a better advisor to this task force and is a better listener.

I know when we first planned these task force meetings at the presidents’ meeting last April, many of us were sceptical. But, after eight meetings, I have to say that I am no longer a sceptic.

We have had local union leadership attend a Unifor event for the very first time. We have introduced local unions who are within walking distance of each other, and we have had activists and members tell us exactly what they need to build stronger local unions and better community connections. Their ideas are creative, practical and even brilliant. And, despite eight repeat meetings, no two meetings have been alike. We have had meetings with a dozen people and we have had meetings with 100 people.

If there is one regret though that we have heard at almost every single meeting, it is that those who are there wish they brought just one more member with them. So, for the members that have these meetings scheduled in your communities, it is so important. Just bring one person with you. I know you will all be there.

Our Research Department attends every meeting and is tasked with developing an extensive report that will go to our convention this summer. But, in the meantime, we will start the work that we can do now, which is opening the lines of communication and creating networks of activists who are ready to do things differently.

I do want to recognize in this task force the staff of our union. They have been instrumental in their outreach and assistance. Sometimes the service representative is the only connection some local unions have to our National Union, and without their encouragement, they wouldn’t be likely to attend.

I also want to talk about organizing. Do you know that in 2015, we have had 22 successful organizing drives in Ontario, with 4,058 new Unifor members? The Casino Rama victory alone brought 1,700 new members to Unifor. 162 members at Accucaps in Strathroy joined our union in October, exactly one year after they lost a vote. So, the moral in organizing is that you didn’t lose a vote; you just didn’t win yet.

Earlier this year, we won an inter-union representation vote at Swissport that increased the bargaining unit, Local 2002, to 850 members. And, there are more organizing drives that were successful. But, I do want to ask everybody who joined our union, who is a new member here, who joined in 2015 to please stand and be recognized. There we go.

I would like to offer my congratulations to John Aman and the entire department. But, of course, John will always tell us that no one individual is responsible for our success. Many people play a role including many of you in this room.

We would also ask the delegates to refer to the Organizing Report in the staff book, because it is so critical that we look at where those active organizing drives are ongoing. Organizing is our collective responsibility and we all want to contribute. And, I couldn’t actually talk about organizing without mentioning Gingrich Woodcraft in Devlin, a small town in Northern Ontario. It is one of those stories that makes me incredibly proud of our union.
On August 17th, five days after a successful representation vote to join Unifor, the employer permanently laid off all 25 employees and shuttered the plant. Despite the fact that this rarely happens, this is probably the greatest fear of anyone who ever signs a union card.

In this case, the employer openly cited faith as their reason for doing so. They further explained that as Christian business owners, their personal beliefs would not allow their conscience the freedom to work with the union. Apparently, their Christian conscience was okay with putting 25 employees out of work.

For decades, the Ontario Labour Relations Act, like similar statutes across Canada, has established the rights of employees to join a union and to do so without fear of retaliation. I don’t think anybody expected retaliation in the name of God. Our union immediately began legal actions against this employer, but we simply didn’t leave this in the hands of the courts.

National service representative, Steve Boon, was, in the words of one of the members, there every step of the way. Unifor stood with these shocked workers and provided them both moral support and financial support. The National Union, the Ontario Regional Council Executive Board and nearby local unions, 324 and 103, made donations to make sure that they had grocery cards to provide to their families during this time.

Throughout this ordeal, the workers were actually never critical of their union. In fact, I received several emails from these members who have thanks Steve as well as John Aman, Farah Baloo, Scott Doherty and our entire union for their help.

On November 9th, 12 weeks after this began, those 25 workers received justice from the courts. In addition to 35 weeks of full pay, the employer was ordered to make the union a condition of the sale of this business. And, any new owner will automatically recognize Unifor as the official bargaining agent and rehire all those employees.

With us today in the room somewhere is Scott Hunt. Where is Scott Hunt? Scott is one of our brothers. Brother, please stand and be recognized by your brothers and sisters in the union. We’ll find him. Back right, okay.

I also want to report that your ORC Board and National Executive Board has reaffirmed their long-standing commitment to the Easter Seals Telethon. We have been active participants in Windsor for several years and we did it for the first time this past year in Toronto.

We had 35 volunteers from 11 different local unions who donated an afternoon to actually answer the phones for the final hour of the telethon. And, as you can see if you saw the photos, we actually had a blast. If you could see Pinball in Scott McIlmoyle’s arms, it was a really great time.

We’ll do it again next April. And, I know that that is good news for everybody that participated, because I think almost everybody has said, “Are we going to do again?” And, they want to come back.

We can do this in other cities as well, if there is an interest. Sault Ste. Marie, Peterborough, Kingston and Sudbury all have local telethons. And, it is an opportunity to build our community profile, to build our relationships with nearby local unions and support an important charity. So, if there are local unions that are interested, please let us know.

Turning to the business of our Council, we will have elections this week in three of our equity caucus committees to replace vacancies in the Aboriginal/Workers of Colour Committee, the Young Workers Committee and the LGBT Committee.

Each of our five equity committees have three elective officers and they are elected from within their respective caucuses. Our Constitution and our bylaws require us always to act with responsibility to achieve equity in our leadership. It is incumbent upon us to make certain we maintain our equity perspective in all our elections.

So, for instance, in the three committees where we are electing someone today or over the weekend, we want to make sure that we have gender balance. We also want to make sure that we have representation from various areas of the province and we want to make sure the Aboriginal/workers of colour are both represented in that elected committee.

And, I know there probably will come a time when we are not going to have to think about it, but we want to make sure that we have balanced representation from both our former unions. Your Executive Board has recommendations for these elections that would ensure this balance and this equity.
For the Young Workers Committee, we’re recommending Carly Sonier. Carly Sonier is an activist and workplace representative at Post Foods in Local 1101 in Niagara Falls. They make Shreddies and Shredded Wheat for anybody who likes to buy union cereal. And, she chairs her local Young Workers Committee and is the vice-president elected to represent young workers on the board of the Canadian Labour Congress.

For the Aboriginal/Workers of Colour Committee, we are recommending Tammy Lafreniere, an Aboriginal woman from Thunder Bay. She is an active member of Local 7-O and is a child welfare worker at Dilico Anishinabek Family Care.

For the LGBT Committee, we are recommending Craig Hallikainen. Craig works at Brink’s and is a member of Local 112 in Toronto. He represents his workplace as a committee member, a bargaining committee member and a Council delegate. He is a discussion leader who brings the equity lens to his classes and he is actively working to raise Unifor’s profile at Pride events.

Again, I want to stress that the final decision will be those who vote in the caucus will make the decision by those of you who have declared to be part of the caucus when you registered. Our recommendations are for the equity balance that we need to achieve.

Okay. So, who was at the Ontario Federation of Labour Convention last week? There were 427 of you, actually. That’s who. It is pretty impressive. I know that probably most of you in the room were all there. Twenty-five percent of the total delegation was Unifor members. And, we do thank you for your commitment. And, we know we ask a lot of you and you do always deliver.

At this time, it was about saving our federation. It was about putting a team in place that could unite and build the labour movement. We elected a great team led by one of our very own, OFL president, Chris Buckley, former president of Local 222 at Oshawa and Chair of the GM Master Bargaining Committee.

As secretary-treasurer, we elected Sister Patty Coates. Patty is a local union president from OSSTF and the president of the Barrie District Labour Council.

As executive vice-president, we elected Ahmad Gaied, a young worker of colour, UFCW, a former retail worker and membership engagement officer from Scarborough.

This was all possible because of your efforts and the efforts of trade unionists across Ontario. And, for those of you that were there, you know we left the convention united.

Former OFL president, Sid Ryan, was among the first to congratulate Chris. Sid has really given his heart and soul to the labour movement and we are all very grateful for his dedication.

In a few minutes, we will hear from the new OFL president, Chris Buckley. He will share the vision of the new leadership team. Besides Chris, we have what we hope you will agree is an interesting line-up of speakers for the next few days.

We have a journalist and member of Local 87-M, Susan Delacourt, who will give us some analysis of the election results and her perspective of what we can expect from the new Prime Minister.

We have Angela Robertson, an incredible social justice activist and champion of women’s rights. And, if you haven’t heard of her before, I am certain you won’t forget her after you hear her tomorrow.

And, we have three politicians: an MP, a provincial cabinet minister and a mayor. Now, it is always, always a risk inviting a politician. There is a good possibility they ticked off one or two of you in the room. I don’t know.

But, I am fairly confident that won’t be the case with our MP, Tracey Ramsey. I am not completely certain about the other two. The fact is, as politicians go, we agree on some things and sometimes we disagree. It is pretty much like family, well, my family anyway, but that is another story.

But, we do have the Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn, here tomorrow who will talk about the labour law reform processes underway in Ontario.

And, we have Mayor Burton from Oakville who will talk about the need for an auto strategy and the risks that the TPP poses to that.
We have gone almost a decade with a federal government that actually wouldn’t talk to our union under almost any circumstances, I guess, with the exception of Senator Hugh Segal, who came here two years ago.

We now have a Prime Minister who has met with the Canadian Labour Congress within his first couple of weeks in office. It is a good sign. I know we will good dialogue here with our invited guests. Maintaining relationships in spite of our differences is always important.

You have my recommendations in front of you. They have been vetted by your elected leadership. I won’t read them until they come up in the agenda, which will be between our speakers and presenters, and hopefully will be in sync with those presentations.

You also have the staff reports. They contain the details of every assignment in our region, plus sector director and department director reports. The staff of our union prepares those reports for every single regional council, and they work incredibly hard servicing our members and supporting our sectors. So, please take a moment to help me recognize the staff of our union and all they do.

You will have the opportunity to speak to any of these reports as well as any comments that I have made today, because this is your ORC. It is our opportunity to listen. So, I encourage everybody to get up to the mics, to tweet, to post social media. This is your union and this is your Council.

I thank you for being here. I thank you for all that you do for your members, your community and your union. Your activism inspires me every single day. Solidarity, sisters and brothers.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. And, again, after of the video this morning and some of the photos that we saw, you can see from Katha’s report how busy we have been and how busy we have become. And, again, I think that that is only going to continue to happen, but that is why we are here and that is why we are taking on the challenge.

So, getting on into the next order of business for the day, I would like to call up Tim McKinnon, a member-at-large for the Ontario Regional Council chair, to recognize our guest speaker.

I apologize. There’s a point at No. 5. I apologize.

CHUCK REDDEN: I assumed that we had the opportunity to speak on the director’s report and I would like to do that, if that’s okay. It’s Chuck Redden, Local 462.

DINO CHIODO: So, if I can, brother, again, if you want to make a point, we’ll take the point. But, with regards to asking questions, we are going to have some time with reference to that later on.

CHUCK REDDEN: Okay.

DINO CHIODO: So, is it a point that you want to make or is it with reference to asking questions?

CHUCK REDDEN: No, it’s a point I want to make on the director’s report with regards to TPP.

DINO CHIODO: Go ahead, brother.

CHUCK REDDEN: Brothers and sisters, looking at the — and, I’m in support of the recommendations of the director. I just wanted to raise a point in regards to the auto policy and the TPP and in particular, point number three of that report, that it goes on to mention not only the impact on the auto sector — and, it does mention the other parts of the Canadian workers and that, that will be impacted.

One part of that is the dairy industry, which a great part of our local represents. I will tell you that the impact on the dairy industry, 117,000 jobs in Canada through production, processing and distribution could be impacted by the TPP in the dairy industry. 25,000 jobs could be affected. I understand they talk about the 20,000 jobs in the auto parts sector. These are full-time jobs that pay somewhere between $25.00 and $35.00 an hour.

Deregulation in Canada not only impacts on the workers in Canada, but on the consumers. And, I don’t think that the government or the Canadian public in general has any idea of the impact it is going to have on them and their families. Deregulation, whether it’s in Australia, New Zealand or Switzerland, has had little impact, if any, other than affecting jobs.
This is close to my heart. I have been in the dairy industry for a lot of years. And, I think we’re not focusing enough on the other parts of the Canadian working class in regards to dairy and poultry and the Canadian farmer. Forty to 50 percent of Canadian farmers ---

**DINO CHIODO:** Brother, we’re going to have an opportunity to debate the actual recommendation, and that will refer to the TPP, I think. And, you will be able to have a point and ask the question and get up and give that information at that time.

**CHUCK REDDEN:** When?

**DINO CHIODO:** Right now, Recommendation No. 3? No, this is with regards to TPP Recommendation No. 5, will happen tomorrow; okay?

**CHUCK REDDEN:** Okay. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you. I mentioned that at the beginning. I’m sorry, you may have missed that. But, again, I just want to make sure that we can get on with the order of the business of the day.

So, in saying that, I think we have one more point, in the back corner.

**POINT OF PRIVILEGE: OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHEER**

**CASANDRA ROBINSON:** Hi. We would like to request respectfully a point of privilege, please.

**DINO CHIODO:** Yes. Please go ahead.

**CASANDRA ROBINSON:** My name is Casandra Robinson and I am with Local 247. And, I organize Operation Christmas Cheer. I would like to take a moment to thank Sister Katha for your very, very kind words. Your voice is loud and strong, and you just spread the cheer like no other. And, without a doubt, letting everybody know, you have just made Christmas a lot brighter.

This Christmas, we have 598 of our brothers and sisters on strike and lockout from Toronto to North Bay to Ottawa. We start delivering the cheer next week. We are back in Toronto supporting the three locals.

Then we are heading up to North Bay, to deliver to 195 of our brothers and sisters. If you’re in the North Bay area, please come out. We will be there on December 16th at 10:00 a.m.

Then, we’re heading back to Ottawa, where we have a semi of food showing up at Unifor’s office on the corner of Hunt Club and Prince of Wales on Friday, the 18th. So, anybody who is available to help unload that would be amazing.

Saturday morning, we are going to be sorting and packing 330 food hampers for Local 4266 as well as 1688. On Monday, the 21st, we are delivering to those 330 families their grocery gift cards, toys for every child, as well as the food hampers. We will have hot lunch. Everybody is encouraged to come out.

If you would like more information about Operation Christmas Cheer, you can go to our website, operationcheer.com. You can follow us on Facebook, which is Facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer. And, one of the best things you could do to spread the cheer this Christmas is to share it with your networks.

And, I want to thank Unifor, because without a doubt Unifor is one of the biggest supports of Operation Christmas Cheer. Many of you have been supporting since Day One, 2004. So, on behalf of the thousands of families you have helped and on behalf of 598 families this Christmas, we thank you and commend you and salute you for your support. Thank you so much.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, sister. And, Casandra, if I can, understanding the great work that you guys provide, supporting almost 600 families this Christmas, we know it takes money to do that. So, from the Ontario Regional Council, we would like to put a motion on the floor to donate $5,000.00 to continue to help Operation Christmas Cheer now and well into the future. Moved and supported. Any discussion?

**PETER KENNEDY:** We’ll match it.

**DINO CHIODO:** Oh, and before we pass that, sorry, the National is going to match that. So, it will be a total donation of $10,000.00. Way to go. Let’s continue spreading that cheer.

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.  
CARRIED

Thank you very much. Now, again, getting back to the order of the day, not seeing anybody at the mics, I will ask Tim McKinnon to come up and introduce our next speaker.

TIM MCKINNON: It is with great pleasure that I get to introduce the next speaker. He has dedicated his entire adult life to improving the lives of hard-working women and men.

As a former president of Local 222 in Oshawa, I had the great pleasure of working with him through four sets of bargaining. He led the Master Bargaining Committee for General Motors or for Unifor fighting General Motors. One of the things he is probably best known for is the fight in Oshawa against the closure of the truck plants where he led a 12-day blockade at GM headquarters in Oshawa.

Chris has always been involved in his community. He was on a campaign cabinet for United Way in Durham region for eight years. He also volunteered with leaders of the YWCA One Man at a Time Campaign, aimed at ending violence against women. I remember when he was an NDP candidate in the federal election of 2011. Something near and dear to my heart, he also organized Our Youth, Our Future. It was a large-scale event for the students in Durham Region and the goal of building hope and optimism for a shared future for our youth.

I could say first-hand that he is committed, hardworking and probably his best feature is he has always been inclusive. It is with great pleasure that I introduce our Ontario Federation of Labour President, Chris Buckley.

ADDRESS: CHRIS BUCKLEY, PRESIDENT, ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

CHRIS BUCKLEY: Well, thank you, Tim and thank you, sisters and brothers. Thank you for allowing me to be here today to take some of your time. I want to thank you not only for the opportunity to be here today, but most importantly, I want to thank Unifor for the support you gave me to become the President of the Ontario Federation of Labour. And, it is truly an honour to be the president of the OFL, but would not have been possible had it not been for your support.

I also want to thank our National President, Jerry Dias and our Secretary-Treasurer, Peter Kennedy. We have all heard the last number of years the state and condition of the OFL. But, Jerry Dias and Peter Kennedy had a vision. They had a vision that would ensure that the federation that existed for 54 years was far too important to let it collapse, far too important on behalf of workers across this province to let a house of labour crumble.

So, I appreciate the support I got from Jerry and Peter. But, most of all, I have to thank them for the confidence they had in me, the confidence they had in Chris Buckley from Unifor to become the President of the OFL, and I will never forget that.

The top leadership of this union made my journey possible over the last three months, made my journey possible in this hotel last week. But, there are also people in this organization that I would like to thank, people that played a crucial role in allowing me to become the President of the OFL, and especially during my campaign, because sisters and brothers, that was a long campaign.

I did my best to travel across this province and touch as many workers as I possibly could, talk to as many affiliates as I possibly could. But, as you can imagine, it’s a pretty big province with a lot of workers. So, I had to rely on some key people, key people out of our organization who made a huge contribution.

First of all, I would to thank your Executive Board of your Ontario Regional Council who gave me their full endorsement. I would like to thank Sister Jenny Ahn, Katha Fortier, Fred Wilson and Shannon Devine who were part of my campaign team.

These were the people that were networking with the other unions across the province. These were the people that were having the conversations about what it would take to move our federation forward. So, those individuals and every one of you delegates that are here today that helped me become your president, thank you very much for the support you have given me.

And, I need to mention one thing before I move on. Shannon Devine was my campaign manager. And, most of you know Shannon. Shannon came into our organization a number of years ago, worked under Buzz Hargrove, worked under Ken Lewenza, worked under Jerry Dias.
And, I’ll tell you, what a remarkable young sister, but what a slave-driver as well. Many times in this hotel and during the convention, I didn’t know if I could keep up to her. There were a few times where I got nervous when we would meet in the morning at 7:00 and she had running shoes on. I was extremely nervous.

And, most of you have probably seen that movie, Ben-Hur, where he is on the back of his chariot and he has got the reins of these two horses. He has got that whip and he is just giving it to them. Sisters and brothers, there’s a carbon copy of Ben-Hur right over there, a carbon copy, because I still have the marks on my back from that campaign and I know they’ll go away sooner or later.

But, all kidding aside, it is such a pleasure to announce what I am about to announce, because not only have I become the President of the OFL, I am also very privileged that I’ll be taking Shannon Devine with me as a transition into the office for a period of six months at this point. And, when things settle down when I’m able, Shannon Devine will be with me full-time at the Ontario Federation of Labour.

Now, that is a huge gain. That is a huge gain for Chris Buckley, without a doubt; a huge loss for this organization, because Shannon played such an important role. But, she has good organization skills, communicating skills. And, she is going to help me put Humpty Dumpty back together again. So, Shannon, I can’t say how happy I am that you are going to be with me as we move the Ontario Federation of Labour forward.

So, the OFL Convention was one of the largest in recent years. And, you have heard Katha touch on it. 1,523 registered delegates attended. 427 delegates were from our union, Unifor. I believe the large turnout demonstrated people understood it was time for a change.

Just over two years ago, we created Unifor. I had the privilege of being on the Proposal Committee as we met as CAW, as we met as CEP, and we formed the greatest union in the country, with a vision to create a larger, more progressive union on behalf of workers across Canada, always striving to be the best we could to improve the lives of workers and their families across this country.

Sisters and brothers, as President of the OFL, I would do my part to ensure those same principles are applied across the province within the Ontario Federation of Labour. My goal is to unite the labour movement across Ontario. And, sisters and brothers, unity will start at the OFL.

I know Patty Coates and Ahmed Gaied feel exactly the same way. I also know there are some big challenges ahead of us. But, I want to assure all of you that I am up to those challenges.

So, where do we go from here? The OFL campaigned around both the workplace review and closing the gender wage gap with some of the most important issues we have seen in a while. We have the opportunity, sisters and brothers, to make serious meaningful changes that will help current and future workers and help turn precarious jobs into more stable ones.

Our intentions as new officers will be to work with our affiliated unions such as Unifor, to build a strong multi-union effort in pushing forward with much-needed labour law reform, like protection for contract workers, making it easier to join a union, first contract arbitration and making employers responsible for those temp agencies.

These changes to our Employment Standards and Labour Relations Acts are long overdue, sisters and brothers. Our Ontario government has also recently made a commitment to closing the gender pay gap and it is about time.

Pay equity legislation was introduced into law in 1987, and since then, we have seen a very slow closing of the gap. The pay gender gap is still at 31.5 percent, and even worse for Aboriginal women, women of colour, women with disabilities.

Sisters and brothers, the time to fix this problem is long, long overdue. These two initiatives are something that can involve our members from the grassroots up. Everyone can play a role in these important changes.

And, we will continue to press for the $15.00 minimum wage, continue to press for affordable child care, and so many other things that will make workers’ lives and their families so much better. We will work to eliminate the red tape that workers face when they’re injured on the job and try to collect WSIB, which was designed to be their safety net.
Sisters and brothers, we do this work with the ultimate goal of greater equality, opportunity and a more just society. And, we understand that we have our work cut out for us. But, sisters and brothers, by having a united labour movement, we will be stronger when we’re together, always pushing to improve the lives of workers and their families. They depend on us and we will be there for them as we move forward, and we will do our best to make this the best Ontario possible.

As we move the Ontario Federation of Labour forward, Labour Councils will play a vital role. Labour Councils will always have the full support of the Ontario Federation of Labour. We will also coordinate stronger support for striking or locked-out workers. When workers have the courage to take on the boss, they will have the full support of the labour movement right across Ontario.

We will be a constant voice in the ears of government and all political parties, always pushing, always pushing for that ultimate goal to make things better for workers and their families across Ontario.

Sisters and brothers, you have lived it, I have lived it and for far too long, there has been this huge cloud of uncertainty over workers’ heads across this province, across this country.

As a united labour movement, when we come together, when we join as one as a labour movement across Ontario, we are going to push that cloud aside and finally let some sunshine in for workers and their families across Ontario.

Sisters and brothers, your OFL will be inclusive and differences will be respected, always advocating for great equality, good jobs and safer workplaces and stronger protection for all workers, whether they belong to a union or not, stronger protection for all workers right across the Province of Ontario. I will be building bridges and building relationships. That is what it is going to take to move this fed forward. And, I commit to that as the president of your OFL.

Now, I understand that not all Unifor local unions are affiliated to the OFL. But, to those local unions that are not currently affiliated to the OFL, I respectfully ask you to affiliate. Join with me and other affiliates across the province as we work our rear ends off on behalf of workers and their families and move this federation forward.

And, I will close off by asking you a question, sisters and brothers, because I know you have a big agenda this weekend. Are you ready to join with me to move the Ontario Federation of Labour forward?

I’m sorry. You know what? I think a few times when Shannon was cracking that whip, she clipped my ears, so I couldn’t really hear you. Are you ready to join with me to move the Ontario Federation of Labour forward? You know what? I knew the answer. I just needed to hear it.

So, let me close by saying once again to my union family, to my sisters and brothers, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for the support you gave me. Thank you for joining with me to make this the best Ontario we can. And, we will do everything we can to truly make a difference. Thank you very much, sisters and brothers, and solidarity to each and every one of you.

**DINO CHIODO:** So, Chris, we are sorry for one thing. We are sorry to hear that Shannon Devine will be leaving Unifor. But, I am sure she will provide you some great support and do a lot of great work for you.

You will have some great challenges leading the Federation of Labour. But, I know under your leadership, under your guidance, I know that we will have a more inclusive house of labour. And, in saying that, I know that “United we stand, divided we fall.”

And, you have heard the membership very clearly. As your Ontario Regional Council Chair, our Executive Board and this Council, we are behind you. So, please reach out when you need us to be there and we will participate. And, thank you for coming here and speaking to the delegation. So, thank you very much.

Okay, brothers and sisters, now getting on to the next component in our agenda. It is with reference to bringing up the Resolutions Committee Report. So, can I have Jim Reid, the Chair of the Resolutions Committee to give his report?

**RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

**JIM REID:** Thanks, Dino. Good morning, brothers and sisters. It is my pleasure to introduce the other members of the Resolutions Committee: Sister Candace Lavalley and Brother Ken Cole. And Sister Lavalley and Brother Cole are going to read the resolutions. I’m just here for window dressing, I guess. Who is first?
KEN COLE: Good morning, sisters and brothers. Resolution No. 1, submitted by Locals 444 and 195.

RESOLUTION NO. 1: RECOVERY DAY

WHEREAS one in five Canadians experience mental health or addiction problems, and many of our members and families suffer from the disease of addiction and its effects; and

WHEREAS there is still stigma associated with addictions, and Unifor categorically rejects the notion that such issues are so-called “Self-Inflicted Injuries”; and

WHEREAS Unifor recognizes that a troubled worker or family member is far more likely to make a recovery and build a new life if help is available from the employer, union and community, and if such help respects the dignity and confidentiality of the individual; and

WHEREAS Recovery Day is an annual event held in September which celebrates the ability of those with drug, alcohol and behavioural addictions to achieve long-term sobriety and productive and healthy lives; and

WHEREAS at the 2015 Unifor EFAP/Addictions conference, the delegates endorsed the annual day of recovery that is celebrated each September as the best way to break the stigmas of addictions and recovery.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Unifor Ontario Regional Council recognize a Recovery Day every September to support these members and their families for the difficulties and challenges that they face, and encourage all Unifor Locals to participate in their respective communities.

The committee recommends concurrence.

DINO CHIODO: So, with the recommendation from the committee, we would like to hear if there is any discussion or debate with reference to the resolution that is in front of us, Resolution No. 1. Do we have any speakers? Going to the right side, middle. I can’t see the number on the mics. What number is that? Mic number 5.

GERRY FARNHAM: Thanks, Dino. Gerry Farnham, president, Local 195. Obviously, I want to thank the committee for going ahead and having concurrence for this resolution. And, as it says, there is one out of every five Canadians that experience either an addiction or a mental health issue throughout all of Canada.

And, there is a stigma that is attached to that. There is a stigma that seems to be no different than any other place when you’re trying to move forward -- I apologize for my voice -- when you try to move forward and take on the fight to change that stigma that this is a self-inflicted injury or a self-inflicted illness that you have the right or you have the power to stop it.

And, I would suggest to the brothers and sisters today in the room that that is not the case. As a matter of fact, in the program of recovery, I do not keep it a secret, but I have been in recovery since 1993. And, I don’t hide that due to the fact that there is an anonymity and there is confidentiality and that’s up to each and every individual.

But, I can tell you this, brothers and sisters, that there isn’t very many local unions in the City of Windsor, if any, or affiliated unions, that a member hasn’t walked through my door and asked for assistance, and if I could help them to get into a facility, a place, or what I did in order to have recovery.

I also want to say that it affects me seriously, due to the fact that I had a wife that was also addicted to this disease of addiction. And, she has been missing now for 14 years and presumed to have been murdered.

My children, I see on a daily basis. My grandchildren, I see on a daily basis. And, if it wasn’t for recovery, I wouldn’t have been able to be a small part of stability to those kids or to my grandchildren.

So, I just want to say to you all that I attended the FEP conference. It was well attended. Mike Byrne and Jeff Ramackers, along with the rest of the committee, passed this -- put this resolution together for a reason, to take away that stigma once and for all.

And, it’s good that we have a day that the people can come out, because most of these people from these different situations with mental health issues or with addictions have low self-esteem. And, with something like this, you have the ability to come forward and educate the members.
GERRY FORNHAM: So, thank you, Dino. I am sorry for taking so much time. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker at mic 6.

MIKE BYRNE: Mike Byrne, staff. And, as proud as I am of that handle, I think it’s only fitting that I announce myself as Mike Byrne, recovering alcoholic; Mike Byrne, recovering drug addict.

And, it’s important to talk about that. And, it’s easy for me, because I have an employer and I don’t have to worry about how I am affected when people know that I am a recovering addict. I am one of the fortunate people that have a job where being a recovering addict created more opportunities to help others and not being used against me.

But, the reality is in our society that there is an impression that people that suffer from addiction are damaged goods, and that is a myth. We do know -- I think everybody here knows that an addiction is considered an illness under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

But, addiction is different from other illnesses in three different ways. One, it is the only illness where the diagnosis from a doctor doesn’t start recovery. It is an illness where the diagnosis has to be a self-diagnosis in order for the recovery to start. It is an illness that the recovery doesn’t come so much from the medical profession, but a true recovery comes from the individual that is seeking the recovery.

And, most importantly, what people don’t know, it is one of the few illnesses when after recovery, those that recover do not only become as good as they were prior to diagnosis, but the recovery goes to 110, 120 percent over the type of lifestyle they lived even prior to diagnosis.

And, what I mean from that is that most injuries, when someone finds out that they’re sick or most illnesses, that is the doctor’s and medical profession’s goal to get them to where they were when they found out.

We have seen in our society that people who recover and have a successful recovery become better neighbours than they were before they were ever diagnosed. They become better parents than they ever were. They become better employees. They become better union reps. And, that is what true recovery is about.

And, where we have been successful in the labour movement is our anonymity programs. And, this isn’t to take away from the work that our substance abuse reps do, and the 12-step programs in our community where anonymity is the foundation, and that is important. That is important, because there is a stigma in our society, so it is important that we protect those people coming in.

But, this resolution is about celebrating those of us that have had a successful recovery, about celebrating that recovery to break those stigmas. I want to quickly thank Local 444 and 195 for putting these resolutions in, and I stand in support of this.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Microphone No. 7.

BRENT McMILLAN: Brent McMillan, Local 38, Sault Ste. Marie, and a new member of the Employee Family Assistance Program Committee. I stand in support of this resolution. Addictions, whether they are gambling, alcohol or drug, know no boundaries. They affect rich or poor, CEOs of companies, union members, union officers, every walk of life. It doesn’t matter what your colour is or who you love. This addiction can affect one and all of us. And, it is a disease that takes everything from you.

As union members, union officers, union stewards, we usually don’t get involved in addictions until a member comes to us mainly because they’re in trouble. Either they have gone to the company and said that they’re having a problem or they are already going down the grievance process and that is when we become involved.

So, we need to have a conversation, not just here in the union but in the community about addiction. I guess the biggest drawback for Alcoholics Anonymous, Gambling Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous is that second word, “anonymous”, where it has been kept quiet.

And, it is good for the people when they first come in, because of the perceived stigma of it, they want to keep their confidentiality. But, we need to have a broader conversation on this and how it affects the people that we work with, the people that we love and the people in the community.
I like to look at the people that are involved in the Pride movement as a role model. Twenty years ago, if you had a loved one that was in a same-sex relationship with somebody, you kept it quiet. You didn’t talk about it.

But, 20 years ago, a few bright people started a movement where they started a conversation about it, started Pride Days in communities, Pride parades and started talking about that. And, that’s where we need to go with this Recovery Day, not only talking about people who are struggling with these issues, but the successes of people that have recovered from alcohol, drugs or gambling addictions, any kind of addiction, and promote that, how much they have changed their lives around. So, I ask that you support this resolution. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Before we continue on, I would just like to recognize for accessibility purposes, if there is anybody in the room that needs an accessible, there is a mic number 3 where individuals could go to, which is more accessible for them and their needs.

Continuing on for Resolution No. 1, we will go to mic number 1.

BROTHER LUC RIVET: Hi, everyone. My name is Luc Rivet and I am a very active member of Local 1359 out of Sault Ste. Marie. I am also a recovering alcoholic and have been for going on 25 years. And, I say that, so that you understand that I am well aware of the stigma that is attached with being an alcoholic and saying so in a room like this. I have no fear of what people think of me, but there was a time I did.

When I first got sober, I tried to keep it secret. I didn’t want anybody to know that I was a recovering alcoholic. And, the easiest way for me to do that was to stay away from functions where there was alcohol, because people didn’t understand.

When I walked into a room, if I said that I did not drink, people would look at me strange and would say, “Well, you can have at least one.” And, if I told them that I couldn’t drink, because I was an alcoholic, then people ignored me, and that is just a sad fact.

In my addiction, I have lost jobs. I have walked away from jobs. I have lost relationships. And, all of that is because of my disease of addiction. And, it is a disease. It is very much a disease. It is not something that I asked to do and it is not something that I felt compelled to do. It is something that somehow I inherited. And, every time I take a drink, I turn into somebody that you won’t like. So, it’s a heck of a lot easier for me not to drink.

As far as being active in my union and my job right now, the only reason I can do those things is because I am in recovery. I am sober. Because when I drank, I was one of these people who took from society, who took from the employer, who took from life anything that I could possibly get my hands on. It took my recovery to turn me into an honest, hardworking person, and to actually start doing something good for society instead of constantly taking from it.

When we talk about recovery, okay -- and I work in the addictions field, so I see this on a daily basis as well. And, this is a gift that I have as well from my recovery is that I work in the addictions field.

When you talk about recovery, people automatically think that it’s about putting the plug in the jug or not taking that toke or not using that pipe or whatever. And, that is part of the recovery process.

But, recovery entails something even deeper than that. It entails learning to live without your substance, without your gambling, without whatever it is that you are addicted to. And, that is a struggle that many of our members face.

I am also a substance abuse rep for our local. And, I have had people come and tell me things similar to this, but ---

DINO CHIODO: You have to wrap it up, brother.

LUC RIVET: Okay, I will, okay. Anyways, the point is that recovery is something to be celebrated. And, I am fully in support of this motion to recognize Recovery Day.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. mic number 2.

BRUCE MALCOLM: My name is Bruce Malcolm. I rise in support of this. I am out of Local 444, Windsor. I helped write this resolution and submitted it.

First off, I would like to say our society unfortunately still looks at addictions as a person being weak or not being able to just say no. It is not that simple for all of us. But, I know our union has always been a leader in this, taking on issues that have been stigmatized.
I mean, we took on the LGBTQ, helped resolve some of those issues. We have also looked at workers of colour, workers with disabilities. We have always been at the forefront of these types of things, and this is just one more task for us to take on.

I know our union, by encouraging and supporting awareness and encouraging awareness, progresses us and helps us to remove some of these stigmas, similar to cancer survivors, and the Relay for Life Recovery Day is a day for celebrating long-term recovery.

I, myself, am a recovering alcoholic of 24 years. Without the encouragement and the support of my own local union in negotiating EFAP programs and programs that assist us that need the help, I would not be standing here. I would not be sober.

I mean, when I was in a treatment program, I was scared. I didn’t know where to turn. I didn’t know what to do. But, you know what is funny is something that got me started in this whole program. I have never talked about it. I have always kept it quiet.

But, a certain individual came and gave me a cheque one day at my recovery home where I was at. His name was Ken Lewenza. He took the time to come in. I’m sorry, I’m getting emotional. He took the time to come and see me at the recovery home, gave me a cheque. Told me that, “Hey, you need anything? Just give me a call. I’ll come and help you out.”

That is what our union is all about, brothers and sisters. There are many people out there that need our help. We know who they are. Many of us have been touched with it within this room. Don’t be afraid to help out and lend a helping hand. We can’t fix them, but we can help them, help them gain that recovery.

And, Recovery Day is just one more aspect to allow us to show what we stand for and what we’re there for, to help, because I know struggling in addiction, having someone support me, knowing that they understood, being able to see what you can achieve in recovery is awesome.

I mean, I look at where I am now from where I was and it is awesome. And, if I can help any individual, just one, I know I have done the right thing. So, please support this and participate in the Recovery Day in your city or town. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Right on. Thank you very much. There is nobody at three. No. 4.

JEFF RAMACKERS: Jeff Ramackers, EFAP, addictions rep, Local 88, Ingersoll and chairperson of the EFAP Addictions Committee with this Council.

I rise in support of this very important resolution, brothers and sisters. Public perception that addiction is a choice is something that needs to be changed and we do that by educating. Our union is phenomenal at educating our members and the public.

I assure you that nobody wakes up and says, “I’m going to become an alcoholic today or an addict.” The Human Rights Commission recognizes the disease of addiction as a disability, because it causes people to make poor choices, in spite of knowing the negative consequences.

Nobody chooses this disease any more than they would choose cancer, heart disease or MS, just for examples. Imagine shaming anyone afflicted with those diseases into hiding. Fortunately, we don’t.

It is time for our great union to break the stigma that society attaches to this destructive disease, the structure of lives and families, by utilizing Recovery Day in our workplaces and communities to educate society on the need to accept those afflicted with this addiction, to allow them to reach out for help without fear of being judged or shunned.

Then, we will make a better, more inclusive society to foster healing and acceptance. Please support this important resolution and make it happen in your workplaces and communities. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Well said. Speaker at mic number 5.

KEN LEWENZA, SR.: Ken Lewenza, Local 444. Let me congratulate the delegates to our Substance Abuse Conference that put this resolution together for the sole purpose of educating Canadians, for reaching out to Canadians, to tell Canadians one in five Canadians suffer from mental disabilities and addictions.

But, you know, in this room, those of us that have had the privilege of representing our membership, representing our community, representing our country and the compassion that Unifor has historically shown Canadians understand this problem.
We bargain representatives that represent those that require the services around substance abuse and mental illness. We also bargain programs to ensure that people when they go off on disability are provided some income where we have the power to do so. We bargain representatives on a regular basis to be called.

But, as part of this day of recognition, we must also fight for a political agenda that provides the services that are required for those that suffer from mental illness and disabilities.

Brother and sisters, Canada has been talking about the shortfall in this particular disability for as long as I can remember, commission after commission after commission. Yet, today, in some communities in our country, when people are suffering from addictions, suffering from mental illness, they get absolutely no support, because there is nothing there. There’s no Brentwood Homes in most communities. Most places, there’s no place to go. There’s a sense of isolation. And, again, government has a role to play.

So, on this day of recognition, we also have to challenge our health-care system. We have to challenge our education system. And, we’ve got to challenge our employers, because I know every representative in this room has an appeal on your desk on a denial of a benefit of some type as a result of these types of disabilities. We have got to make the employers understand the same way that we understand.

The five or six people that spoke before me raised the fact that they were in sobriety, raised the fact that they were alcoholics. Do you know what they are to me? Damn good trades unionists, damn good human beings, damn good people that have helped build our union and build the society, quite frankly, that is compassionate for one another, a place to go when people require our services.

That is what Unifor is all about. So, the day of recognition is important. It is another day of education. But, brothers and sisters, let’s go to the bargaining table and make the employers accountable that they recognize mental illness, that they recognize addictions, and they step forward instead of rejecting claims, find support and make sure that their employees, the same as our members, are treated with the respect they deserve.

And, I congratulate all the substance abuse representatives, the advocates, those that take their time to build confidence and folks that are torn down. And, at the end of the day, our collective responsibility is to pick each other up when we’re down. And, we will continue to pick each other up when we’re down. Thank you, brothers and sisters.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Can I go to mic number 1, please?

AMY RUBINO-START: Hi, there. My name is Amy Rubino-Start and I am from Local 229 in Thunder Bay. And, actually, I work in the field of addiction and mental health. I am a social worker who works with primarily women who are really struggling with this debilitating illness and as well as I have worked with youth for a number of years.

And, I can tell you, those folks that I work with never woke up one day and said, “Gees, I wish I had this illness. I wish I would lose my children. I wish I could lose my job and my financial independence.” So, I really stand in support of this resolution.

And, in fact, in Thunder Bay for the last two years, we have had a Recovery Day. We have had an opportunity that was community-driven to really support and challenge the stigma that is attached with this terrible illness, and to really celebrate those folks that have been able to receive the help that they needed, to make the difference in their lives.

And, it also raises the opportunity in our community to have a conversation about the fact that our mental-health doors are closed to people. You are looking at wait lists of one to two years and that is a shame. That is a shame for those folks that are trying to reach out, that are trying to say, “I need some help.”

And so, I agree with Brother Lewenza. This is a wonderful first step. But, we need to lobby our politicians. We need to get those envelopes of money open again for those folks that need it. We are dealing with the most vulnerable people in our communities, and the services certainly aren’t there for them.
There is a real lack of psychiatrists in our community. These folks make way more money than we could ever make in our lifetime, and yet they don’t want to come and open their doors to help the people in our community. And, that to me is a real shame, because we need them as part of the process to help these folks make differences in their lives.

This stigma is prevalent in our workplaces. It is prevalent with our friends, our neighbours, our family members and with our members. We hear the conversations. We hear the jokes.

We hear people making comments like, “Oh, I just want to go have a joint,” when you don’t know the person beside you could be that person that is really struggling with that disability or that illness.

So, we need to be careful of the language and the jokes that we make with each other as members. And, we need to be aware that even though years ago, it wasn’t okay to say, “Oh, you’re so gay,” it’s not okay to say some of the things that people say now when it’s around addiction and mental health. So, I really hope that we will continue to support our members by having this wonderful day attached to our union or communities, or however it is going to roll out. And, I hope that we will continue to make sure that our voices are heard at the higher level, so that people can have access to services for everyone. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, sister. I’ll take the last speaker at mic number 4.

SHERETA BOWERS: Shereta Bowers, Local 1106. When we talk about mental illness in our community, in the black community, there aren’t many of us that are willing to talk about it. It is such a shameful disease for us that we refuse to talk about it. I stand in support of this recommendation, a day of recovery, to open up a forum for our members and our community to talk about it.

I am from the health-care field. And, in our field, there are so many people that are suffering from mental illness, but they refuse to talk about it, because of the stigma that is attached to it. And, I am going to thank you for bringing this day of recovery to the floor, so that we can open up that door for that conversation. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, sister. It doesn’t look like there are any more speakers. So, what we will do is we will have a vote on the resolution in front of us, with regards to recognizing Recovery Day every September to support our members and their families.

All those in favour? (favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any? (opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried. CARRIED
Thank you very much for a great discussion, brothers and sisters.
I’ll have Jim Reid now come up. And, we do have an emergency resolution. But, what we are going to do is we will read the resolution out today. We are going to make copies. We will make sure that those copies will be on everybody’s desk in the afternoon.
And, once we have an opportunity to get to it, we will get to it at that point. And then we will bring up the rest of the Resolutions Committee to go through the next set of resolutions after that.

JIM REID: Emergency Resolution.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION: UNIFOR AND THE OLF TO ADVOCATE FOR THE RESTORATION OF UNION MEMBERS’ ACCESS TO THE OFFICE OF THE WORKER ADVISOR

WHEREAS more than 40,000 Ontario workers filed lost time claims last year to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board; and
WHEREAS almost two decades ago the Conservative government of Mike Harris amended the Ontario Workers Compensation Act to exclude members of a trade union and their survivors from the services of the Office of the Worker Adviser (OWA); and
WHEREAS Ontario is the only province in Canada that excludes union members from access to public worker advisor service like the OWA; and
WHEREAS our union compensation representatives strive to provide conclusive, expert service to our membership but, from time-to-time, those representatives may change or leave office as a result of retirement, promotion or illness; and
WHEREAS these representative changes may leave new representatives with little training or experience; and
WHEREAS other already overworked union compensation representatives frequently offer representation to injured members of other local unions out of a sense of duty.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Unifor Ontario Regional Council work with the new executive of the Ontario Federation of Labour to demand the Ontario government deem the OWA an essential service for maintaining a functioning representation system for injured workers in Ontario, including members of a trade union and their survivors.

Committee recommends concurrence.

DINO CHIODO: And, saying that again, we just wanted that resolution. It’s an emergency resolution that came to us just earlier. We wanted to make sure it was read into the minutes.

We will have copies of that resolution. They will be put on the tables this afternoon, so we will get to it as soon as we can, as soon as everybody has a copy and has an opportunity to read it for themselves. So, in saying that, we’ll just put it on hold.

Right now, I would like to call up Candace Lavallet to go over Resolution No. 5, supporting migrant workers’ right.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Resolution No. 5.

RESOLUTION NO. 5: SUPPORT MIGRANT WORKERS’ RIGHTS

WHEREAS the use of temporary foreign workers is a deliberate attempt of the Canadian and Ontario governments and Canadian employers to exploit the most vulnerable people in the global economy; and
WHEREAS all workers deserve full labour and human rights.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That Unifor will call on the Ontario Federation of Labour to work with all its affiliated to implement a plan of action to:
1. Have the Ontario legislature pass the OFL Migrant Workers’ Bill of Rights;
2. Have the Ontario legislature allow migrant agricultural workers to unionize;
3. Develop an organizing plan to defend the civil and labour rights of temporary foreign workers;
4. Press the Canadian government to ratify the International Covenant on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers, and the International Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers

The Committee recommends non-concurrence.

DINO CHIODO: Anybody at the mics? Seeing nobody at the mics, all those in favour with the recommendation from the Resolutions Committee -- oh, I’m sorry. We have a speaker on mic number 5.

HAMISH GREENLAND: Hamish Greenland, Local 72-M, TVO. I am just curious. Can somebody speak to why a recommendation of non-concurrence has been suggested, proposed?

JIM REID: Yes, the Committee had some lengthy discussion on this resolution, and we felt that Unifor has already taken the position, it is our position, to support migrant workers. We have supported that at various councils and it is a position of our union.

And, we also felt it was a bit redundant in that the OFL is already committed to working with affiliates and also has adopted a migrant worker’s Bill of Rights. And so, we felt that while there is some merit to the resolution, there are parts of it that were redundant. And, also it is the position already of our National Union.

DINO CHIODO: Speaker on mic number 4.

RAWL FINGAL: Thank you, sir. My name is Rawl Fingal. I am from 1090 in Ajax. I work for Maple Leaf Foods. I have been talking about this with CAW for a number of years, Port Elgin, et cetera, et cetera, and other committees that I have attended concerning migrant workers.

I have spent a number of years in Trenton, Ontario, because of my family history of military background. I will be speaking to that a little later.
I have noticed when the migrant workers are here, the way they are being treated are worse than dogs. If you or us treat our dogs the way these migrant workers are treated, quote “Most of them are blacks,” we would be charged for animal abuse. But, their employers are never charged for human rights abuse.

Just recently in Courtice, Ontario, I will not mention the name of the farm, but we have a number of Dominicans from Roseau, Dominica. There are two Dominicas, by the way. A lot of people don’t know that, that there is the Dominica that we like to go and share our money with, and there is the Dominica where these young men are coming from to work. They are very humble people.

And, recently, I go there, pick them up with my van, take them to Shoppers, pick up whatever they need, because the geographical area that they’re in, they really don’t have any transportation to come out, unless people like myself show up there and volunteer my time.

And, if you think that these guys are here just to take your jobs, no. One migrant worker would spend in Canada and put back into the economy of Ontario and in the Oshawa area, over $15,000.00 for his stay of nine months in Ontario while he is working. So, don’t think that they’re here to take your jobs, because they do put back into the economy and they should be recognized for that.

I stand in support of this resolution. And, I do strongly recommend that we find a way that we have these migrant workers unionized. Thank you for listening.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Seeing no other speakers at the mic -- sorry, mic number 4.

LEANNE PARRISH: Thank you. The migrant workers in Ontario are legislated under a whole different Labour Relations Act. I don’t know how many of you know this.

DINO CHIODO: Can you please put your name up, sister, first?

LEANNE PARRISH: Sorry. Leanne Parrish, Local 567.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you.

LEANNE PARRISH: They don’t have the right to unionize in Ontario. And, this was recently decided by the Supreme Court ruling in Fraser v. Canada. Migrant workers are precarious classes of workers in Ontario, and I am listening to how we are here for all workers, and this is one group that really needs us to be there for them. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker, mic 4.

VINAY SHARMA: Hi. Vinay Sharma, staff Unifor. I am just surprised at the committee. I mean, as a union have done a lot, I agree. But, what is stopping us from making the OFL more accountable and make them do some of the work that we can only do in our union that a lot of the other communities in Ontario can’t do or are not able to do for various reasons?

So, we should not be saying non-concurrence to this. We should be sending this to the OFL, and make them do their job and make them work together as we keep talking about. So, I would say vote no to this recommendation of the committee. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Any other speakers? Seeing no other speakers, the recommendation from the Resolution Committee is one of non-concurrence.

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Defeated. DEFEATED
It is defeated. Thank you very much, brothers and sisters.
So, in essence, understanding that we just voted the non-concurrence down, there is some question whether we now put the motion on the floor to accept the resolution that has been passed. I thought that it would just automatically be passed, in essence, that we would do what the resolution stipulated.

But, I think it is in order for us through that resolution to accept the resolution in its entirety. I’ll open up for discussion with reference to that. Speaker at mic number 4.

RAY MORTIMER: Ray Mortimer, Local 26. I move adoption of Resolution No. 5.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, brother. Any speakers?
All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.  
CARRIED
Thank you very much, brothers and sisters.
Going on to Resolution No. 2, Mobilizing to Keep Hydro Public. I will ask Ken Cole to come up and read that resolution.
KEN COLE: Resolution No. 2, Local 567.

RESOLUTION NO. 2: MOBILIZE TO KEEP HYDRO PUBLIC

WHEREAS Hydro One is a valuable public asset generating $2 billion annually for the public Treasury, funding health, education and public services; and
WHEREAS Kathleen Wynne ignored the advice of Finance Accountability Officer, Stephen LeClair, that the sale would actually increase the government debt and increase the cost to ratepayers; and
WHEREAS province-wide independent political action by labour and its allies is the most effective way to force the Wynne government to retreat; and
WHEREAS publicly-owned power is essential to sovereignty and economic development that's in the public interest, including job creation in value-added manufacturing and secondary industry.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Unifor will work with the OFL to organize province-wide demonstrations against the sale of Hydro One, working with labour councils, affiliates, the Ontario Common Front and other allies in the fight to keep Hydro One public, keep rates affordable, and stop privatization of valuable public assets and services.

The Committee recommends concurrence.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, Ken. And, it has just been brought to my attention again. We do have a guest speaker that will be coming this afternoon. It was in the recommendations that were read.

So, what we would like to do is defer this resolution to this afternoon. So, I apologize for that. But, with your indulgence, I would like to defer this to this afternoon, so we can hear the speaker, and we can basically pass this resolution and look at the recommendation as well, pretty much at the same time.

So, I would like to also call up again on Ken, with reference to Resolution No. 3, Unifor to work with the OFL.
KEN COLE: Resolution No. 3, submitted by Local 567.

RESOLUTION NO. 3: UNIFOR WILL WORK WITH THE OFL TO

WHEREAS fighting austerity and the rise of right-wing values requires a united mobilization of Ontario’s labour, social justice and equity-seeking movements; and
WHEREAS Unifor and the OFL must remain on the offensive if we are to continue advancing a vision in the interests of working-class Ontarians and effectively capturing the public imagination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT;

1. Expand support for labour community coalitions which build and mobilize working-class resistance to the austerity agenda by providing dedicated resources to the Ontario Common Front.
2. Strengthen links between equity-seeking communities and workplace struggles.
3. Vigorously enlarge the alliance between community organizations, mass popular movements and labour.

The Committee recommends non-concurrence.

JIM REID: Just before anybody gets to the mic, I'll give the reasons for non-concurrence. And, the motion in itself, we are in support of by and large the entire motion, except for the one part that the Committee felt that we couldn't pass, because part of the resolution couldn't stand on its own merits.
And, that is the part where it provides in point 1, “providing dedicated resources to the Ontario Common Front.” The committee was unclear as far as what that involved, and we were not comfortable with being given a mandate to give that blanket statement without any real parameters of what those resources would involve. So, that was the reason why we had moved non-concurrence on the motion.

DINO CHIODO: Any discussion? Mic number 1.

KEN LEWENZA, JR.: Ken Lewenza, Jr., Local 444, Unifor coordinator. I’m not sure about if we can just take out that particular part as it relates to the Ontario Common Front, because I myself, too, who has participated in the OFL last week, am a little bit concerned, because I know, for example, in Oshawa, they have a group called “We Are Oshawa”.

In other jurisdictions, people are organizing. In Windsor-Essex we have Making Waves Windsor-Essex. And, there is actually a pretty good relationship between all the different groups.

And, I know Chris has echoed very clearly about support for labour councils, about how we can do creative types of organizing and how we can mobilize on the ground. But, when you look at austerity -- I mean, this is really worth thinking about. I think Natalie Mehra produced a great report called the Back Slide, how public services’ jobs are falling apart.

I know in Windsor-Essex, we have done an assessment and I don’t think it is any different than any other jurisdictions. If you look at the long-term trends, good jobs are going backwards. Everyone knows that. The environment is in bad shape. Everyone knows that.

The TPP agreements, these trade agreements, are completely undermining democracy. Things are going backwards there. Public services are going backwards. So, we really need to start thinking about how it is that we can work together and how it is that we can start to coordinate.

And, one thing the labour movement teaches us when you look at the history is that there was times when there was divisions between skilled trades and production workers. There was times when there were divisions between men and women, between blacks and whites, between straights and the LGBT community.

We have had to create new structures and we have had to create new spaces, so that we can adequately respond to the challenges to be able to make progress. So, I can’t emphasize enough. The only way that we can actually start to fight this fight in a real serious way is to actually create mechanisms in communities that have the ability to organize, build the relationship so that people can stand arm in arm together around a common agenda.

One thing we know very clearly. If we don’t find a way to advance some type of form of systematic and structural change that represents the needs of people before the needs of corporations, that things are just going to continue to get worse.

And, the reality is that any type of organized response is going to require the support of 70 percent of people that are outside of the labour community. So, even outside of having a political party, we do need spaces on the ground where we can do this type of organizing and mobilizing.

And, I just want to share a quick strategy or stories about what we were doing in Windsor-Essex even during the election. We said we were going to organize around issues. We went into neighbourhoods and we talked to people about particular issues.

For example, we brought David Suzuki on a street. And, we said, “You know what? We’re not bringing in activists, but we just want to create authentic conversations.”

DINO CHIODO: Can you wrap your point, brother?

KEN LEWENZA, JR.: I’ll make these comments again later, but definitely I’m going to emphasize this point all throughout the weekend about what we need to do. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. So, understanding Ken Jr.’s point with reference to amending point number one, and with the indulgence of Local 567, the submitting local, the Resolutions Committee had a short conversation. They would be willing to remove “by providing dedicated resources to the Ontario Common Front.”

Is there anyone from Local 567 to accept that friendly amendment? Mic number 4.

LEANNE PARRISH: Yes, I accept it. Thank you.
DINO CHIODO: No, thank you very much, sister. So, in saying that, the Resolutions Committee will recommend concurrence with the amended change again in point number one. What will be stricken out is close to the end of the sentence, “by providing dedicated resources to the Ontario Common Front.” Everything stays exactly the same. Speaker on mic number 2.

KARI JEFFORD: Hi, Dino. My name is Kari Jefford. I sit on the ORC with you. Unifor Local 229. I rise in full support of the new Resolutions Committee’s recommendation of concurrence. But, just to clear everything up, I think there is an easy way for Unifor to support the OFL and all of the work that the OFL is doing under a brand-new leadership, I might add, which I think will be fantastic in the years to come.

We can all just maybe affiliate to the OFL. I know there are a lot of folks in this room who aren’t affiliated, a lot of locals who are not affiliated to the OFL. It is really important that we do that. It is the best kind of support that we as Unifor could give to build the movement in the OFL and the Common Front and all of that great work that they do. It is just put in your per capitas and re-affiliate to the OFL. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Seeing no other speakers at the mics, all those in favour of the recommendation in concurrence of Resolution No. 3,

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.  

Thank you very much. Moving on to Resolution No. 4, and just so everybody is on the same page, Resolution No. 4 was removed and withdrawn from Local 567, from what I understand, from the Resolutions Committee. So, we won’t need to have any discussion or debate with regards to the resolution as presented.

And, we will move on to Resolution No. 6 from Local 229 on Violence in the Workplace. Candace Lavalley.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Resolution No. 6, Local 229.

RESOLUTION NO. 6: VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE REGARDING SERVICE INDUSTRIES WHERE MEMBERS ENGAGE DIRECTLY WITH THE PUBLIC

WHEREAS almost one out of five incidents of violent victimization in Canada occurs in the workplace (Criminal Victimization in the Workplace, Stats Canada 2007); and
WHEREAS four out of five Canadians who said they had unwanted experiences did not report this behaviour to their employers (“It’s Never OK” Government of Ontario, 2015); and
WHEREAS as many as 72 percent of nurses do not feel safe from assault at work (International Council of Nurses, 2004) and Personal Support Workers are at the highest risk of being attacked at work (Kingma, 2001); and
WHEREAS workplace violence reports of lost time injuries in 2013 were Healthcare/service industry 639, manufacturing 77, construction 10 and mining 1; and
WHEREAS certain occupational groups tend to be more at risk from workplace violence. These occupations include: health care employees, correctional officers, social services employees, teachers, municipal housing inspectors, public works employees, retail employees, hospitality and gaming employees (CCOHS); and
WHEREAS OLRB, Bill 168 OHSA, WSIB and Provincial Offences Act legislation do not support most employee reported claims of violence in the workplace; and
WHEREAS 2,000 bus driver assaults are reported each year in Canada. In the B.C. Lower Mainland alone, there were 251 reported incidents of driver abuse between 2012 and 2013, more than half of which involved a weapon. Canadian taxi drivers had the highest rate of occupational-related homicide in the country in 2011, higher than police officers. (Unifor.org)
THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Unifor National Education and Health, Safety and Environment Departments update materials to reflect the information and prevalence on violence in the workplace; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an education and awareness campaign be developed and shared with Ontario Unifor members on violence in the workplace with a focus on prevention and the steps to follow if you have been injured or witnessed an event; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that Unifor create a campaign to force employers to meet their legal obligations to provide workers a physically and psychologically healthy and safe workplace and encourage Ontario local unions to lobby their MPPs with these tools.

The Committee recommends concurrence.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Candace. Any speakers at the mic? Speaker on mic number 1.

SUZANNE PULICE: Hi, my name is Suzanne Pulice with Local 229 in Thunder Bay. I rise in support of this resolution. I just want to share a story in regards to one of my members. This happened in the summertime. She is a young worker. She is a PSW. She worked in a long-term care facility on the Alzheimer’s unit. She was choked one evening by one of her residents.

Luckily, there was another co-worker there that was able to take his hands away from her neck. When they went to report it to the RN, unfortunately, she felt that supper was more important to her than coming back to the floor and supporting that young member that was choked.

She ended up going back to work the next day. She did end up filing a report, went back to work the next day, and this resident ended up actually stalking her on the floor for whatever reason, whoever he thought she was, because he has Alzheimer’s. Nobody could understand why he was doing that. He was seeking her out and trying to cause her harm again.

She ended up going off work after that. Once we found out what happened and they reported it to us, we were able to contact HR and get her the help she needed. We were able to fast-track her to a physician who actually deals with post-traumatic stress disorder, because that is what she ended up having.

She was off work. She is still off work. She is going back this week. We were able to get her back to work. But, through the whole process, we made sure we filed a report to the Health and Safety Committee with the city in regards to her not getting the support that she needed when this initial incident occurred, because maybe she wouldn’t have been off as long as she is now.

And, this is just one of the occurrences that happen. We are predominantly a health care local. We see, unfortunately, a lot of violence happening in the workplace, whether it’s resident on staff, staff on staff, and even employer on staff, and it is just happening far too much. So, I am glad to see that we are going to be doing something about it, and thank you for that.

DINO CHIODO: No, thank you, sister. Speaker on mic number 2.

ROB MOQUIN: Rob Moquin, Local 229. I am a first responder in Thunder Bay. I am a paramedic. There are some stats out there that two-thirds of paramedics in Ontario have been known to lately report being assaulted verbally or physically while on the job. It’s a new stat. Recently, there were some studies put out, because there was a large increase in violence for first responders on the job.

Previous to this though, first responders simply were assaulted, whether it be physical or verbal, and just simply trudged along humbly. It was just part of the job. And, this is no longer acceptable in the workplace, regardless of the workplace.

We have some socio-economic issues. There is often alcohol and drug-fuelled rages that we are having to deal with as far as people that are looking for fixes or often looking for just trouble as simple as that. We do carry narcotics on us. And, there are people that are seeking narcotics and they do come after paramedics, looking for these narcotics, which also makes our job a little more dangerous.

Edged weapons right now seem to be the theme, especially at home. I myself actually have been involved in several calls where edged weapons were the weapon in choice used in homicides. I also, once on the job, have had a gun pointed at me as a result of responding to a call.
We all here as brothers and sisters are true heroes to our families, our children, our spouses. And, it’s important that at the end of the day, we go home to those families, we go home to our children, we go home to our spouses.

It is important to know that as much as we are seen as leaders and heroes in our community, our homes, our jobs, we are vulnerable. And, this kind of stuff needs to stop. The violence is no longer accepted regardless of the workplace. I speak passionately about the first responders, of course. And, I do, of course, fully accept and promote this. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Speaker at mic number 5.

BILL GIBSON: Thanks, Dino. Bill Gibson, staff, Kitchener. I rise in total support of this resolution, and let me just make sure we are perfectly clear here. Nobody would walk into a construction site without a proper hard hat, without proper foot protection. No one would walk into a foundry without proper protective equipment to protect them from the heat there.

So, why does a health care worker take on some programs like specialized mental health with barely an in-service on how to handle a violent patient or violent family members, which we are seeing all too often now? Why is it they’re given little or no training and no support from the employer with respect to how to protect these workers?

Healthcare workers are taught at an early age that the best thing they could do is learn how to duck. Well, that is totally unacceptable right now. We are daily dealing with assault situations in hospitals, long-term care retirement homes.

We are dealing with aggressive family members that are upset, because their loved ones aren’t receiving the type of care they believe they could, simply because we are reduced in staff levels.

So, all of these type of things add up to a perfect storm. And, unfortunately, this perfect storm one day will result in the death of a health care worker. It is coming. We are totally on top of these employers right now to try and move this needle.

At a major hospital I deal with right now, there is a document called a Transfer of Information. This document is given to each worker that comes into a new nursing situation, to give them information about the client.

But, it is all based on client acuity. It is based on medical diagnosis. There is nothing in this form that deals with the possibility of violence in the workplace. And, that type of thing has got to stop. That type of thinking has to be brought forward by our members, to ensure that this type of stuff does not happen anymore.

DINO CHIODO: Right on. Speaker at mic 1.

GEORGE SAARINEN: Good morning. My name is George Saarinen. I am a member of Local 229 in Thunder Bay, and I am totally in support of this resolution.

My background is I am a developmental service worker and I work in a group home for the developmentally disabled. I have been physically attacked, assaulted, choked, bitten, head-butted, kicked, spit on, scratched. It is hard to go back to work after something like this.

Often, our clients have a dual diagnosis. Along with being developmentally disabled, there are a lot of mental health issues. I ask the support of the Ontario Council to pass this important resolution.

Our residents are aging. They are being placed in nursing homes, homes for the aged, often with Alzheimer’s and a developmental disability. This leads to physical attacks due to confusion and a change of routine for our residents.

I am also a public school board trustee. And, as that, I see the special education supports, the EAs and the early childhood educators in our public school system are faced daily with the chance of being attacked with violent situations.

So, again, I would concur. I would strongly support this resolution and I wish the Council would as well. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker at mic 2.

SHARON HARRIETHA: Good morning. My name is Sharon Harrietha. I am from Unifor Local 229. I, too rise in support of this resolution.

Coming out of the health care sector after 35 years of working there, it is easy for us to see that working in long-term care has changed so much over the years. Nowadays, when people come into the homes, they come in there, like George said, with multiple diagnoses.
There was a day that you put an elderly person in a long-term care facility to be cared for and that time has passed. Now, our jobs as PSWs and RPNs are to protect those people from the violence that occurs around them.

I’m also in support because of the workers that work in there. The very first thing that happens, a worker is involved in a situation of violence and immediately they start receiving flack from the employer, the old “If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen,” attitude. Right away then, the accusations turn to the worker, “What have you done to provoke this resident into becoming aggressive as they have?”

And then it carries on. And then it goes to WSIB, where of course you get a denial from WSIB, because they have the ability to determine whether it was an act of violence or not. So, then, you have the injured worker in a position where they have no income. Everything, their whole life is in turmoil, and there is absolutely little that we can do.

Also, there is never any counselling available to these workers that are injured or near misses in these facilities. That is never offered to anyone. So, then you have people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, which also is denied by WSIB.

I really believe that this resolution needs to be supported by everyone here.

Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker at mic number 1.

SHANE THORNE: My name is Shane Thorne, Local 229 out of Thunder Bay. A little history, I’m an RPN in a long-term care home, and workplace violence is a big thing in that issue. I just want to say that I do stand in support of this resolution as well. Myself, personally, I have been a part of workplace violence. I have been kicked on, punched, slapped, spit on. I have had a resident try to stab me with a fork, just because I asked how she was doing.

So, I would like to see this. It has been something we have been fighting for, for a long time in our home. And, I want to thank you guys for putting it all together and I stand in support of it. And, I want the rest of the union members to vote for it. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Candace on mic number 2.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Candace Lavalley, Local 7-O, in Thunder Bay. My workplace is made up of child welfare workers, health care workers and mental health workers. Our child welfare workers are going into very dangerous homes. They are threatened with guns, with knives, have dirty diapers thrown at them, death threats where we have to hide them, because the person who gave them the threat may be on the loose and the police are looking for them.

So, I fully support this resolution. Our workers face danger on a daily basis. Whenever you are working with the public and you don’t know what you are walking into or what the situation is, you are taking your life in hand. So, I stand in full support of this resolution.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. I will take the last speaker on mic number 2.

JODY POWERS: Jody Powers, Local 229, Thunder Bay. As a 30-year RPN, I too can attest to all the violence that through the last 10 years, maybe 15 years, has escalated to uncontrollable and unbelievable numbers.

I know I started in 1986 and I worked my first shift with one of our retirees, Marg Arnone here. And, at that time, our ratio was 5 to 1. That is the resident workload that we had. Today, in our long-term care homes, we see ratios of 14 to 1. That is absolutely ridiculous and totally wrong and almost criminal.

If you break down somebody’s shift to a 7.5 hour shift, you subtract the time for lunch and coffee breaks, subtract the time for mandated nourishment as per the ministry standards, subtract the time that you need to spend with residents to assist with feeding for both breakfast and lunch, as well as the time it takes for charting, making beds for your 14 residents, toileting your 14 residents, so on and so forth. And then usually, you will have two whirlpools at the same time.

Once you subtract all that, you are left with a paltry 8 minutes and 30 seconds for your remaining 12 residents. And, these residents are often incapacitated. They may have mental illness as well as many physical ailments, which makes them very difficult to move in a fast pace.

Eight minutes and 30 seconds. Think about that. Tomorrow morning, when you get up and have your shower, time it. And, you’re healthy. Thank you.
DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. I stand corrected. We’ll have one more speaker and then we’ll test the house. Mic number 1.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: And, I will be very brief, Dino, because I am never comfortable doing this. Oh, Debbie Montgomery from Unifor Local 4268.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: I always forget that. I want to indicate our support of this resolution, and specifically for everybody who deals with this, but it is also a great problem in transportation as well.

We have our transit drivers assaulted fairly regularly. We also have with our trucking industry, guys being hijacked and abused, even by customers. And, who would think in a school bus this would be a problem? But, we have dealt with it, and we have been bitten, slapped, scratched, attacked, not just by our little passengers, sometimes their parents, too.

So, I am really happy to see that, in this resolution, our union is looking to support and provide education. And, this is a big problem, because people are reluctant to come forward in a lot of these industries. It is brushed under the rug by the employer. They don’t want to deal with it. So, educate our members and make employers responsible for the people who work for them.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. So, looking at Resolution No. 6, with Violence in the Workplace. The recommendation is concurrence from the Resolutions Committee.

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.

Thank you very much. So, the last resolution we would like to at least get started and get it read out, and if we have some speakers, we would try and recognize a few speakers before we break for lunch. I’ll make a few announcements at that point. But, I would like to call Candace up for Resolution No. 7, Promoting Licensed Taxi Services in Ontario.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Resolution No. 7, Local 1688.

RESOLUTION NO. 7: PROMOTING LICENSED TAXI SERVICES IN ONTARIO

WHEREAS new online “ride-sharing” technologies are revolutionizing an age-old problem in the taxi industry - namely, that unlicensed (or ‘bandit’) cabs will illegally provide taxi services to customers, while undercutting wages, work standards and public safety; and

WHEREAS the growth of unlicensed taxis, and the refusal of corporations, such as Uber, to work within the existing regulatory framework, encourages more precarious forms of work, while undermining the tenets of local democracy; and

WHEREAS a new private member’s bill introduced by MPP Tim Hudak threatens to further undercut the regulated taxi industry, and passed second reading on October 29.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the ORC, on behalf of Ontario’s taxi workers, commit to engage provincial MPPs and municipal representatives to seek policy solutions discouraging the use of ‘bandit’ cab operations; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ORC will dissuade staff, members, locals, and delegates from using unlicensed taxi services.

The Committee recommends concurrence.

DINO CHIODO: Any speakers? And I see one speaker at mic -- I think two speakers. I’m sorry. So, what we will do is we will take those two speakers and then we’ll call the question. Three speakers. I’m sorry. Go ahead, speaker at mic number 4.

JASPAL BRAR: Yes, Jaspal Brar, Brampton Assembly, Local 1285. I am speaking in favour of this resolution.

The only reason is it has come up before the in past. The drivers that belong to Unifor, they have raised this issue before. It is going back a year now. Uber has been coming here. They have been decimating the business.
And, now what I saw as I came to Toronto is outside City Hall, you’ve got a group of people out there protesting against Uber. They don’t belong to Unifor. For five days now, today is Day 5, they have been on a hunger strike. All they are asking for is some kind of support.

And, I urge this Council and I urge the leadership here to show some kind of support, get together. They don’t need any help as in food, because they are on a hunger strike. What they are looking for is something from someone. And, I think Unifor can do that. With our leadership, we can go out there together and let them know that Unifor stands not just for the union itself, but for the underprivileged as well.

If something can be done, Dino, Katha, I would really appreciate it. If we can go out there, organize something, some kind of a march, some kind of a drive, and let them know that we are here for them, and not just for those people out there, but also for our own drivers that are at the same, I guess, disposal of Uber.

They’re losing jobs. They’re cutting back on the industry. And, it is to the detriment of our own drivers. So, thank you again. I hope we can do something.

DINO CHIODO: No, thank you very much. Speaker on mic 5.

JOHN TOTH: John Toth, Local 195, Windsor, representing nearly 400 drivers. I rise in support of this motion. This is an opportunity for our union to make a difference and I know that is what we are all about.

Our union represents 400 drivers, approximately, and throughout Ontario, Unifor represents over 2,000 people who work in this industry. If we had an opportunity to stop an employer from leaving the province through legislative change, we would take advantage of that. And, we have an opportunity with this resolution and with this protest that we are putting up.

Uber and similar companies like it are coming into the market and undercutting our drivers, for one thing. They are not playing by the rules. They don’t carry the proper insurance. And, we have public support on most of those things.

We have to fight this battle on three different fronts. Public support is one. And, again, we have got public support on the need for insurance, the need for inspections, the need for proper credentials for drivers. We need to fight this front legally, and there are legal challenges being forward.

But, we also have to fight this fight politically and that is what this resolution is all about. So, I urge all of our members. It doesn’t take much to pick up the phone and call your city councillor or write a letter to your newspaper. Call your MPP and explain to them how important it is that this be and remain a regulated industry.

In our city, there are 217 plates issued. It is based on the demand and population. Other cities have similar regulations. It is a supply-management system. And, the reason it is a supply-management system is because if you double the number of drivers out there, you are not creating anything else but cutting the income in half of the people that are currently employed in the industry. So, we have an opportunity to make a difference. To me, it’s a classic David versus Goliath battle.

You have a $50 billion company based out of San Francisco, coming into Canada, coming into our municipalities, stealing jobs and siphoning off money, where you have got the poor cab driver struggling to make $100.00 a day just to support his family. So, please, do what you can, make those phone calls. It will make a difference. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Speaker at mic number 1.

MAHMUD HARJI: Hi. My name is Mahmud Harji. I’m from Guelph, Local 1917. I am in support of this resolution. But, I also want to say I took a few minutes of my time to go talk to the brothers at City Hall and it is a shame what they’re going through.

I have a brother at work that works for Uber. He has two incomes: one at my factory, and one doing the Uber. All these cab drivers have is -- what they love to do is drive cabs and promote a service to the greater GTA.

I support this, but I also challenge all the brothers and sisters here to read this article. It is a brother who lives in Ottawa who is a taxi driver, and what he goes through and the cuts that he has to make, to provide a living for his family. So, please read this article. Thank you.
DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. The article he is talking about is in your kit and it is titled, “The Ottawa Taxi Dispute is about Corporate Greed.” So, if you get the chance to read that, please take the time to do that. Seeing no other speakers at the microphones, on the recommendation and the Resolution Committee’s recommendation for concurrence,

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried. CARRIED

Thank you very much, brothers and sisters.

So, that concludes the first part of our day on the first day of the Ontario Regional Council. I want to thank everybody for participating, getting up to the mics and making this a democratic process.

In saying that, before we do adjourn, I would just like to announce that we do have Wayne Gates, a Member of Provincial Parliament that is in the house. I believe Wayne Gates is to my right, doing a tremendous amount of work in always supporting us and making himself available when we need him, and asking important questions within the Parliament.

And, I would just like to make mention that the Women’s Committee will be meeting today at noon in the provincial ballroom.

Thank you. And, we will see you here at 1:30. We’ll start Ontario Regional Council up again at 1:30. Thank you very much.

--- Whereupon the meeting was in recess from 12:09 p.m. to 1:44 p.m.

RETIREES SOLIDARITY RALLY

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, delegates. In saying that, like we suggested earlier today, we have a number of retirees that have come from far and wide across the province, in order to come, having a platform with reference to the work that they do, but at the same time, give us some key messages with regards to not leaving retirees behind.

So, in saying that, I would like to welcome the retirees to the Ontario Regional Council, coming into our Council. And, if I can have Gary Parent and Barb Dolan please come to the stage? Because I would like to recognize them to say a few words with reference to the work that retirees do, especially in our province and for our locals.

Can you play Solidarity Forever, please?

--- Retirees Solidarity Rally

DINO CHIODO: Wow, that is absolutely amazing. What a show of solidarity from retirees coming across the province to be able to be here at our Ontario Regional Council.

It is a delight and we welcome you here to Ontario Regional Council, being able to spend time with you and talking about the issues that are important to you, giving you the space, recognizing the amount of work that you do within your respective locals, but at the same time, understanding that you are the ones that created the foundation for our local unions to be able to build upon and grow and be better in the future. So, thank you very much to each and every one of you.

In saying that, I do want to recognize a few individuals that will be speaking to put points across on behalf of the retirees that are in the room. But, again, this is a great display, having over 450 retirees again coming across the province to be here showing their support for their union and presenting their activism to us whenever they’re called upon.

In saying that, I would like to call up Barb Dolan, the director of the retirees, to come up and say a few words.

BARB DOLAN: Thank you, Dino. It is with great pleasure for me to share my retirees with all of you. Sisters and brothers, this is the heart and the soul of our union, and thank you for recognizing them as they came into the room.

As Dino mentioned, we have over 450 retirees here today with us. They have come from Windsor. They have come from Ajax, St. Catharines, Brampton, Oshawa, London, St. Thomas. Some of them have been on buses all day. Oakville. I’m going to miss somebody and I apologize.
But, this is part of our retirees. We represent over 70,000 to 80,000 retirees. And, these members helped to build the union to what we are today. So, I thank them for that.

I know they were acknowledged earlier at the opening of the conference, but you will notice the banner being held by our Retired Workers Executive, “Retired from the Job, But Not the Fight.” Sisters and brothers, whenever there is a fight, whenever our active members have a strike, a struggle, happenings at the bargaining table and we are reached out to and they say, “Can you get some retirees to come out?” They will board buses and they come to wherever that rally is. Any of you in the room that was at the GTAA rally when it was cold, it was pouring rain, our retirees were there supporting Local 2002 at their struggles they were having at the bargaining table.

Our retirees give us an opportunity to build our locals. There are many locals in this room that do not have Retired Workers Chapters. And, let me tell you this, give me more work, please. We need more chapters in our union, because the support that these retirees give the active membership, whether they’re doing local meetings, activities in their communities, whether it is being part of the Ontario Health Coalition, our retirees are there.

And, you know what? They haven’t forgotten the fight. They haven’t forgotten the struggle that they fought to make sure that we have got the benefits that we have in our life, whether it be health care, whether it be pensions, whether it be benefits and they don’t want to see us lose it.

So, when we’re in a struggle, they’re right there beside us. And, that is why this rally today has been called a Solidarity Rally, because it is a rally of solidarity between the retirees and the active membership and making sure that everybody knows within Unifor, there is a home for all of us.

Before our retirees leave, any local presidents, I would encourage you to come and talk to them, get an opportunity to meet our retirees. They’re incredible people. And, they will inspire you and they will motivate you. And, if you ever needed a reason to get energized, spend some time with the retirees. They will energize you.

So, thank you very much. Thank you to Katha and Dino for the opportunity for the retirees to come here today and to the whole Ontario Regional Executive. So, thank you very much. We appreciate that.

DINO CHIODO: Barb, it’s absolutely our pleasure in sharing some time with all the retirees that are here, because we know how important their issues are. And, again, their issues are our issues.

And, we want to share in that experience, understanding the trials and tribulations that you have all been through, but at the same time understanding that we are in this fight together. So, thank you very much to each of you.

Now, in saying that, what I would like to, I would like to recognize the next speaker. He is a retiree, comes out of Local 444, at the same time was the President of the Windsor and District Labour Council for 27 years. Retired as an activist/member out of our local after 44 years, but is still very active in almost everything that goes on in the Windsor area community and beyond, throughout the Province of Ontario and in Canada. And, I would like to recognize my colleague, my friend, Gary Parent.

GARY PARENT: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much, Dino. And, it’s actually 44.4 years. As Barb just said, I want to thank the executives of the ORC. I want to thank the National Union. I want to thank the Auto Council who yesterday had a meeting and invited us in to sit at that Auto Council.

And, that Auto Council, which represents every bargaining committee in the Big Three or Detroit Three, whichever you want to call it, made it very clear they support retirees of Unifor in every one of our workplaces.

I want to say to the new delegates that are here -- some may be saying, “What is this all about?” Well, prior to every Big Three, Detroit Three bargaining, we had a bargaining conference, and what started out years ago as a protest -- we came here to the Sheraton Centre. And, Brother White, who was the president at that time said, “Let’s bring the retirees in,” so we brought them in.
But, what he didn’t realize was that subsequent Big Three bargaining, ever year they were back. I wasn’t a retiree at that time. As much as people think that I am that old, I’m not. But, I was part of the bargaining team.

And, you know what? And, I’m saying this to the young people out there. The inspiration that retirees gave us as a bargaining committee, you couldn’t really feel it unless you were part of it, because the people standing in front of you right today as has been said by people before me, they’re the foundation of our union.

They’re the workers, men and women, from workplaces across this province that worked every day of their life, to make a better place for you, the junior workers that are out there in the audience as Council delegates today.

P-COLA -- it’s Pension COLA -- was established in 1987. And, it was there to provide retirees every three years with what was referred to as a cost-of-living adjustment and it was based on the CPI, Consumer Price Index, and that is where Pension COLA came from. It came out of the 1987 Chrysler bargaining. That’s where it happened.

I was part of it, proud of it. To this day I am proud of it. So, our message today is to General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. In 2008, 2009 and ongoing, there were a lot of sacrifices that had to be made, to make General Motors and Chrysler alive. Retirees made those sacrifices, too. And, we are saying to General Motors, Ford and Chrysler through you as Council delegates, to our bargaining committees that are here, it is time to pay back the retirees.

So, I think that our message as retirees through our bargaining committees, this is the first phase, the first step in a campaign that is going to bring us to September of 2016. We are hoping that through the coming months that we will have demonstrations in front of Chrysler in Windsor, General Motors in Oshawa and Ford in Oakville, to make sure that they understand that pensioners can’t be forgotten in 2016 bargaining.

You heard Chris Taylor at lunch. There will also be an opportunity at an Auto Council coming up in the spring that will be pulled together with the IPS for bargaining purposes, because Pension COLA, anything, you have to have a blueprint to go forward.

And, more importantly, you need a blueprint for other local unions that they can grasp on.

Wouldn’t it be great if every collective agreement had a pension cost of living? Wouldn’t it be great if every collective bargaining agreement had a defined benefit pension plan? If you don’t have those established goals and blueprints, where are you going to go to? You have to have something to aspire to. And, what we are saying it is, is an adjustment to the retirees that have made the sacrifices so that General Motors and Chrysler and Ford could be as profitable as they are today in 2015.

So, we have to make sure that you, as young leadership that are in the audience, that as we go and we talk to the active members within all our workplaces to get their support and garner their support in the upcoming 2016 bargaining.

So, I say to you as delegates, I say to you, the retirees, I am so proud of you. I am so proud that we have put here 450 people that are dedicated, committed and are the foundation of our union and are willing to come here and show our bargaining committees, retirees support you.

We will be there at your beck and call. You call us when you need us and we will be there. We will make sure that GM, Ford and Chrysler understand they we’re making progress in 2016. Again, Dino, thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: So, I want to say thanks very much to Gary. I want to say thanks to Barb Dolan and the retirees that have come here today.

The reality is the retirees have a conference that they go to in Port Elgin every September -- late August, early September. They do a number of resolutions on issues that are important to them, but at the same time, those resolutions don’t have a vehicle to be able to get heard anyplace else.

And, in saying that, I want to thank the Executive Board of the Auto Council with the leadership of Chris Taylor that said that we will provide the space. We will give the opportunity to retirees to come and participate and be active in the Auto Council, so resolutions can be heard, so we can bring your message, our message together to Chrysler, Ford and General Motors for that Big Three bargaining.
Obviously, we stand here together today in the Auto Regional Council. And, this is more of an educational for ourselves, for the retirees getting acquainted, the locals that have retired chapters, and working collaboratively with them and taking advantage of using the expertise of retirees, but at the same time looking past the locals that don’t have retirees and how we can aspire to get them, because when you can make some phone calls over a three- or four-week period and you could motivate 450 retirees like this, you can help make more progress happen. And, this is a testament to making sure that we continue to work collaboratively to get there.

So, thank you very much, brothers and sisters. Thank you for participating. Thank you for coming and showing your support. And, in saying that, you will not be forgotten. Thank you.

In saying that, what we would like to do is just play a Solidarity Forever as they’re going and marching out, because the buses will be waiting.

And, we will be exiting. And, we have a lot of business to take care of under the Ontario Regional Council business. And, we will want to get into the basic order of business again. So, thank you once again for being here, all the very best and safe travels back home.

--- Whereupon the retirees file out.

DINO CHIODO: Now, if that is not uplifting and inspiring, then I am not sure what is. So, as the retirees exit the room, what we will do is we will get onto our normal agenda for the day and the normal business of the day.

And, in saying that, what I would like to do is I would like to recognize Ken Cole that will come up and introduce our next speaker.

KEN COLE: Thank you, Dino. Thank you for giving me this great pleasure of introducing our next speaker.

Katrina Miller is a communications and public policy strategist with over 15 years of experience, working with labour, community and environmental organizations to promote progressive social policy. Her work commonly involves designing and implementing issue-based campaigns, focus groups and strategy sessions and media and public presentation training.

Katrina has designed and implemented issue-based campaigns that resulted in significant shifts in public policy over a range of issues, including waste diversion, chemical pollution, access to public services and privatization.

Her work history includes considerable experience with labour unions, from collaborating on strategic coalitions to undertaking specific communications, and strategic planning and advocacy initiatives with organizations including CUPE, Unifor and the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers.

Katrina also custom designs and facilitates interactive workshops and training programs to help organizations’ own communications develop strategies and consult members and stakeholders, including at the Good Job Summit held in Toronto last year. So, let’s welcome Katrina.

PRESENTATION: KEEP HYDRO PUBLIC COALITION

KATRINA MILLER: So, that was the bio that my mom wrote as you can tell. It has got everything in it, except for my tenth birthday.

I am here on behalf of the Keep Hydro Public campaign, which I have been fortunate enough to be involved in for about the last eight months. It is a campaign of a set of wonderful organizations, from labour, to community groups, to anti-poverty activists, to environmental associations who are clear on one thing; that we do better if we keep Hydro One public.

And, they are ready to continue that fight from now right up to the next provincial election until we win back everything that we can, in order to make sure that that is a utility, a vital service that we depend on every single day that is owned by every Ontarian and only every Ontarian, and not by private investors.

I’m going to tell you a little bit about that campaign. And, I’m going to start, I think, by saying how excited I am to be in this room and how hard an act that is to follow with the retirees there. That was amazing to walk into and it reminded me how so many campaigns I have been on, how retirees have been the bedrock of the activism of that campaign. So, it was amazing to walk into the room and see that happening right here.
It reminded me how much this campaign matters to retirees and how we have heard about their issues and their concerns, especially in fixed incomes with rising hydro rates that will come from privatization.

So, I am going to tell you the two things that I thought, my two predictions when I first started working on this issue about eight months ago. I walked into the issue with a bunch of other people who were deep in the trenches.

And, I looked at the issue and said, “Wow, this is an issue that people in Ontario will rise up against.” They do not want the sale of Hydro One. When people find out what the government is planning, they will be very, very upset and they will take action.

And then the second one, the second prediction I had was that the government, in face of that rising opposition, would eventually back down. Now, one of those predictions has come true. The other one, I still firmly believe will come true.

Let me tell you about the first one, which is the rising opposition that we have seen and the support for keeping hydro public. Now, it is rare in my life as an activist -- I mean, some of you have been at this way longer than I have.

I have been on a critical-issue-based campaign against a very, very powerful force like the Ontario government, and had the public so completely on my side and on our side. Eighty-three percent of Ontario residents do not want the privatization of Hydro One. I have never seen numbers like that around the privatization of a service before, 83 percent.

And, 61 of them are mad enough to take action, 61 percent. So, that is amazing. That is the kind of level of action and activism that we rarely see on issues. And, it is the kind of thing that we have to continue to ignite, in order to get them to back down.

Along with that, though, it is not just the general public that thinks this is a horrible idea. We have 200 municipalities that have passed formal resolutions and have sent them as letters to Kathleen Wynne saying they oppose the privatization of Hydro One. So, we have 200 municipalities on our side, 83 percent of the public, but that’s not it. That is not all, folks.

We also have farmers on our side. The National Farmers Union recognizes, as major energy users, that they can’t afford the lack of reliability and the rising hydro rates that come with privatization. Major industry groups are also expressing concern about this. Thirty Chambers of Commerce have asked the government to press pause and to consult with them, because they are concerned as well.

We are seeing the type of stakeholders that we rarely get around the table with each other all say the same thing. All have a common cause. This is a critical public service, not one that we sell to private investors for profit, and that is where we are today.

I would like to tell you a little bit about why people are so concerned, but I suspect a lot of you know. Everyone is worried about rising hydro rates. And, we know this not because it is just a fear. We know this, because it is a fact. It is a fact that has been proven. It has been proven in the U.S. in study after study when we compare privately-owned systems that provide electricity to publicly-owned systems. And, the private ones are, on average, 10 percent more expensive to the consumer. We know this for a fact in our own system when Hydro One back in 2000 by Harris was forced to sell its debt to private financiers.

And, when it had to start meeting the needs of private financiers on the debt service charges as well as the public, we saw hydro rates go up at double the rate of inflation. And, that is one of the reasons why our bills are so high today, that and deregulation.

We know for a fact that even when we compare today in our own systems between those utilities, those local utilities that are somewhat privately owned and the ones that are publicly owned, that the private-owned ones cost more per customer to operate.

So, this isn’t just fancy. This isn’t just fear. This is fact. We know with privatization rates will go up. And, no one here, none of our municipalities, none of our industries can afford that.

The second thing we know is that with selling Hydro, the government loses a revenue stream. It is a revenue stream that brings in about $800 million every single year. That is $800 million that funds our hospitals. It funds our schools. It funds other critical public services that we depend on.
And, this cash-strapped government, what is going to happen when they lose a good portion of that revenue stream? What we are looking at is probably about $600 million when they sell 60 percent. That is going to mean that we are going to get a crunch, a further crunch, on public services that are already somewhat anaemic from the austerity agenda that has played so far.

But, probably the most important thing and the thing that I think causes people to want to take action most is the fear around no longer having public accountability of something that we each depend on every single day.

Even before they sold a single share, they erased the role of eight public accountability officers that were in charge of making sure that Hydro One served customers with reliable, affordable service. The ombudsman, the fiscal accountability officer, the environmental commissioner, all of their authority got a raise back in the budget, so that they could clear the way for privatization, because it turns out private investors don’t really want that kind of public accountability. I don’t know why. I don’t know why they wouldn’t be going for that.

But, that is what they did. And, they replaced it with one ombudsperson. And, that doesn’t give us any sort of assurance that we are going to have the kind of public accountability that we need for this kind of service.

And, we know that when we privatize services like this, services that are so critical to us in our communities that bad things happen, that Walkerton happens, that we need that public accountability to make sure that things like that don’t happen. And, I think that’s why people want to stand up and have a say.

And, lastly, I think people recognize that this government never, ever had a mandate to sell hydro; that this is something that all of us owned and they never had a mandate to take it away, and people are mad about that.

Now, this is where I come to my second prediction. I think the government will eventually back down from this. I think this is a fight that we can win and this is why.

When they decided to do this back in May, they were told by all their strategists, we heard all of these things coming from their internal rooms basically saying, “Don’t worry. You have got three years before an election comes up.”

They’ll all forget about it by then. They won’t remember that you have done this. It will go under the bridge. It was be water under the bridge, and we will all move on and you won’t pay any price for this. They may be bad now, but everyone will calm down.

I think what they’re discovering, after selling the first 15 percent about a month ago, and still get petitions and emails rolling in and still getting municipalities sending in resolutions, is that no one is willing to forget.

Everybody is watching to see if they go for another 15 percent. And, when it comes to the next election, they will be judged and held accountable for this action.

So, what does that mean that we have to do? It means we can’t stop fighting.

We have to continue growing our base. We have to continue engaging our friends, our neighbours, our co-workers, our brothers and sisters, those in the labour movement and those that we sit around the Christmas table with.

We have to ensure that they feel the heat from that public opposition constantly.

And, as stakeholders, we have to all join around the table together, recognize the common cause and ensure that we continue to work together, because we can win this. We can stop them from selling another 15 percent and we can win back the 15 percent they have sold.

And, if they go further, they have another -- they have got three other hills they have to climb before they get to their 60 percent. And, each hill is opportunity for us to turn the page and win this fight.

So, I ask you to join me. I ask you to join us. I ask you to become engaged in this campaign, first by emailing your MPP, and then by ensuring that you and your community find a way to make your voices heard, both to your MPPs, to your friend, to your families and, of course, to the government, to Kathleen Wynne. So, thanks very much.

**DINO CHIODO**: Katrina, thank you on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council. We just have a gift that we would like to give you for taking up the challenge with regards to Hydro One and keeping it up. So, thank you very much for all your help.
If I can -- just hold on one second, Ken. So, in saying that, I want to move on to the recommendations. I am going to have Katha read a recommendation. But, what I want to recognize is we also had a resolution. It was Resolution No. 2, with regards to Mobilizing to Keep Hydro Public. So, I would like to create the debate, so anybody can speak on either of the two issues. We will do at the same time, so we’re not having two separate debates, especially while it is on the same issue, basically. But, we will vote on each individual component separately.

So, in saying that, I will have Katha come up and read the recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: KEEP HYDRO PUBLIC**

**KATHA FORTIER:** Thanks. And, just before I read the recommendation, I just want to bring to the delegates’ attention there are petitions in your kids. Hopefully, you guys will get them circulated at your table and signed, but also you can take them back to your local unions. The Keep Hydro Public website, it’s just easy, a click of a button to email the Ontario Energy Board on the decision around having hearings on any further sales of Hydro One.

So, the recommendation is No. 1 in your pamphlet. It is Keep Hydro Public. 

Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government of Ontario are proceeding with the ill-conceived, counterproductive betrayal of Ontario citizens, consumers, and workers through the privatization of Hydro One.

The government has now completed the first sale of 15 percent of Hydro One shares. However, the overwhelming majority of Ontarians continue to oppose this privatization, and it is still not too late for the Wynne government to change course.

I therefore recommend:

1. Ontario locals support the Keep Hydro Public Coalition and make use of the petitions, social media graphics and suggested letters found at www.keehydropublic.ca and continue to attend rallies and town hall events organized by KHP and our other allies, including the Ontario Federation of Labour.
2. Ontario locals immediately support the letter campaign and petitions to the Ontario Energy Board requesting public hearings.
3. The ORC calls on Premier Wynne and her government to stop further sales of Hydro One shares, and to maintain majority public ownership of Hydro One, and to ensure that it retains a public interest mandate with oversight by Ontario’s Auditor General and Ombudsperson.
4. That the ORC calls on Premier Wynne to fund transit infrastructure through new funding agreements with the federal government, not through the sale of public assets, and continue to participate in the Keep Hydro Public coalition as well as any initiatives on this from the Ontario Federation of Labour.

And, again, as Dino said, we would open discussion on both the recommendation and the resolution to Mobilize to Keep Hydro Public, No. 2.

**DINO CHIODO:** I’ll take any speakers at the mic. I’ll start off with mic number 1.

**KEN LEWENZA, JR.:** Ken Lewenza, Jr., national coordinator. Katrina, thank you very much for your excellent presentation.

Like you said, you, like many people, are out there fighting for this important issue. I think you hit the nose right on the head. I mean, we’re going to win this. I am confident we are going to win this as well. I think the only thing that we have to do to win this is show up and I think that is the key part. It is not automatic. We have to show up.

So, I just want to give you a sense on some of the conversations that we had in Windsor, and again, any types of additional collaborations would be great. But, we have taken the poverty groups, the unions, the environmental groups that are starting to think about how we can have a type of campaign.

On December 17th in Windsor, what we are talking about is actually having a meeting in the street where we are going to know on some doors just prior to, get people out, come out and talk about the issue, which we will use as a springboard. It will be a press conference as well, with just everyday ordinary citizens.
And then we are going to use that to leap into a community town hall on this issue, and then actually to think about what type of educational supports can we follow that up, to ensure that we are instilling a sense of confidence in people to take on this very important issue.

And then we are actually talking about one house per every thousand in our community where they would actually host a ballot box or thinking about actually having a community referendum on this particular question.

And then to start thinking about how we can take this issue and pass it on to London, Guelph and so on, because I know some of the Labour Councils have already had some conversations about this particular issue. But, again, here is an opportunity for our members to start thinking about how we talk about this issue and the connectivity.

One of the things that we have talked about is even taking the whole issue of the privatization of health care services and the paying of health care services, and actually run two simultaneous joint campaigns where we are asking people to vote on actually those two issues, thinking about how we can share capacity between two different organizations that the public supports heavily, like that 83 percent.

The very last comment is around the question of trade agreements. And, you start thinking about the future of Hydro, and a lot of the environmental communities talking about how we are actually going to have the ability someday to have totally sustainable, renewable locally-developed power.

And, the reality is that if we sell off our Hydro today to private interests, because of trade agreements later on down the road, the province would be on the hook for ensuring that we continue to provide those profits to those corporations for 25 years, whether or not we were getting power off the grid or not.

So, it starts to really raise some deeper long-term questions as it relates to our kids and just in terms of the corporations continue to find ways to harvest us. So, thank you very much for your awesome presentation.

But, again, I speak to the delegates. This is a winnable issue. I think it just means everyone actually taking a small piece and finding something that they can do that fits their time, energy and comfort level to get out and win this, Dino. So, I would be glad to have that type of support in Windsor, where we can win this together.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, brother. Speaker at mic number 2.

KEN BONDY: Thanks, Dino. And, thank you to my friend, Katrina, a long-time social activist, for leading this charge. I stand in support of the recommendation and the resolution.

And, you might think that this is not a particularly important issue in all of the things that we deal with within our workplaces. But, make no mistake. This move to privatize our Hydro is just one step further in privatizing every other public asset that we pay taxes to support, whether that is health care, whether that is schools, whether that is our roads. We have seen it rolling in slowly across the province and across the globe. And, this is a fight that we have to show that we can stand up and push back.

I was fortunate enough to have been sent to South Korea about a month ago to represent our union on this specific issue, because they are fighting the same privatization fight in South Korea. And, if you want to meet a bunch of great trade unionists, those people are in for the fight and they will not back down. And, they are holding public protests in civil disobedience. They are marching in the streets. They are marching on the government’s offices, and they are saying that we are not, as a labour movement, going to accept the privatization and the recapitalization of public utilities and public assets.

And, I would be so proud to be able to share with those people, those colleagues that I met in South Korea, that we in Ontario are fighting the same fight and to report that we are winning that fight.

So, brothers and sisters, please take this fight seriously, push back this privatized agenda and we will win as a labour movement. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Moving over to mic number 3.
MARY STRAUS: Mary Straus with the retired workers. I missed a bit of what Katrina said, but I totally agree with what I did hear. And, I want to talk to you, because I live in a rural area and I pay rural Hydro rates. For those that don’t know, people who live in the country do pay higher rates.

Premier Wynne gave Mike Harris his dream when she started this charge towards privatizing our Hydro. Back in 1993, Mike Harris tried to privatize Hydro. And, at that time, there was a referendum and he had to go to the people first.

And, when he went to the people, he found out that 92 percent of the people said, “No, you’re not going to do that.” So, he didn’t get away with it. But, what he did was take away the referendum. So, here we have a Liberal government with Premier Wynne giving what Mike Harris wanted, that terrible Conservative.

What it means for us in the rural area with our hydro rates is the laundry gets done either on the weekend or after 7:00 at night. It means that you get up before 7:00 in the morning if you want to have a shower that day. It means every six months that changes, so that now from 7:00 to 11:00 is the high rate and then from 11:00 until 5:00, it’s the medium rate. From 5:00 to 7:00, it is the high rate again. And, I don’t know about you, but both of those times involve making meals.

The hydro in our area went from 7.5 cents per kilowatt hours to 8.3 cents and that is the off-peak, supposedly the easy hours. Mid-peak went from 11.2 cents per kilowatt hour to 12.8 cents. And, right now, on-peak went from 13.5 cents to now 17.5 cents.

And, that means an old girl like me gets up and gets her laundry and hangs up the laundry, rather than use the dryer. I know all kinds of people who dry their clothes in their homes, just hanging over things, because it’s too expensive to use the dryer.

At 1325, the retiree chapter that I belong to, we had a similar resolution, a great resolution, and we wrote a letter to Stratford City Hall, to the mayor, asking that they pass the resolution. We also wrote to the Perth County Council, asking them to support us, pass the resolution and send it on to ROMA, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association. And, also, we sent it to the Huron County, because our members are from both. And, Huron County, what they did was received and filed. And, in Huron, they have given it to a committee to study.

DINO CHIODO: Please make your point, sister.

MARY STRAUS: So, at least, we know that some of our elected members are looking after us. And, when you have got somebody on a fixed income, we can’t afford to be playing roulette with this.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. Speaker at mic number 4.

GRANT ORCHARD: Yes. I’m Grant Orchard from Local 4268. I rise on a point of privilege to speak in support of both the recommendation and the resolution.

As the sister said, Kathleen Wynne is trying to do what Mike Harris wouldn’t tackle and it has to be stopped. Ontario Hydro was formed in 1906 under the mandate to provide power at the lowest feasible cost to Ontarians. It has 97 percent of the transmission lines in this province.

That is a mandate, as we know, as Katrina Miller has eloquently said, it won’t be a subject held by the private sector, and so we fall to the private sector. And, as the brother said, unlike any regulations the Wynne government would like to put in to control the private sector, which will be subject to change by any subsequent government, once under the state provisions and state investor provisions of the free-trade agreement and the NAFTA, this will be virtually impossible to put it back into public hands once it is privatized, so it has to be stopped.

Kathleen Wynne has to find other ways to raise this cash. And, I am sure many people in the province would love to be part of that discussion, but this can’t go ahead.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, brother. Brother at mic number 5.

GLENN SONIER: Thanks, Dino. Glenn Sonier, staff rep out of Sarnia-Lambton. I thank Katrina for her presentation and the Council for taking on this fight.

I just wanted to raise two points. One is in the ‘80s, it was these founding unions that took on the legal fight against Harris and won. So, I am curious as to whether or not that legal fight still has some variance in regards to helping Katrina and the Council move forward in that fight.
The second I wanted to share is that a number of years back, in conjunction with the Health Coalition, we ran a plebiscite, a referendum in the Sarnia-Lambton area. We used volunteers from our different union locals, our activists, and we ran a referendum that had more votes than the city council elections.

And, the majority ruling from the Lambton County area was keep health care and Hydro public. And, that was a good fight. And, we presented it to the government. And, I think it’s an opportunity to run those type of plebiscites across Ontario, to run the message home. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Thank you, brother. We’ll recognize the speaker on mic number 1.

SHERI LAEKEMAN: Sheri Laekeman, president, Unifor 4212. I stand in full support on behalf of my members back in Niagara at the Welland Canal. This resolution and recommendation are both very important to every one of us, whether we are paying our bills at home or in the workplace.

In Montreal just this past summer, my local sent me to present a resolution to the national council there with regards to stopping the privatization of all public assets across the country. Part of the reason why we did that was because of our workplace, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority in 1998 was privatized, commercialized. And, it has been, since then, eroded on so many levels. So, from a worker’s standpoint, it is very important that we stop this now.

I am actually quite inspired by Katrina’s message, because I thought it was kind of a done deal that this was not going to stop. I am inspired by what we are doing here at the regional level.

And, hopefully, with the resolution that was passed unanimously this summer in Montreal that was supported stopping privatization that we can count on the National Union as well.

And, my final point is this. I do a lot of work with a lot of organizations, activism. And, what I am finding is there are a lot of silos. If we can break down those silos and build some bridges so that when we go to a rally or a protest, we don’t have a label over here from one, maybe health care, and then there is another group over here protesting. We need to bring these people together and on board. And, I think this is a great opportunity to do that in a very big way.

And, I look forward to perhaps we can have a rally somewhat like you’re doing down there in Windsor and Niagara Falls where a lot of our power comes from just in my neighbourhood there. And, we would love the support and we can organize a great rally in Niagara Falls. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Is that a point at mic number 3? I don’t see any speakers at the mic, so I’ll have Katha respond to the question from the brother at mic number 5.

KATHA FORTIER: Thanks, Glenn. That was a very good point. Obviously, there were a number of unions, when Harris was trying to sell Hydro previously that took on legal challenges that essentially stopped them.

A number of unions are in the Keep Hydro Public Coalition that did that the previous time, of course, our predecessor unions being one of them. We have actually looked at that. And, unfortunately, the same conditions don’t exist in this sale that would make a legal challenge actually feasible. So, unfortunately, that is not one of our reasonable expectations of what routes we can go.

But, you did go talk about a plebiscite and a vote. And, those are the plans that we’re talking about with the Keep Hydro Public Coalition. We have been supporting it. Your Executive Board and the National Executive Board have contributed financially to various issues.

We have helped pay for all of the things that have happened, the website, the surveys that we have done, the outreach to people and all of the things that have to go along with this campaign. We have talked about a plebiscite in the New Year and that will probably be in part of the plans. And, again, it is just great to have the mandate from this body to be able to go forward with that work.

DINO CHIODO: Very good. Seeing no more speakers at the mic, we have a recommendation and a resolution in front of us. Dealing with the recommendation first, Keep Hydro Public, I will ask,

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.  CARRIED
Thank you very much.
And, with reference to Resolution No. 2 and from the Resolutions Committee,
and they’re recommending concurrence,
All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.  CARRIED
Thank you very much for your indulgence, brothers and sisters, and your participation, and the discussion and debate.

Moving on to the next component of our agenda, Changing Workplace Review, I would like to ask Maggie Harbert to come up.  But, before I do that, is Jody Powers in the audience?

Yes, I’m going to grab your point.  Just give me one second.  Is Jody Powers here?

Can you come up to the front for a second?  And, I’ll take your point, brother.

ROBIN DUDLEY:  Thanks, Dino.  Robin Dudley, president of Local 1917 in Guelph and vice-president of the IPS Council, here along with Doug Beaton, the financial secretary for Local 1917.

Every year, we set a table out on the side here for the CP24 Toy Drive.  I think it was on the reminder letter that came out a couple of weeks before Council.  We’re looking for anybody that is out and about tonight to do some shopping, pick up a toy and bring it down, put it on the table.  We are going to present it to CP24 tomorrow.

Also, we do take cash.  And, at this point, I will thank the Chrysler Council for the $200.00 donation they gave, and the IPS Council also gave a $500.00 donation.

So, anyway while you’re out tonight, grab some toys or some clothes for some kids and let’s try to make Christmas a little better for some of the kids that are a little less fortunate.

Thank you.

DINO CHIODO:  Thank you very much.  Robin, just before you go, what we would like to do is, on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, we would like to put a motion on the floor to provide $1,000.00 to the CP24 and the work that you’re providing and doing to help you buy more of those toys.  Can I get a mover on that?  So moved.  Any discussion?

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.  CARRIED
Thank you very much.  And, keep up the great work.

ROBIN DUDLEY:  Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO:  Is that a point on No. 4?

ALLISON GIBSON:  Yes.

DINO CHIODO:  Okay.  Can we get a point? No. 4.

ALLISON GIBSON:  Allison Gibson, Local 1090.  I represent the workers at Great Blue Heron Charity Casino.  We currently have a family that is going through their second bout of cancer with a child under the age of five.  A few years ago, their daughter was diagnosed with ovarian cancer.  And, we would like to proudly say that, in her words, she “beat cancer’s butt”.

However, sadly as her mother was coming back to work from dealing with her bout of cancer, we found out that their son who is two has brain cancer, and it is a very aggressive form.

We are selling these bracelets.  They’re $5.00 each.  And, we are trying to raise enough money, so that Sherry can stay off work with her kid.
DINO CHIODO: Sister, have you got a table on the outside? Is that where you are situated? Are you going to be able to sell those throughout the course of the event?

ALLISON GIBSON: I am just at the back over here. If anybody wants to email me, my email is cawagibson@gmail.com. And, we can make them available to whoever needs them.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. Thank you very much. So, if anybody can, make sure they make their way to see her and provide some support, that would be wonderful.

Seeing no more points on any of the mics, I am going to ask Maggie Harbert to come up and introduce the next speaker.

MAGGIE HARBERT: It is such an honour for me to introduce our next speaker, Unifor’s economist, Jim Stanford. He really does need no introduction, because he is boring, shy, dull. He has been putting crowds to sleep for two decades now. But, seriously nothing could be further from the truth.

A friend to working people, he can take a complicated economic concept that I know a lot of us struggle with, he makes it possible for us to understand and then use that knowledge as we face employers and governments, a definition of empowerment. He holds a PhD in silly wigs, crazy songs and goofy dances. Seriously, though, he holds a PhD, a doctorate, in Economics, an author of two books, a writer for the Globe and Mail, a star of CBC’s Bottom Line.

So, for a change of pace, instead of Jim entertaining us, we have something for him and it involves all of you. So, Jody Powers of the famous Local 229 is going to lead us in it.

KATHA FORTIER: Just so everybody knows, this is Jim’s last Ontario Regional Council with us as an active member. He is leaving for Australia with his family in January. So, Jim, this is for you.

--- Musical tribute to Jim Stanford

JIM STANFORD: Wow. That was amazing. All you need there, brother, is a rap beat to that and it will be on -- yes, sequins and maybe some stretchy psychedelic pants and then we are ready. That was incredible. Wow. Wow. Thank you very much everybody, including the song lyric writers and for your passion and for your tribute.

I do want to correct one thing. Believe me, it wasn’t me that made this union strong. It was you who made this union strong with your passion, your hope, your activism and your solidarity. And, it was an incredible privilege for me to serve this union. I can’t imagine a better place where you can take some number-crunching skills and put them to the work of humanity and building a better society. So, thank you very much for the opportunity to serve this great union.

So, anyways, I am off to Australia, as Katha was saying. It’s a family decision. We will be down there for a few years, but certainly back to Canada at some point.

And, I am going to keep my foot in all of the great debates going on up here. I’ll keep, hopefully, my newspaper column, maybe show up on TV every now and then from Australia by satellite. I’m not sure. If I am looking bleary-eyed on your TV, okay, it is because there’s 16 hours difference.

I am also going to retain a role as an advisor for our leadership, for Jerry and Peter and the whole leadership team on an as-need basis, so where it’s possible. Of course, we have got an awesome team of experts and resources at Unifor. We have got an amazing Research Department. Bill Murnighan is our director. And, we have hired some really very bright young staff who are developing their skills and their experience. So, we are in absolutely good hands with that team.

But, I will be available. I will be on call and very glad to hear about our struggles and our progress as we go forward, so that’s the update. I have got a couch in Sydney, Australia. We could start booking appointments. Come on down. I might regret saying that.

Okay. Well, let’s got to the order at hand. That was really memorable. Thank you very much. We’ll call it the PowerPoint if we could, please?

PRESENTATION: CHANGING WORKPLACES REVIEW

JIM STANFORD: We are going to talk about one important item of business. It is called the Changing Workplaces Review, which was an initiative launched by the provincial government this year and it was an important one.
We know that the Wynne government has got its pluses and minuses; right? It has got its good spots and its bad spots. And, we just talked about one of the very bad spots, which is the stupid decision to sell off Hydro One.

But, there are some opportunities for us as well with this government to try and push the agenda in a positive direction, instead of just trying to fight to put out fires, as we typically have been doing.

And, one of those opportunities was the government’s decision in part because of our urging to launch a major initiative to look at the world of work, how the world of work has changed in general for the worst and what we can do about it. So, this is where the Changing Workplaces Review came from. And, Unifor played a big role and is playing a big role in this.

In fact, we developed, I think, a very important submission, a formal submission to the Changing Workplaces Review called “Building a Balance of Fairness and Opportunity in Ontario’s Labour Market”. That is what happens when you get an economist to write the title; okay? The Communications Department is pulling out their hair saying, “Who the heck named it that?” It was me.

But, it’s, I think, a very comprehensive overview of the problems in our labour market and what can be done about it. You can see the full review plus a whole bunch of other materials related to our campaign on this issue at unifor.org. Then just put backslash Changing Workplaces, or you can find it through our Campaigns section on our website.

And, the whole thing comes in at 159 pages. So, “Bullshit baffles brains,” they say and “Quantity can defeat assholes.” That’s sort of the motto on that one. And, if nothing else, it will be good to bash the employer or some other negative force in society, bash them over the head with all 159 pages.

Now, as trade union activists, of course, we have been watching what is happening in the labour market and expressing concern about it for ages. So, in a way, this whole thing is not new for us.

But, the Ontario government, to their credit, appointed two commissioners: Michael Mitchell, who is a labour-side lawyer, and John Murray, who is a business-side lawyer, to a two-person panel to review both the Ontario Labour Relations Act, the labour laws and the Employment Standards Act, the ESA, at the same time.

So, this is interesting and I think positive, because they are recognizing the interaction between labour laws and the rest of what goes on in our labour market and looking at them together. And, we encourage them to do this as a kind of dual initiative, to look at both the labour laws and the employment standards.

And, it is part of our mission as a social union, and this is embedded in Unifor’s Constitution and found in documents and core values, that what we are fighting for, for our members, in terms of better working conditions and wages and protection, we fight for all working people.

And, we recognize that most Ontarians don’t have the realistic opportunity right now to join the union. We want them to. We’re going to support them. We’re going to organize wherever we can.

But, we also recognize we have to do something for the members of society who don’t have the protection of the union, and that is why this dual mandate makes a lot of sense. The commissioners held public hearings across Ontario through the spring and summer. And, I do want to commend, Katha, the local unions in every community that the commissioner visited.

We had a very strong Unifor presentation. One or two or three different Unifor locals came, spoke to the commission, related the experience in their community with problems like precarious work or part-time work or organizing laws, and really put a human face to the story that we were telling.

And, the commissioners were very impressed with Unifor’s presence, not just in terms of the formal submission, but also our activism and our human representation at every spot that the review visited.

So, I personally want to give a great thanks to Katha and your whole Executive Board. You were the ones who spoke to the locals in every community in Ontario and made sure that we had real credibility. So, thank you very much for your leadership on that score.
So, the commissioners are now working on a preliminary report that they will issue early in the New Year. And then the idea is that the government, the Wynne government, will look at their report, hopefully take some of their recommendations, assuming that they’re good, and enshrine them in new legislation that would come forward next fall.

So, this is where in a way the research part of the exercise is not completed, but mostly done. And, it is now going to become a matter of organizing and mobilizing to put pressure on both the commissioners and the government, to make sure that there’s a good outcome from that.

So, let me kind of quickly review what we got to in our submission. And, we did this as a team approach. We had staff from the Research Department, excellent input from the Legal Department, the Communications team, the Women’s Department at the National Union led by Katha in our team.

We also had tremendous input from the local unions that appeared at the hearings. And, we had the executive of the Ontario Regional Council review the whole thing before we put it in, in a marathon meeting that I promised them would last about 90 minutes and then lasted three hours, so kudos to the Executive Board for suffering through that.

Six major sections to our submission. We have an introductory section written by Jordan Brennan, who is in our Research Department, a very talented economist, about the problems of precarious work and inequality.

Then, we got to what are the solutions? And, there were kind of four sections where we broke out the proposed solutions. One of them was we developed a list of incremental improvements to the Employment Standards Act and regulations that would protect all workers in Ontario.

Then, we had a series of reforms that we proposed in the labour relations sphere, to incrementally improve how union organizing and representation can occur.

So, those are kind of an expected approach. I think the expectation was that everyone would come with a list of proposed forms, a wish list, if you like, to strengthen both pieces of that.

But, then we decided to go a little further and kind of think outside the box. And, there are two more sections that I will explain in the presentation, where we went far beyond just tweaking the existing employment standards and labour relations system, and started to imagine very ambitious and, I think, quite promising ways to rebalance the power relationships in our labour market, so that workers can have a fighting chance.

One of those was around the issue of protections for just cause and collective action in non-union workplaces. And then the second big-box idea or out-of-the-box idea is around having sector-wide structures of representation in collective bargaining that could lift the standards of workers in an entire sector.

Finally, we had a whole section that looked at the economic effects of these reforms, trying to debunk the traditional idea that we would hear from business lobbyists like the CFIB and others, that we just can’t do any of these things. It will bankrupt the economy and price Ontario out of the world market. In fact, we showed that that would not be the case.

And, I think everyone in the process, the commissioners certainly and the other unions, even the employers, recognized that Unifor’s submission was very ambitious, very comprehensive and very innovative. We really do have some original ideas there.

So, we are trying to grapple with this whole problem of precarious work, if you like. And, we have talked about this before at Ontario Council and elsewhere in our union.

There is actually a dictionary definition for precarious work, this challenge that we are facing. The dictionary defines “precarious” as “dangerously lacking in security or stability, subject to chance or unknown conditions”. So, that is just straight out of the dictionary, but it actually applies totally to the concept of precarious work.

That is the idea that you don’t know when you’re going to work. You don’t know what your hours are going to be. If you’re a contract or agency employee, you don’t know how long you’re going to have that job. You’re operating at the behest of the employer. You’re kind of a just-in-time workforce. And, it’s very, very, very difficult to plan your life and support your family under those circumstances.
So, addressing this whole trend towards precarious work and the fact that about half of workers now in Ontario experience one form of precarity or another, whether it’s part-time work, contract jobs, nominal self-employment for outside contractors, and so on.

Really, only half of workers now have got what we traditionally called a regular full-time job with some security and some permanency. So, that’s the problem and the definition.

Now, let me just define a couple of the technical terms that we’re going to refer to in the full technical submission, so that you understand the terminology as we go along. This is an important concept that we address.

It is called “shitty job” and it is pronounced shit-ty job; okay? And, the dictionary definition of shitty job, “an employment position not sufficient to meet needs of the worker and their family”; okay? So, keep that in mind. We are trying to address the problem of shitty jobs in the economy and make some proposals.

Other technical concepts, which come up in our brochure is “greedy bastard”. That is a noun. And, the definition of it is “an employer unsympathetic to the requirement that workers have to eat in order to survive”.

One other technical definition again, before we get into the deep, “scumbag agency” is “a leech-like business undertaking profits from the misery of others and creaming up to 8 or 10 bucks an hour off of the wage”. That is the part that is just fucking sickening, frankly, to coin another phrase.

The idea that you’re not making very much anyway and then the agency, sitting back in their office, is going to cream that much is absolutely immoral and should be illegal as well as immoral. And, that is the direction that we’re headed.

I can swear all I want up here, because Katha, what are you going to do, fire me? Okay. So, as I mentioned, we talked about the problem of precarious work and the declining quality of jobs and the fact that workers are so desperate in an environment where unemployment is high and jobs are scarce, they’ll take anything.

So, the employer can offer a few hours of work. And then say, “I don’t know when I’ll want you back, but I’ll keep you on the roll.” And, the worker will say, “Well, what choice do I have?”

Then, as businesses see that there’s a whole pool of precarious people out there who are desperate to take those positions, then they adjust their business practice and they say, “I don’t need to offer anybody a full-time job with benefits. I’ll staff my entire business this way.”

And, you start to see that more and more, not just in retail and hospitality and some of the traditional service sectors, but even in manufacturing where companies will absolutely minimize the number of permanent employees that they have on the job.

Government regulations clearly have been too passive in the face of this change and government has not yet been addressing the problem. And, unions are concerned about it. We see it everywhere including in unionized workplaces.

But, our power, obviously, is under siege, because of the labour laws and the attacks of employers. So, we haven’t been able to protect workers in this situation as well.

And, there is this interaction between quantity and quality of jobs that has been very negative. You start out with a situation where jobs are scarce, say because of a recession, and therefore workers are desperate to take any job. Employers find that they can fill those precarious jobs.

They can offer someone only occasional hours, yet still have people willing to do it, even when employers will prevent you from taking a second job, that is again one of the most immoral things, “I’ll give you a few hours here and a few hours there, but you can’t take another job, because you can’t have another commitment that would interfere with your ability to come in on short notice if I was, in fact, to decide to hire you that day.”

So, you get doubly exploited as the worker. But, the companies develop all these systems, including the whole employment agency industry, which is one of the biggest growth sectors in our economy; right? Employment agencies are right up there with sign painting. The sign-painting industry had a tremendous expansion when Harper did that stimulus program and there were all those signs everywhere throughout the country saying Economic Action Plan.
Those were good times, brothers and sisters, in the sign-painting industry. And, the same goes for the agencies and all of these other systems, even software planning systems that are developed to allow businesses to operate off of a permanent pool of vulnerable workers, rather than a traditional employment model.

And, this is where you really get into a rut. And, you have to snap out of it. You have to do something that pushes the economy into a different path. Otherwise, this carries on. What could you do? Well, first of all, you could and should make job creation your priority, so that workers have a shot at a decent job and therefore aren’t feeling compelled to accept those lousy conditions.

But, secondly, you can lift the standards and the rules regarding work and employment standards and precarious work to just prevent companies from taking advantage of that desperation in the workforce.

Just a couple of charts and graphs I’ll put up for those who want to look at the whole study on our site. Again, this is from Jordan’s section at the beginning of the report. This shows how important unions are to lifting not just the pay in the economy. This is a graph that shows union density, the dotted line, against average hourly earnings, the solid line.

And, when unions were strong and growing and making demands, wages were rising. Ever since, sort of, the neo-Conservatives came to power in the early ‘80s, unions have been under siege. Union density has been declining gradually. And, wages have been completely, completely flat. There has been virtually no real wage growth for workers in Canada. So, unions are absolutely essential. And, we make this point not just for union members, but for lifting the standard throughout the whole economy.

The same goes for job quality. Jordan did some analysis matching, union density again, that’s the black line this time, against a measure of job quality, which economists have done based on a number of measures, like part-time work, temporary work, self-employment, et cetera, et cetera. And, the weaker unions become, obviously, the weaker is the average level of quality in the economy.

So, this is where we have to position the recognition of the value of unions in collective bargaining, front and centre, in our strategy for addressing job quality, precarious work, income equality, and so on.

Unions have to be part of the solution. And, this is part of our pitch, obviously, to the government and to the public, that without strong unions, no society has ever achieved a truly inclusive and prosperous labour market.

So, let me take a couple of minutes and just go through some of the solutions that we proposed as part of our brief, starting with, kind of, a list of proposed reforms in the employment standards area. So, these are things that we are proposing get changed to the benefit of all workers, whether they’re in a union or not.

So, we had a number of measures regarding scheduling for part-time workers, to allow part-time workers to have more certainty and stability in their schedules, rather than having the schedules changing all the time, giving them 14 days’ notice of a change in their schedule and strengthening the rules regarding a minimum call-in period to get paid for, if you do get called in.

We have also made a proposal about prohibition of two-tier wages where you are just outright discriminating against workers on the basis of the date of their hire. There is a rule to this effect in Quebec that isn’t fool-proof. Employers are still able to find ways around it sometimes, but it helps unions to try and turn back the idea of two-tier wages.

We have a number of proposals around temp agency workers, including limits on how much the agency can cream off and a requirement that temp workers get the same pay as permanent workers doing the same job where they have been assigned.

Also, employers have to have responsibility for what happens with temp workers. Right now, if there is some kind of abuse or some illegal activity around wages and payment and so on, the employer tends to wash their hands of it and say it is all just the agency’s fault. They can’t do that. They should be partly equally responsible for following the law and they can’t outsource their liability to the agency.

We’ve got an interesting proposal, based on an Australian system, to provide paid leave and guaranteed return to work for workers who are dealing with domestic abuse at home. That is a very important idea to include.
Stronger protections for migrant workers including the ability to complain about abusive treatment on the job and without being kicked out of the country. Right now, the temporary foreign workers and so on, if they were to complain about something their boss was doing, would be in a very, very vulnerable position.

Finally, all of the employment standards stuff means nothing unless you have got a strong enforcement mechanism. So, we have a number of proposals in the brief about how to improve enforcement of employment standards, including giving third parties -- whether that was a union or a Community Legal Clinic or a Workers’ Action Centre, giving third parties the right to prosecute a case on behalf of someone who has been exploited and treated unfairly.

And then employers who are found guilty under this system would have to pay fines, but then go into the system for help covering the costs of those who are helping to prosecute the cases. So, I think this is a far-reaching and very positive set of reforms on the Employment Standards Act.

Now, let’s look at the other track, okay, in our two-track system, which is labour laws, and what can we do to enhance the ability of workers in Ontario to join a union, to be free from persecution by employers for union activity and then, importantly, to use their union, use the collective voice that comes with the union in order to better their condition?

So, some of the important measures that we put forward on the labour law side of things, we would like to see a return to a card-check system for certifying the union. It is much fairer and more democratic.

This idea of having a ballot on the employer’s work site with all the intimidation, even things like compulsory meetings with the employer beforehand and all the threats that the employer gets to wield, that is not democratic at all. That is about as democratic as a vote in North Korea, where they have ballot boxes as well and nobody should think that that is a democratic system. So, a return to card check would be ideal.

And, an important victory on that score is happening now federally with the election of the Liberals and the ousting of the Conservatives. The government has pledged to eliminate Bill C-525, which was going to take away card check for federal sector workers. So, it is not impossible to win these things, so that is important and that is why that is at the top of our list.

In cases where you do have voting for certification, then we propose some changes where you don’t have to do it on the employer’s site. You can do it from offsite using electronic techniques, which are very common in all kinds of things, like Canadian Idol; right? If you can vote electronically for that, why can’t you vote for a union that way? The same goes for electronic union cards, better protection for union organizers, early disclosure of employee lists.

This is another ridiculous thing. I mean, how can you say that this is democratic? Imagine having an election, okay, where one of the parties, not all the parties, but one of the parties competing for the election knew who every voter was and where they lived and their phone number.

And then everyone else didn’t even know many voters there were, let alone where they lived and what their phone numbers were; right? That is not democracy; right? Again, that is just a ridiculous barrier. That’s all that is.

So, having disclosure of employee lists, so at least we know how many workers are in the pool; right? Otherwise, we are constantly just guessing as to whether we have enough cards to file or not.

We need to have more proactive arbitration by labour boards in situations where we are at loggerheads, either trying to negotiate a first contract or some of the very long horrible disputes that we’re facing, such as with the cab drivers in Ottawa and other long fights that we have had.

Finally, we have very clear language on protecting union rights in the event of contract flipping. This is one of the most horrible and exploitive techniques that companies use nowadays in any kind of a business where there is a contract for the service, whether it’s bus-driving services or parking services all over the place.
If the contract comes up for bid, then the company, the employers, can easily avoid the union by just shifting the contract to a different employer. And, it has been a horrible source of abuse in those situations. And, there are many Unifor locals that have a terrible experience with it; in fact, have told the commissioners about this during the hearing. So, in situations like that, it is essential that the workers have the right to representation and that right has to go with them.

Just because the company puts up a new house of cards and a new business name, you cannot lose your union status. You have to have the work that goes to those workers with their duly-recognized union status. There is no other way to do that, for fairness.

Now, I mentioned a couple of out-of-the-box ideas or big-sky ideas, and let me tell you what those are. And, again, consult the full brief for more details.

One is a couple of rights, basic rights that would be provided to workers in non-union workplaces. To some extent, we take these rights for granted in a unionized setting. But, the idea of extending it to non-union workplaces is kind of novel, although there are some precedents for it.

The idea of having just-cause protection for workers in a non-union worksite is as follows. If you get fired by some arbitrary decision of an employer in a non-union setting, about all you can do is take the employer to Civil Court. You can sue the employer for unfair dismissal and then hope that you get damages.

First of all, most workers don’t have the financial wherewithal to do that. Secondly, even if you win, you don’t get your job back at the end of it. The most you can get is damages and even that is a bit iffy. However, in some cases, like in federal jurisdiction, you can actually, as a non-union worker, take your case to the Labour Board and have them rule on unjust dismissal and order that you actually get your job back. And, that seems much fairer, in terms of giving some protection for those workers against unjust dismissal.

So, we do propose a just-cause provision in the Labour Relations Act that would cover all workers, not just in unionized workplaces, similar to the one that occurs in the Canada Labour Code.

The second thing, in a way, is even more, I think, novel is the idea of explicit legal protection for workers in a non-union setting to undertake collective action in defence of their rights. And, the precedent in this case, believe it or not, is the United States. It is very rare that we actually look to the United States as an example of labour law leadership; okay? But, on this issue, their law is actually better than ours.

In America, even in a non-union setting, the right to organize, to speak publicly, to talk to your mates, to sign petitions, even to go on strike is legally protected even in a non-union work setting. That is how we managed to see these strikes recently in places like Walmart or the fast-food franchises where workers don’t even have a union, but they’re still able to go on strike and not get fired for it, interestingly enough, and that is because of this provision in the U.S. law.

Now, in and of itself, I don’t think it is going to mean anything. And, where those types of actions are occurring, there is usually a union behind it; right?

I mean, it’s a no-brainer that if you see a group of workers who are organizing or complaining about something to the boss, a union should be right there in the middle of it, helping them to organize, and saying, “By the way, the way to prevent this is to form a union at the end of the day,” as a way of recognizing that all workers have the right to collective action and laying the groundwork, sort of planting the seeds, if you like, for unionization.

This idea of protecting collective action and the right to speak out without being fired in a non-union workplace is, I think, a basic democratic right, first of all. And, secondly, could plant some seeds for future union drives. So, that is one set of the interesting ideas.

The second chapter that is kind of an out-of-the-box idea was Unifor’s proposal for a sectoral approach to labour standards and collective bargaining. Again, there are some precedents for this in Ontario today that exists. There is legislation that allows the provincial government to establish specific employment standards for specific sectors of the economy.

That legislation is on the books and they do that from time to time. Usually, unfortunately, they do it by allowing employers in a particular sector to opt out of a particular standard that would otherwise apply to the whole economy.
One example of that is what Toyota did. Toyota went to the Ontario government and said, “I don’t like these rules about the maximum number of hours that people can work in a week. I don’t like that 56-hour limit. Can you write a specific regulation for the auto assembly sector that allows people to work longer hours?” That was how that whole thing came about. So, the provision -- the power is there to do that on a sector-by-sector basis, but they don’t use it. At least, they don’t use it to try and lift standards in particular sectors that are hard hit.

There is also experience from other jurisdictions. In Quebec, for example, there is a system called the “decree system”, which our union has used a lot in certain sectors; for example, auto mechanic shops in Montreal. Unifor has representation in about 100 of them, several thousand members.

And, it has come together as a result of this decree model that they have in Quebec, whereby the government establishes a structure that covers the whole industry in a particular part of the province. And then they can join the union and have their standards lifted evenly across the sector.

This approach is going to make a lot of sense in industries where working conditions are very poor, like fast food, for example, where it is very hard to organize.

And, even when you do organize one franchise, say, the competition from the other franchise is so wicked that more often than not, you end up losing the unit after all. So, this sector-wide approach makes a lot of sense.

So, what we propose in the brief is a new thing called sectoral standards agreements, which would allow the ORLB, the Labour Relations Board, to establish on a whole industry, basic provisions. It wouldn’t be all the bells and whistles of a collective agreement, but they would take the core features of the collective agreement and say, “From now on, this applies across the whole sector”. And then they would have a representative structure whereby workers even in the non-union places could elect representatives and have input into the bargaining.

It is similar to the sort of industry-wide collective bargaining that goes on in many other countries, such as in Europe or such as in Australia that has industry-wide collective bargaining. So, I think it is feasible. It isn’t a Utopian idea, but it would certainly be a change in practice. We know that the commissioners and the governments are taking this proposal very seriously and they are looking into it right now. So, there is some possibility that they might actually move on it.

We made a number of other recommendations about improving standards on a sector-wide basis, including sector-wide certifications, new rules whereby franchises could be covered within a collective agreement for the master company, and new protections for independent contractors on a sector-wide basis.

So, this whole approach, I think, is very innovative. Unifor’s brief is something we can all be proud of. And, it is something that we will use elsewhere, too, not just in Ontario.

In Alberta, for example, with the new NDP government there, they are going to initiate a review of labour law, and hopefully an opportunity for us to fight for similar measures in Alberta. So, the work that we have all done on this, I think, will have value in other locations as well.

So, now we have put in our submissions and I think mapped out a very credible case, but it doesn’t matter how good your argument is, if you haven’t mobilized political force in order to win the demands that we’re putting in. So, this is, again, where the torch gets passed from the researchers and the lawyers who wrote the submission to the local union activists and organizers and leadership to try and take the ideas that we put into the brief and then enforce upon politicians of all stripes and the commissioners and the public as a whole that this kind of a thing has to happen.

We cannot take it as inevitable that our economy becomes more polarized, that our labour market is dominated by precarious work, that the old dream of a full-time stable job with benefits is just that, a dream. It is not reachable for our children anymore. And, that pessimism is not justified and we can’t accept it. So, at this stage now, we are going to move into a pretty ambitious lobbying and mobilizing campaign.

Starting next week, most of you will have been contacted again by Katha’s team about the mass lobby that is going to occur at Queen’s Park. We are meeting with MPs and leaders from all three of the parties. We are going to be going in with our full brief, 159 pages. Did I mention that, 159 pages? If anyone disagrees with us, we hit them on the head with the brief.
And, I think that is how we can make this more than just another consultation process. We could actually get something out of it at the end that we will all be proud of and that will energize our members as we go forward.

So, in conclusion, there is just one more technical term that I should define as we go, “Progress: showing employers, government and society that change is possible and that the union, Unifor in particular, can lead it”. And, I am optimistic that that’s what we’re going to do, starting with the mass lobby next week.

Thank you very much for your attention, and good luck to all with the organizing, and thank you very much for that song you sang me today. I will remember that forever. Thank you.

KATHA FORTIER: You do have a copy of the PowerPoint presentation in your kits. Jim, you’re missing a few slides that weren’t in there. Do you have some extras that you probably share with the delegates on your technical terms? I know they would love to have them.

But, on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, I would like to present you with a gift on behalf of all of us. It is for your piggy-bank to come back to Canada and visit us sometime.

JIM STANFORD: Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: So, just before we get into the recommendation and I ask Katha to come up and read Recommendation No. 2 of which we will be debating and discussing, I do want to recognize three individuals that are here with us today. They come out of the Toyota facility. They are sitting to my right here. It’s Dan, Lee and Jeff. If you guys can get up and please be recognized?

These are individuals that have worked hard in the Toyota facility, worked with our organizing group to make sure that we could connect with different individuals. And, we have them here, because we want to make sure that we can recognize them for when they become full-fledged Unifor members. So, thank you to all your hard work and dedication. It is much appreciated.

Okay. So, thank you guys again, and I will now ask Katha to come up and read Recommendation No. 2.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2: THE ONTARIO CHANGING WORKPLACES REVIEW AND THE GENDER WAGE GAP REVIEW

KATHA FORTIER: So, this recommendation is on the Ontario Changing Workplaces Review and also on the Gender Wage Gap that I talked about in my remarks this morning, and I know was also discussed at the Women’s Caucus lunch today.

The Ontario Minister of Labour is conducting two inter-related reviews concerning employment standards, labour law and gender-based discrimination.
The Changing Workplaces Review will make recommendations on the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act. Initial submissions from labour, business and community are presently before the advisors to this process and a preliminary report is expected in early February 2016.

Unifor has been organizing meetings and consultations with community organizations, business groups, Minister of Labour and government policy advisors in support of our comprehensive submission. Unifor ORC will lead a lobby to Queen’s Park on our Changing Workplaces Review submissions on December 7th and 8th.

The Gender Wage Gap Review is a parallel process by the Minister of Labour and the Ministry Responsible for Women’s Issues to “examine the causes and effects of the gender wage gap on women, of all ages, backgrounds and abilities across the economic spectrum.” This process will receive submissions from labour, business and the public and will report by the autumn of 2016 on policies that will address “conditions and barriers that lead to the gap.” The Pay Equity Act, Employment Standards Act and the Human Rights Act are all included in this review.

Public hearings for the Gender Wage Gap have commenced and will continue until February 2016. Public hearings ahead include: December 9, 2015 - Peterborough; Dec. 27, 2015 - Sudbury; January 25, 2016 - London; February 16, 2016 - St. Catharines; February 22, 2016 - Brampton.

These processes offer an extraordinary opportunity to make changes to the world of work for Ontario workers and women. I therefore recommend:
1. **Ontario Unifor locals circulate and discuss our proposals to the Changing Workplaces Review.**
2. **Ontario local unions support our December 7th and 8th lobby to Queen’s Park, to build political support for labour law and employment standards changes.**
3. **Ontario local unions organize meetings, consultations and discussions with community, faith or business groups with a view to explaining our proposals and securing endorsements of part or all of our submissions, including a willingness to continue a dialogue towards labour law and employment standards reforms.**
4. **Ontario locals circulate and discuss our submission and proposals to the Gender Wage Gap Review.**
5. **Ontario locals and women activists participate in the remaining Gender Wage Gap Review hearings with coordination of our participation through the Unifor National Women’s Department.**
6. **That throughout the Gender Wage Gap Review process in 2016, the Ontario Regional Council, women’s committee and local unions use Unifor’s submission to generate the widest possible discussion on gender equity in Ontario.**

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, Katha. I’ll take any speakers at the mics. Speaker at Mic 4.

**LEANNE PARRISH:** Leanne Parrish, Local 567. I wanted to thank Jim for pointing out again and again the importance of unions and collective bargaining. I also wanted to thank the delegation for including migrant workers to the resolution that we passed. I have a lot of thoughts on this.

And, there is one thing Jim said that I will say I didn’t agree with. Under the modernizing labour laws, he said if they put the protection of all workers to engage in collective action might not mean anything, but I think for the migrant workers, this would mean a lot, because it is exactly the ability to unionize and to collectively bargain that has been taken away from them, and the AEPA, whatever it is, the Agricultural Employees Protection Act.

I would also like to ask Jim how the Agricultural Employees Protection Act is included or excluded from the provincial review. Thank you.

**JIM STANFORD:** That Act was not part of the terms of reference for this review. They actually excluded several different topics, including the minimum wage itself, the gender parity issue, that Act from the terms of reference for the two commissioners.

So, that doesn’t stop us from raising it; okay? So, in our lobbying, we should say if we are truly going to protect migrant workers and agricultural workers, we have got to reform that bill as well. So, that shouldn’t stop us.

**LEANNE PARISH:** Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, sister. Speaker at mic number 2.

**SUE MCKINNON:** Sue McKinnon, Local 444. I rise in support of this recommendation. Sisters and brothers, in Windsor, we had over 50 people in attendance for the participation of the Ministry of Labour Gender Wage Gap consultation process.

There were 14 town hall meetings and 101 sessions. It was important to attend this. They’re three-quarters of the way through already. So, we need to be out there, to give our thoughts, what we believe should be there. It is different in each community. So, we need to make sure that it is full house at these town hall meetings.

It shows that we are important and, plus, to be part of the development and strategize to close the wage gap gender between men and women. The wage gap in Ontario is 31.5 percent on average of all earnings. It is a wide percentage for workers of colour, Aboriginal and disability of females. The majority of the low moderate paying jobs are held by women. We know that being unionized and having a collective agreement narrows the gap. The wages are transparent and you’ll pay to the value of all this work.

The workers need a national affordable universal child care program, employment legislation of equality, increase minimum wages to a living wage for all workers, stronger part-time scheduling guidelines with enough notice to maintain a work/life balance, enforce pay equity legislation, a greater opportunity for higher-paying permanent full-time jobs. Let’s enforce this. Thank you.
DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic number 4.

GWEN CAMPBELL: Gwen Campbell, Ontario Women’s Committee. I stand in full support of this recommendation also. As Sue said, we have to get out to these Gender Wage Gap Reviews. So, anybody in the Brampton area, I urge you to attend the one on February 22nd. We don’t have a place yet, but I will be sending out emails and posting on Facebook, et cetera. We have to have our voices heard. It is so important that we close that gap for women.

As Jim stated in his review, precarious work means unpredictable irregular schedules and it’s temporary or uncertain. And, what does it mean? It is linked to health risks, as his report stated. It is including stress, depression, heart disease and diabetes.

And, who are in those precarious jobs? For the most part, it’s women. It’s women working in health care where they’re working two or three jobs. They’re our sisters and brothers, but the majority are sisters, working in our grocery stores. They made a great gain to their most recent contract, but they are still so far behind.

Some of us are very fortunate to work for the Detroit Three. I make a decent wage. It is important that we bring everybody’s wages up to affordable living wages and as Sue said, also getting child care for everybody.

So, all of this feeds into women not being able to leave abusive relationships. If you’re not making good money, if you’re holding two or three jobs, if there is no child care, you’re going to stay in a relationship, because you need to feed your kids. It comes down to that. So, please, everybody support this recommendation. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker at mic 2.

TERRI WEYMOUTH: Hi, Terry Weymouth, National Skilled Trades coordinator. I stand in support of the recommendation.

I had the privilege of doing the roundtable in the Windsor area. We did a consultation process and they had a number of questions there, the first one being what encourages and what prevents women from pursuing employment in jobs that tend to be male-dominated; example, the science, technology, engineering, math and the skilled trades, and what encourages and what prevents men from pursuing employment in jobs that tend to be female-dominated?

Luckily, I was able to stand as a representative for the Skilled Trades Department. They all know women are under-represented in the skilled trades. Currently, only 4 percent of women are in the construction, motor power and the industrial trades.

This is a place where we can make a difference in pay equity. There is a window of opportunity here. Baby boomers are retiring and our building and road infrastructure is ailing. Unifor Skilled Trades have made a commitment to advocating and promoting women in the trades through awareness programs, school presentations, trade shows and a national network to identify mentors. Brothers and sisters, sometimes you have to see it to beat it.

Unifor Skilled Trades are also advocating to have our tax dollars used to build or rebuild or replace our infrastructures, be it municipally, provincially or federal tax money, those tax dollars to be tied to apprentice opportunities, and those apprentice opportunities should have an equity lens.

I would ask for an amendment to add the Skilled Trades Department to this recommendation. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, speaker. I’ll take the speaker on mic number 1.

MAGGIE HARBERT: Thanks, Dino. Maggie Harbert, Local 35-O, not from 229. I just want to share a personal story with you. I work for Bell and as a technician -- so it’s a very male-dominated workplace. And, I want to just address a story on the whole issue of gender equity and some of the things that we have to face as women in the workplace.

So, my job requires me to drive a truck, so I drive a Ford F-250 4X4 four-door, a big huge honking truck. And, I have to tow a trailer every so often with generators. So, I got sent just this past spring on a trailer-towing course in Belleville.

In the written documentation that Bell shared with us all, in one section -- for everybody who knows how to hook up a trailer, you know how you have the two chains and you put the chains across and all that stuff? In the documentation, it says, “Do not put anything heavier on those chains that your wife cannot lift.” Suffice to say, I was all over that one. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. I’ll recognize the speaker on mic number 4.
DEB HENRY: Hi, my name is Deb Henry. I’m from Local 414. We are the retail sector. I realize that wages are not being discussed in this review. But, we are retail workers and have many students who only make $10.35 an hour, and minimum wage, the standard minimum wage, is $11.25. In some of our departments, the students are the senior person in the department and making less than minimum wage.

So, we just wanted to raise this issue, bring it to the forefront and hopefully this will change. They don’t deserve any less than the rest of us. So, thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. Seeing no speakers at the mic -- sorry, mic number 4. I apologize.

JACKIE McINTOSH: Hi, I’m Jackie McIntosh from Local 79-M. That’s CTV in Toronto. I stand in full support of this recommendation.

The reason why is when I started at CTV in 1989, I had brothers that were making the same as I was. But, then there were other people in my department that talked to the boss and got a better wage than myself and started as an editor, cutting the news and making more, because they were a guy.

I know way too many people my age that are not making half of what I make and it’s disgusting. I hate this precarious work that has been going on, and people that are barely getting by and hardly making what they should be making to get by, a living wage.

The other day, I went into the bad place, Walmart, and they asked me if I want a MasterCard. And, I said, “No. I want to make sure that you make a living wage. And, when they unionize every single person here, then that is when I will get a MasterCard from Walmart.”

I’m sorry, I’m not doing it anymore. They make way too much money and I’m tired of seeing that happen. They’re making money off the backs of the people in our country. This has got to stop. The time for gender wage has to be there. If men and women are not getting the same, and then by the time I retire and I am not making what I should be making from the time I started work to the end of when I retire, because I’m on my own and I’ve got to make sure that I can take care of myself. Goodbye.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Seeing no speakers at the mic, I do want to ask for a point of clarification. I think Terry was at the mic, when she was asking to look at inserting skilled trades in Recommendation No. 2. I am assuming that that would be in Point No. 5 or -- I’m not sure. I just want to get some clarification for that friendly amendment.

TERRY WEYMOUTH: Point No. 5, please, where it says, “Ontario locals and women activists participate in the remaining Gender Wage Gap Review hearings with coordination of our participation through the Unifor National Women’s Department.” I would like it to say “the Unifor Skilled Trades Department” as well.

DINO CHIODO: So, just add the words, “Unifor Skilled Trades Department”? TERRY WEYMOUTH: If you go through the consultation questions, there are a couple of questions that directly relate to women in the STEM or skilled trades, which I did present a brief as well as sat in the consultations.

DINO CHIODO: So, we’ll accept the friendly amendment in Point No. 5 to also stipulate the Unifor Skilled Trades. Any other discussion? Seeing none, all those in favour of the recommendation with the friendly amendment to include “Skilled Trades” in Point No. 5,

All those in favour? (favouring votes shown)

Down.

Opposed if any? (opposing votes shown, if any)

Carried. CARRIED

Thank you very much, brothers and sisters.

In the next order of business -- and, what I am going to do is I am going to have Tullio come up and introduce Peter Kennedy. But, I just want to let everybody know that we are running ahead of schedule.

So, what I would like to do is I would like to go over the staff reports, so hopefully we’ll be able to be done on time or a little bit early tomorrow if we can get through everything.
And, potentially, if we have time today as well, we will be referring to the Emergency Resolution that was read out. It will be considered Resolution No. 8. It should be in front of everybody currently. And, what we will do is, if we can get through staff reports, then we will also look at Resolution No. 8 as well.

Yes, point of privilege. I was trying to get my point out, too. Thank you.

POINTS OF PRIVILEGE

MARY LEONARD: Mary Leonard, Unifor Local 414.

JEFF FERRISS: Jeff Ferriss, Unifor 414. I just wanted to let everyone know at Council, we are running our 9th Annual Purse Auction for Lupus. And, it starts at 7:00 p.m. in the ---

MARY LEONARD: Room 8.

JEFF FERRISS: Room 8. And, we are looking for support from the brothers tonight. It’s not just a purse auction. We have Raptors tickets. They have got an autographed goalie stick. We’ve got golf packages. We are looking for support from everyone. And, we are looking forward to a big night. We have live entertainment and everything.

MARY LEONARD: And, tickets are one for $10.00, three for $20.00. It also gets you in the draw for an iPad Air. Thank you.

JEFF FERRISS: Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Very heavily supported by Local 414. They’re the ones that put it on, so way to go. Keep up the great work. Point at mic number 1.

SHERI LAEKEMAN: Thank you, Dino. Sheri Laekeman, president of Local 4212. I am here with a group of volunteers today and tomorrow. We are raising money, as we did a couple of years ago, for the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial Task Force.

I have this great resource that actually came with me from the Niagara region. He worked for 30 years for the museum in St. Catharines. And, he knows everything about everything in the area historically, but specifically about this issue where I don’t know if you are aware of it, but 137 men died between 1919 and 1932, building the Welland Canal.

Why I am here and why I am asking for your support is, we are running a draw this weekend to raise funds. My local would have actually been the -- if there was a union then at the time, we would have actually represented those men that died.

There’s an interesting story here that these were forgotten men. They were supposed to build the memorial in 1932 when the Welland Canal opened. It never happened. And, as a result of a lot of really, really good work done by the historians, that they actually found that there were 137 people that had died that they’re fully aware of.

At any rate, his name is Arden Phair. Anybody who is from Niagara has probably heard of him. He is out there. He is a great resource. We’re selling tickets, because we have committed $25,000.00 to this memorial. It is going to be a great thing at Lock 3 in St. Catharines.

But, go out there. We have got first prize, an Apple watch. Second prize is a Samsung notebook. And, third prize is $50.00. We really need your support to meet a goal of $25,000.00.

I know that 444 has in the past donated $300.00 and we really appreciated that. I would love to see some locals come forward and throw some money in the pot. Thanks very much for your support.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Point on mic number 4.


The Council of Canadians in Montreal this past August, the Energy Industry Council, passed a resolution to initiate a process to develop a Made in Unifor Canadian Energy Policy. I am happy to stand here today to advise the delegates here that the process has begun. The policy, when complete, will address all modes of energy production and consumption, the need for infrastructure investment and planning, ways to maximize Canadian value-added activity related to energy industries.

It will propose effective mechanisms to attain indigenous support for and participation in energy projects, and will address how to align energy policy with sustainable environmental policies, including reduction in greenhouse gas pollution.
A draft policy would be presented in the summer of 2016 at the Energy Council and for other Unifor bodies.

I stand here today to invite delegates here at the ORC to contribute to this policy and this project by contacting Brother Jordan Brennan at the Unifor Research Department. This policy, this development policy is supported by Brother Brian Campbell and Brother Dave Moffat. So, it is just a point of information, brother, and we invite you to participate in this going forward. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Thanks for informing us. Point at mic number 1.

JIM ANGUS: Jim Angus, Local 240, Windsor, vice-president. I rise with great pride to acknowledge a very important award presented just two weeks ago today to Theresa Farao, president of Local 240 in Windsor, my local union.

Theresa is the 2015 recipient of the Charles Brooks Labour Appreciation Award presented each year by United Way Centraide Windsor-Essex. Named after Local 444 president, the late Charles Brooks who was tragically murdered in his own office, Charlie would have been 100 years old this year. And, his legacy is a vision that carries on in the spirit and, indeed, in the values and actions of the recipients of this award.

Theresa’s work is in our community, including time spent on community boards like the United Way, the Unemployed Help Centre. If you need a volunteer, you just ask Theresa as Coats for Kids, Easter Seals, and so many others have.

She is always there willing to help. Her passion for our members and their lives is always a driving force. Her expertise in pay equity plans and their practice and enforcement is well known throughout Unifor and the wider labour movement.

Her passion surrounding the practice of equal pay for work of equal value and spreading that knowledge and assistance to workplaces across Ontario is again, indeed, well-known and needed so much.

Please join me in congratulating my president, Theresa Farao, United Way, the Charles Brooks Labour Appreciation Award for 2015. We love you, Theresa.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much for that. Now, getting back onto track with regards to the next order of business, I will ask Tullio to come up and introduce Peter Kennedy.

TULLIO DI PONTI: Thank you, Dino. Peter Kennedy. Peter Kennedy is the founding secretary-treasurer of Unifor. Come on up, Peter. No, no, we've got to do this, Peter.

Peter played a key role in the creation of Unifor. He served as co-chair of the CAW/CEP Proposal Committee, which oversaw the creation of Unifor. Peter began his career in the labour movement at 3M Canada in London, Ontario, in 1972 where he was a member of CAW Local 27.

Throughout the 1970s and early 80s, Peter was elected to various in-plant and local union executive positions. During this time, he was active in the London community as a United Way board member and a founding board member of the London Unemployed Help Centre.

In 1989, he was appointed director of the union’s Education Department. In 1992, he was appointed assistant to the National Secretary-Treasurer, Jim O’Neil. Peter calls this the longest apprenticeship ever.

Peter was elected the CAW National secretary-treasurer at the union’s Constitution Convention in 2009 and again in 2012.

Peter sits on the Executive Board of the International and Transport Workers Federation and the International Trade Union Federation of Transport Workers Union, representing more than 4.5 million workers in 154 countries.

Please join me in welcoming Peter Kennedy, Unifor Secretary-Treasurer.

ADDRESS: PETER KENNEDY, UNIFOR NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

BROTHER PETER KENNEDY: Thank you very, very much Tullio, and good afternoon, sisters and brothers. I would be remiss if I didn’t take a few minutes to acknowledge our good friend and colleague, Jimbo, who is, as we all know now, travelling off to Australia.

And, the song that Jody led us in, I think, captures a lot about Jim and what he has meant to the union. But, the one thing it didn’t highlight and probably something that not everybody is necessarily aware of, but it is just how tough Jim is.
He made that entire presentation wounded. When he made that leap to engage Katha, he smashed his finger on the side of the podium here and bled through the entire presentation. So, Jim, we want to recognize not only the tremendous contribution that you have made, not just with the numbers, but in terms of the humour and the parody and the songs -- I mean, my favourite was the Harper skit. I mean, it has got to be one of the best. But, just to appreciate and acknowledge just how tough you are. So, thank you, brother.

The other thing too, I wanted to acknowledge the retirees. If any of you were doing the math during Tullio’s introduction, there weren’t any child labour laws in effect in 1972 when I started.

But, the reality is that -- and, many of you already know this, but in 393 days -- it should be 392, but who is counting? Next year, it’s 2016. It’s a leap year, so one more to serve, and then I will be retiring from Unifor. And, believe me, it has been an honour and a privilege. And, as you might suspect, I will have much more to say about that in the intervening year.

But, just in terms of historical events, there were a couple things that happened that were significant to the labour movement in North America, in both Canada and the United States 60 years or so ago, 55 years or so ago.

And, one which happened in the U.S., it’s 60 years ago tomorrow. The American Federation of Labour and the Congress of Industrial Organizations came together to -- because they weren’t really deep thinkers about how you market names, but the AFL-CIO came together to become the AFL-CIO.

But, the other point in a similar time frame, maybe three or four years later, I’m not exactly sure of it, but it was around that time, I know, that the Canadian Labour Congress and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation came together to form the NDP. And, I would argue that both of those events were events that were designed to strengthen not only the labour movement, but the political movement, to entrench what was part of the socio-economic fabric of the day.

And, that was the postwar social contract that had been developing with the understanding amongst all that we all needed to share in the prosperity that was being created. And, that was government that was business and labour.

And, in the intervening six decades, a lot has happened. And, I would argue that -- and these aren’t exact numbers, but rough numbers. I would argue good enough for my analysis. Maybe not the analysis that Jimbo would do, but good enough for my analysis that the first 30 years, things were pretty good, at least not so bad. On the other hand, the last 30 years, things have been bad. In fact, they have been bleak.

In the first three decades of that period, employment was growing, incomes were increasing, education was made more accessible and health care was expanding, what a lot of us would refer to today as the good old days.

During the last three decades of that period, that unwritten social contract began to unravel. At first, the business component, multi-national and trans-national corporations, decided amongst themselves, contrary to the prevailing wisdom, that they were the income generators. Consequently, they deserved a bigger share of that three-way split.

And, for the record, so that there is no mistake, it is you working women and men who are the real income generators in our society. And, that, sisters and brothers, is as true today as it ever was.

And then lo and behold, the multi-national corporations financed and supported political leaders, first Thatcher in the U.K., Reagan in the U.S., Howard in Australia, and more recently in Canada, some guy that used to be known as Stephen Harper.

But, they had this belief, a fundamental belief in what they called the trickle-down theory. And, that is, if you just cut corporate taxes, cut corporate taxes, cut corporate taxes, cut corporate taxes, that somehow that additional income would filter down to the rest of society and, consequently, incomes will rise, the classic neo-Liberal, neo-Conservative agenda.

And, we all know too well, sisters and brothers, that that has not happened at all. In fact, what has accompanied that is not only a stagnation of incomes, but the precarity of work that we have already talked about here today. And, coupled with that was an all-out attack on the labour movement, on working people and their institutions. And, it was within this backdrop that Unifor was created here in Toronto some 27, 28 months ago.
And, we left that Founding Convention with our mission statement, with six sort of key ideals that we challenged ourselves to do and to become, and to support going forward. The last time I spoke to this counsel, I did kind of a report card on those six items. I am not going to do that today. But, I do want to focus on one, at least briefly, and that is making our progressive voices heard. And, we have talked about that already today. We have done it. We have had our voices heard. All of you here in the Province of Ontario, we have done it. All of us across the country, we have done it.

I remember the last Prairie Council meeting. It was just days, perhaps a week before the Notley juggernaut took over in the Province of Alberta ending 44-45 years of Tory rule. There was a panel of federations of labour presidents who addressed that gathering, and they were talking about the role and the necessity of unions in politics.

There was one panelist, and I think it was Kevin Rebeck from the Manitoba Federation of Labour, and he said something very succinctly that never struck me prior to, but was quite, I think, powerful and meaningful in how simple it was. And, that was simply, “Unions can’t leave politics alone, because politics won’t leave unions alone.”

And, that is a sentiment, obviously, that is true today, and it is never more obvious perhaps than what we witnessed here in the Province of Ontario with Tim Hudak and his pledge to turn Ontario into a right-to-work province and to start off his term in office by laying off 100,000 public sector workers.

And, I don’t know if we appreciate necessarily today, in the aftermath of that victory making sure that Hudak wasn’t elected, just how close we were to his dream becoming our nightmare.

The reality is, when he went into that election, Hudak was leading in the polls. He was leading in the polls with strong support, 30 percent support amongst union households. When Election Day arrived, that support amongst union households had gone down 10-11 percent to somewhere around 20 percent or the high teens.

And, that, sisters and brothers, was the difference. And, that was in part, at least, by the activities of Unifor, our constant engagement, our rights-at-work campaign, the numerous leadership meetings that we held across the province. And, that engagement continues today with our local union task forces. It is about another commitment as well that we also made at that Founding Convention. And, that was how we continue to defend labour rights, how we build a stronger and more engaged membership.

So, we have made a difference here in the Province of Ontario. We have had an opportunity now to perhaps see something come to fruition that hasn’t happened in a long time, and that is the labour law reform that we have talked about, that Jimbo made the presentation on just minutes ago. And, that is something that, again, if it comes to fruition, it will be in no small part because of the efforts of you, sisters and brothers, and of Unifor.

And then obviously, more recently, we have seen a similar strip play out federally. Working people, indigenous peoples, progressive people of all stripes, women, communities, even our scientists, statisticians, they have all been targeted and have been attack from the Harper government from the first days he was elected.

But, in the dying days of what thankfully would turn out to be his last mandate, he introduced some of the worst, most Draconian legislation aimed directly at the labour movement, 377, 525, C-4 and another piece of legislation about fear-mongering, C-51.

The problem with Harper and his ilk, they just cannot tolerate the fact that we would have the temerity to speak out and to challenge their neo-Conservative, neo-Liberal agenda. But, we have proven that we do have that temerity and we will continue to have that temerity.

We are not going to go away. We may be bruised from time-to-time, but we will not be deterred. We will continue to fight for and advance the ideas that are part of our DNA: socio-economic justice, fairness, equity, inclusion, tolerance and understanding, opportunity for all, ideals, sisters and brothers that the vast majority of Canadians also support.

And, I thought for many, many years, if we could just get people out to vote, if as a country, as a promise, as a municipality, if we could achieve 75-80 percent voter turnout, then I don’t think we would ever have to worry about a right-wing government again.
I mean, we’ll move back and forth from centre left and left back to centre, but I don’t think we would have to really worry about a government, certainly of the Harper ilk that we would all, I think, agree is basically a northern version of the Tea Party.

But, that hasn’t been the case in terms of voter turnout in the past. But, it was part of our strategy in this last federation election, the I Will Vote campaign. And, as it turned out, 3 million additional voters. And, again, that was the difference. Working with others, our efforts were successful in encouraging people to vote and in encouraging people to switch their vote.

And, like Hudak, Harper also started that election campaign, the longest in Canadian history, with again about 30 percent support amongst union households. Again, we changed that dynamic, and now we have Justin Trudeau elected as the Prime Minister, and a Liberty majority government.

As we speak, the speech of the throne is underway in Ottawa, which will outline the plans for the implementation of the Liberal campaign promises. And, I think it is clear. I don’t think there is any doubt about it that 377 and 525 will be rebilled.

On the other hand, it is not so clear where the Trudeau government will go with respect to TPP. And, I would predict that, ultimately, it will be ratified. We can only hope to make some changes, some tweaks to it, to help protect auto, auto parts, the dairy industry that we heard about this morning, and other critical industries in our country.

So, we are going to have to push. You can’t sit back and just assume that the government is going to deliver on their promises. We’re going to have to push, which we should do in either case. I mean, the reality is whoever is leading in a particular jurisdiction, the best vehicle for working people is not any political party. I believe it’s the labour movement.

So, in that regard, we will be establishing a Lobby Day in Ottawa early in February, to make our voices heard with this government, and to push on those issues that are important and critical for all of us.

We need to hold them to their commitment for an inquiry into the murdered and missing Aboriginal women, not only to meet the basic commitment that they made, but to make sure that there are positive, actionable recommendations that come out of it that we can use and undertake to change the culture of violence.

And, as I stand here two days before the anniversary of the Montreal massacre 26 years ago in 1989, I want to remind the brothers in the room that many of us took an oath in Vancouver at the 1st Unifor Canadian Council, and oath not only to not be a perpetrator, but also not to be a silent witness; to speak out about violence against women in all the forms that it takes. And, that, brothers, is our pledge. That is our oath. We must recommit ourselves to that pledge. We must, as the badge says, “Challenge Sexism, End the Violence.”

So, there is so much more to talk about with respect to what is happening in our lives as a part of Unifor. We have talked about the local union task force. And, I just want to acknowledge that there are many more to come in Ontario, as Katha has pointed out in her report.

The information that we are receiving at the National Executive Board is that the experience in Ontario is the same experience in the Atlantic, the same experience in the West and that our members are engaged and they appreciate the opportunity to have their voices heard about how we shape ourselves going forward.

We have had political successes within the labour movement, at the CLC, more recently at the Ontario Federation of Labour, and heard from our brother and colleague, Chris Buckley, today.

On the collective bargaining front, we have had many, many successes. We have had some challenges and not the least of which is one that is underway in Ottawa today, the Coventry Taxi lockout.

We have members who are facing criminal charges for supporting our locked-out brothers at Coventry. In my view, that is not criminal; that is solidarity. What is criminal is the collusion between Coventry Taxi and the Ottawa Airport Authority to steal millions of dollars out of the pockets of hard-working families. That, sisters and brothers, is what is criminal, economic larceny.
And, we go into this festive season, and we have had some discussions here earlier today about supporting our sisters and brothers who are either on lockout or on strike the week of December 25th. But, I just want to let everyone know, if they don’t know already, that the Strike and Defence Fund will contribute an additional week’s pay to those sisters and brothers who find themselves in that unfortunate situation over the week of December 25th.

And, again, in closing, sisters and brothers, I just want to thank all of you for everything that you do day in and day out on behalf of the members that we have the privilege to represent. But, I also want to offer you my personal best wishes to you and your families, to your loved ones during this festive season. So, thank you very much, sisters and brothers.

**DINO CHIODIO:** Peter, thanks for the warm words and recognizing our strengths, and recognizing that we’re continuing to build and grow and get stronger.

And, we thank you for your leadership and continued support, especially when recognizing groups like the striking workers and giving them that extra week during the Christmas break, the time they need it most. It comes well received and we thank you very much, and appreciate all the comments that you just said. And, don’t leave too quick on us. So, 392 days and counting. So, again, thank you very much for the warm words.

What we will do now is we will go into the staff reports. So if you have an opportunity, and you can take out your staff reports, we will take any discussion, anybody at the mics, with regards to any points or any questions or concerns with reference to the Ontario Regional Council National and Area Staff Reports. We have a speaker on Mic 5.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** So, it’s a point of privilege, the Young Workers Committee. We just want to put a friendly reminder that we have our caucus meeting at 5:00. We see a lot of young workers actually out here today, so hoping to see you down there. And, it’s at the Sheraton Hall A. So, thanks.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**DINO CHIODIO:** Thank you, brother. Are there any speakers on the staff reports?

Oh, Jimmy Woods or is it a point of privilege?

**JIM WOODS:** No, I want to speak on the staff reports.

**DINO CHIODIO:** Jim Woods, Mic 5.

**JIM WOODS:** Thank you. And, Dino said I could be filler, so nobody else got up.

Anyways, I do want to just take this opportunity to talk the National Union and its membership. We went through a very difficult set of bargaining at the OLG as they went through a process of modernization.

And, certainly, I was tempted to get up discuss what they’re doing to the members of OLG or our workers at OLG when we had the privatization discussion on Hydro. But, it was fitting to leave that discussion for Hydro alone.

But, OLG is another asset that the government is selling. And, one of the things that they have done is they told us -- and, again, the Ontario Hydro workers will go through the same dilemma we’re in, where as a public sector employee, we got to belong to the public sector pension plan, which is a very generous defined benefit plan.

Once we are modernized, we actually can’t belong to the public sector plan, because OLG will be selling the sites off to the private sector to run them. And, therefore, we can’t belong to that very generous DB plan.

So, obviously, our objective was to bargain an alternative plan that would give our members the right to retire with dignity. OLG had different ideas. And, when I say “OLG,” insert “Government of Ontario” when I mention OLG.

And, what they did is they said to us that we had to sign a collective agreement that would make no references to a pension plan, because in Ontario --- and, everybody in this room is fortunate. In Ontario, when you’re sold, we’re fortunate to have the successor rights go with that new employer and we would take our collective agreement forward.

So, the government in its wisdom said, “Aha, I’m going to force them to take the pension plan out of their collective agreement before I sell. Therefore, they won’t have any obligations with the new employer.” And then the new employer will then decide through their wisdom what that pension plan will be.
So, they initiated their process by isolating each individual site, starting with a bunch of non-Unifor unionized workplaces. And, those places agreed without a struggle — sorry, not without a struggle. They agreed without being locked out to take the OLG-suggested remedy of taking the pension out and no other remedies in site.

In OLG, we took the position that we weren’t going to accept that, that our members deserved a fight, to fight back against this. And so, we started with Mohawk where we pushed back the employer, because they were going to lock us out.

And, what they did is they took Mohawk Casino and they set them aside and took them to a lockout date and said, “If you don’t accept these, I am going to lock you out.” We were able to fast forward that process. When we got everybody to a common bargaining table, we took seven sites, including three newly-organized sites: Point Edward, Georgian Downs and Ajax Downs, and we were able to include them in a common bargaining strategy. And, I say that, because it was critical for us, because this is where we took a multi-faceted approach to bargaining.

And, I am asking the indulgence of the chair on the timing just to discuss this important thing if I may, Chair, because it has ---

DINO CHIODO: You can have some extra time, absolutely.

JIM WOODS: Thank you, brother. So, we had a master agreement set up for all seven sites. But, the importance here is before we could get there, OLG locked out Woodbine, Sudbury and Brantford.

And so, in order to address this, we approached from a multi-faceted approach. I know Wayne Gates was here. I don’t know if he is still here. But, it really echoes the importance of us electing Unifor members to both the provincial parliament -- the Provincial Legislature and the national Parliament.

I know we are going to meet Tracey tomorrow, but I want to talk about the efforts Wayne Gates did and how important it is for us to have Unifor members, because Wayne brought this issue to the Legislature when we weren’t able to get it on the docket. He raised the question. He even forced his caucus to move it up the agenda over some of things, because there have been a number of issues that have been of extreme importance.

Second of all, we had a number of locals that came and supported us, not only the locals that had members that were either locked out or about to be locked out, we had other locals that came and supported us.

And, for the first time ever, we were able to shut Woodbine down and to force the government. It was a very difficult strike. The reason we were able to shut down Woodbine was we were able to call on all of our friends in this room. So, it was pure sense of social solidarity.

The other thing we were able to do was we were able to work with our Communications Department and we were able to get the issues to the forefront in the media, in spite of the fact that our biggest competition was the Jays and the Royals.

And, in fact, I was in Superior Court during that fifth game, because of the Woodbine strike, but we did ask for an adjournment for an inning and a half. And, you guys think that’s funny. It’s true.

The third thing we were able to do is we were able to use the strength of Unifor itself through our leadership. For example, Chris Buckley was by several times. Katha Fortier was by. Deb Tveit was by. Bob Orr, who was the assistant responsible for this, was there throughout the process. Local 444 and the other locals were always prominent.

But, we were able to reach out to Jerry Dias who was able to, because of the strike, because of everything else I just said to you, reach out to the government and say, “You can’t allow this thing to happen.” So, at the end of the day, we bargained a settlement that on average was ratified by all seven sites at 97 percent.

I want to take this time to thank everybody in this room and to suggest again, as I have said to our members and in my staff report, you’ll see it says, “We didn’t ask for this fight.” In fact, we got locked out. We didn’t back down at all. We didn’t ask for this fight. But, at the end of the day, we took it on full head. And, because of your support, we were able to be successful. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on mic 1.
THERESA FARAO: Hi. Theresa Farao, president of Local 240, Windsor. A year ago, we had passed a resolution on pay equity, making and ensuring that every time we went to bargaining that pay equity was going to be made a priority.

So, in reviewing the staff reports, I just wanted to come up here, because it is very important to recognize when our union is doing more than just putting words on paper and actually following through.

So, I wanted to thank Katha, our Ontario Regional Director and our Regional Council, but more importantly the national staff reps who are going back and looking at every single workplace and their collective agreements, and letting us know whether there is a plan and whether there is maintenance that is following through, because the only way we can make change and close that gap is by ensuring that these women get the wages that so rightly deserve and earned. So, I just wanted to thank you all.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Thank you, sister. Congratulations on your award as well. Great job. Speaker on mic number 4.

BOB ORR: Bob Orr, assistant to Peter Kennedy. I just want to give a brief supplement of Jim’s report. So, what was really amazing about the OLG fight and the OLG struggle was that we brought together as Unifor members that for the first time had signed a union card, had organized their workplace and had yet to have a collective agreement bargained.

We bring them in the room with three other bargaining committees, eventually four, because we had Mohawk there. But, we bring them in a room with four other bargaining committees that have collective agreements in place, and to see the interaction between those that had formed a union, those that had a union and how much difference we could make together in the bargaining was absolutely an amazing process. It empowered everybody in that room.

Dino played an instrumental role in this as the president of Local 444, along with the other presidents, Dave Rustin, Anne Marie MacInnis, Paul Shields. I don’t know if I’m missing anybody. But, they got together and they all said that this is not good enough. “We’re not going to allow OLG to do this.”

And, again, what happened with the OLG was that the company said they had a mandate from the government and that mandate wouldn’t change. Well, the mandate did change. And, it did change because of our pressure at the Woodbine protest and demonstrations. So, it did change because of that.

But, what we did was we showed that the government was vulnerable on the issue of pensions. We all know that the Ontario government campaigned on being labour friendly and union friendly. So, they were vulnerable on the issue of pensions. And, while we didn’t resolve the issue, we clearly know that they’re vulnerable.

So, it’s up to us now, when these sites do change, the operation of the sites go to a private operator, it is up to us to have a campaign in place, to prove the importance of pensions. And, what we did do was say that any new operator has to bargain with us very shortly after they take over, so not two years later, not three years later, not a year later. They know when they take over the site, they have to bargain with Unifor.

And, if it’s one site, all of those sites will join that fight, because we will still all be in it together. So, we will make progress on the pension issue with those new operators, I assure you. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Pension is one thing you surely can fight for and want to fight for. Speaker on mic number 1.

LUC RIVET: Mr. President, before I begin, I just want to know if this is the appropriate time now to make a comment on the presentation by the Ontario director earlier today?

DINO CHIODO: Yes, you can, absolutely.

LUC RIVET: Okay. My name is Luc Rivet and I am with Local 1359 out of Sault Ste. Marie.

And, I just wanted to comment, and it is something that I spoke about last year, and I am going to speak this year, and I am going to speak about every time I hear the National making recommendations as to who people should vote for. I really oppose that.
I hear us talk about how inclusive our union is, how great it is and how it includes everybody under the sun. And then I hear from the National that these are the people that they endorse, rather than the membership making their own decisions. We are capable of making our own decisions. And, I will always, always oppose hearing the top telling the people down below who they should vote for.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother for those comments. Much appreciated. Are there any other speakers, any other speakers for the staff reports? Seeing no other speakers,

All those in favour? (favouring votes shown)

Down.

Opposed if any? (opposing votes shown, if any)

Carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 8: UNIFOR AND THE OFL TO ADVOCATE FOR THE RESTORATION OF UNION MEMBERS’ ACCESS TO THE OFFICE OF THE WORKER ADVISOR

DINO CHIODO: What I would like to do is go into Resolution No. 8. Resolution No. 8 was already read out, but I’ll make sure I read the “Therefore Be It Resolved” section again, and then we’ll take speakers from there.

So, Resolution No. 8 was provided at lunchtime on all the tables, so everybody has one. Are there any places that don’t? It looks like everybody has them. So, I will just read:

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Unifor Ontario Regional Council work with the new Executive of the Ontario Federation of Labour to demand the Ontario government deem the OWA as an essential service for maintaining a functioning representation system for injured workers in Ontario including members of a trade union and their survivors.

Are there any speakers for Resolution No. 8? And, the Resolution Committee moved concurrence on that resolution. We’ll take the first speaker on mic number 3.

NADIA ANTON-COLLINS: My name is Nadia Anton-Collins. I am the financial secretary for Local 707 and a Workers’ Compensation advocate. I rise in full support of this resolution and I’ll tell you that it’s important for us as a labour movement.

First of all, I’m sure it is the only province in Canada that became so legalized and changed the name from Workers’ Compensation to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. And, again, Ontario is the only province in Canada who does now allow unionized members to seek the assistance of the OWA.

We now as a union have a lot of small local unions that do not have access to representation at Workers’ Compensation. So, this is quite beneficial, not only for our own members, but for the workers of the province as well. It helps our members. It helps the local unions. And, it’s a shame on our provincial government not to include this for all the workers of the province.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic number 4.

SHAWN ROUSE: Thank you very much. My name is Shawn Rouse. I am the Health Council president for Unifor and I am also the financial secretary of my local, Local 1106, which one of the duties I have is WSIB work. I stand and rise for this resolution.

Health care workers, which I wish to speak to, actually have the dubious honour of being the No. 1 most at-risk injury group in all of Ontario for lost-time injuries. We actually have 30 percent of all the lost-time injuries in all of Ontario just out of health care. And, there is no reason that we should be standing in salute of this dubious honour of being No. 1.

And, the overwhelming amount of injuries that are happening every year causes us to get to fatigue in being able to service and help all these injured workers in health care. And, some small locals, like Nadia was saying earlier, many locals don’t have the expertise and the capability of advocating fully on behalf of any of these injured workers.

We need the support of the OWA and we need the provincial government to allow the OWA to represent unionized workers as well as non-union workers going forward. Our members deserve the best representation they can get.

And, while we are training and advocating and educating new representatives, we need our members to not sit on the sidelines to not have representation. So, please vote for this resolution.
DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, brother. Speaker on Mic 1.

KEN BONDY: Thank you. Ken Bondy, national coordinator, Health, Safety and Environment. Just a couple of things. First of all, some clarification, because I had a hand in drafting this resolution.

To those people that work on the compensation files, this resolution is not intended in any way to look for replacing our Unifor compensation reps. It is simply in regards to taking some of the workload off of the compensation reps that we have today.

You know, the realization was yesterday in our health and safety standing committee meetings. You look around the room, and our compensation advocates that do an amazing job representing our members, that group is getting smaller all the time as a result of mostly retirements.

And, what we are seeing is that the next generation of workers look at the job expectations of being a compensation advocate and it’s enormous. And, it is certainly intimidating to those workers that if they want to be a union representative, do they really want to be an ad hoc lawyer, which is what our compensation advocates do.

So, we need to have a stop gap. And, there is no reason why the only province in this country, thanks to Mike Harris’ government, does not allow us to access a publicly-funded office. So, this is incredibly important if we are going to continue to do the good work of representing our members without overloading the compensation advocates that we have today.

And, I want to end my comments by saying that I want to pay tribute to our compensation advocates that are just an amazing group of people, not because of their knowledge and expertise, but because of their willingness to say that “I may have a desk full of files, but if you put in a call to me and you are having trouble in your local with a compensation appeal, then I will be there and help you for that.”

And, that is an amazing commitment to take on that extra responsibility, and our compensation advocates do that willingly.

So, I want to pay tribute to them and say thank you for all of the hard work, because the final thing that we know is that getting hurt at work is a serious issue. And, if you do get hurt at work, you need representation to ensure that your claim has been treated properly. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on mic 2.

JIM REID: Thanks, Dino. Jim Reid, president of Unifor Local 27 and also licensed paralegal. And, the reason I mention that is not that I am trying to get more work as a paralegal, which I’m not. The reason I mention that is because I became a paralegal, because the Liberal government, through the Cory Commission or the Cory Report, cut the access to justice for injured workers.

Before, you could have an unlicensed -- if you were a non-unionized worker, you could have a friend, a relative -- you had people that weren’t licensed that were representing workers at the board, at tribunals. It was creating a set of problems, but people were able to get their claims processed and dealt with. And, at least they had some access to justice.

The problem that we have got now is that we have -- I mean, we have to look at ourselves internally as far as what we are doing as a union. We have some local unions that are doing an amazing incredible job representing injured workers.

We have small unions, smaller units where a lot of the time is on your own time, that the representatives are doing claims at their kitchen table, taking work home, devoting all sorts of time representing their brothers and sisters.

But, I think this is an issue that our union hasn’t paid enough attention to over the years. I have been representing injured workers now for 18 years. And, one of the things that is doing that strikes me is that I always ask myself, when does a worker need a union more?

When you think about it, they’re out of their workplace. They are socially isolated. They have no income coming in. When does a worker need the services and the help of a union more? And, when we can’t provide that service, we need to examine what we’re actually doing.

The other thing is I go back to the days when we did have the right as workers to use the services of the OWA and they did tremendous work. But, the OWA now has been tasked with also looking after work refusals as well. So, I am in favour of the motion. But, I think also, we as a union need to look at what we are doing in how we represent injured workers. And, I think we can do a lot better.
And, part of that maybe is looking at what we are doing and participating in the local union task force.

**JIM REID:** This has to be a fundamental task of the local unions. And, I think that we can structure ourselves, whether it’s in co-operation with other locals or with the National Union to provide injured workers the proper representation that they deserve. Thank you very much.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, brother. Speaker at mic 4.

**SCOTT McILLMOYLE:** Good afternoon. Scott McIlmoyle, president of Local 112, also chairperson of the Health and Safety Environment Committee.

The speakers before me have touched on a lot of the great points, so there are just a few more things here. As a representative of Unifor through the OFL WCB Committee, this is something we can take a leadership role in asking everybody, obviously, to rise in support of this and getting everybody to vote on this, when we get to the next meeting with them and other affiliates that they jump on board and also push this issue forward.

As you can see in the second “Whereas”, and to quote Jim earlier, one of his nouns was we’re still trying to clean up Mike Harris’ shit from two decades ago, so we have got to keep moving this forward. And, Jim talked about some good points. We still have a lot of work to do in our own house here and helping out a lot of small locals. And, because of turnovers and what have you, people get dropped into the fire. And, the calls come in and there are a lot of people that help out there and it is very much appreciated.

And, I guess, I’ll put a request in right now through to Katha and yourself, Dino. We have the Minister of Labour coming in tomorrow, and the standing committee, the Health and Safety Committee, the three of us, myself, Stephanie and Jamie, would like to grab him for hopefully five minutes or less. And, obviously, we have got a couple of hot items we want to put on his radar screen. So, I rise in support of this and ask everybody to support it as well. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Scott, thanks for that and thanks for inserting that little piece. We’ll have a chat with you a little later on today. Speaker at mic number 1.

**BOB HOFFMAN:** Bob Hoffman from Thunder Bay, Local 39. I work in the forest industry, Resolute Forest Products. I have been an advocate with WSIB for over five years now and an ODRT trainer as well.

So, it is nice to see that this came out as an emergency resolution. It is an emergency. It’s sad to see that Colin Argyle has been laid off. Sue Fratric has been laid off at the ODRT. So, now more than ever, we need more help with advocating for WSIB for our workers.

It is hard to get people out for training purposes as it is. We have got retirements. The training is phenomenal, I mean when we had a full complement of trainers. We’ve got great training for this. But, now it is getting harder to get people out.

At the last course I was at, the last time I was trying to get courses in Toronto, they have been cancelled, because of lack of registrants. It is nice to see a couple of younger people coming up. By the way, we do have another person who is interested in learning WSIB. So, I fully support this resolution and hope everyone votes for it. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, brother. Is there a speaker at mic number 6?

**PAT GARDNER:** Yes. I support the resolution, but I think there is an underlying problem here that Unifor needs to address.

**DINO CHIODO:** Can you give your name, please, brother?

**PAT GARDNER:** Pat Gardner, Local 4457. The underlying problem with the whole thing is to get the system working for the worker again and not the employer, which requires legislation change, because it is just getting too one-sided now with the changes made by the Conservatives, and we need to lobby the government to change the Act back to the way it was.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, brother. Seeing no other speakers at the microphones, all those in favour of Resolution No. 8, and the recommendation from the Resolution Committee is concurrence,

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down.

Opposed if any?

(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.  

Thank you, brothers and sisters. Thank you very much for that and passing those resolutions.

What we’re going to do, as this is going to come to the conclusion for today, we are going to basically break off today and ask for adjournment. But, I do want to make a few announcements before we do that.

Obviously, we have already heard that there is a purse auction supporting lupus which will take place today. It will be between 7:00 and 11:00 p.m. in the Sheraton Hall East. It is presented by Local 414. So, if you could please be present? They’re looking for men and women to go in there support the initiatives. They do a wonderful job in supporting lupus. If you can attend, that would be well appreciated.

Also, at 5:00 p.m., there will be a book launch for Jim Stanford. And, that is going to take place in the Chestnut Room on the mezzanine level. That will be here in the Sheraton Centre. Again, that will be between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m., and that will be free admission to everyone that can make it and attend.

And, also by extension of that, the Young Workers’ Caucus meeting will be taking place tonight, between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. and that will be held in the Sheraton Hall A.

So, to everybody that was here today, thank you very much for your indulgence. Thank you for your patience, your commitment, your drive, the emotion that you expressed at the mics with regards to the issues that we have talked about.

And, I thank you for participating. And, we will look to see you here at 9:00 a.m. in the morning. Thank you very much and have a wonderful day. Move to adjourn,

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)

Down.

Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)

Carried.  

Thank you very much.

--- Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 4:49 p.m.
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2015

--- Upon commencing at 9:14 a.m.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

DINO CHIODO: Brothers and sisters, we will get on to the second day of our Ontario Regional Council. We do have a full agenda and we will try to get through that as quickly as possible, but at the same time making sure we have all the information.

And, anybody that wants to speak, please feel free to get up to the mics. We will try and recognize everybody that has an opportunity or wants an opportunity to speak on whether it would be the recommendations or Katha Fortier’s report.

Before we do start, before I do call Tullio up to do his financial report, what I would like to do is just make a couple of quick announcements.

For today at lunchtime, the Aboriginal Workers of Colour caucus will be meeting at noon, and that will be at the Sheraton Hall E.

Also, the Workers with Disabilities will hold their meeting. It will be today at noon as well in the Sheraton Hall A.

And, I would also like to just put a little bit of a plug in for the Skilled Trades Bargaining and New Technologies Conference, which will be held in the spring of the New Year or actually in the first quarter of the New Year.

It will be held on February 23 - 25. They do a tremendous amount of work preparing for their bargaining, which will be later on that year. And, call letters have already gone out. So, if you have not received them, please make sure that you reach out to the Skilled Trades Department to determine if you could participate. And, the dates for that again are February 23 - February 25.

I would also like to recognize Joie Warnock. She is the Western Regional Director, Joie Warnock, sitting up at the front. Thank you, Joie, for all your hard work and dedication.

And, in saying that, what I would like to do now is call up Tullio DiPonti, the financial secretary of the Ontario Regional Council, to give the financial report.

ORC FINANCIAL REPORT

TULLIO DIPONTI: Thanks, Dino. I know everybody has been waiting for this, but we do have a good financial report. But, before I start that, I just want to introduce behind Dino and Katha, Richard Vann, Director of Finance for the National Union.

Okay. So, if we go to the first page -- I hope everybody has got that financial report in front of them. If not, please get one.

So, the Ontario Regional Council Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2015. As you can see, there are two columns; one that has got 2015 and the other one that is 2014. So, I’ll go through the 2015.

So, in cash, we have $908,713.00. The dues that we got from Unifor for that period of time were $869,977.00. And Investments, in May of 2015, the Executive Board sat down and said it would be beneficial if we put some of that money that we had in cash in some investments, and that was $2,965,155.00, which that gives us a total asset of $4,743,845.00.

Liability is listed at $2,500.00. What that liability is, is our cost to do the audit report.

So, that leaves a net asset of $4,741,345.00. And, if you add that liability, which eventually has to come off to pay the audit, it is $4,743,845.00.
If we go to the next page, all right, so what that does is it shows the balance beginning in 2015. What we brought over from 2014 was $4,000,808.00. The excess over expenses was $740,537.00. Again, the balance at the end of August 2015 was $4,741,345.00.

The next page, that shows our expenses for that period of time. So, the dues are $994,005.00. The investment income that is what we got in return for the investment of that $2.9 million for that period of time. So, it’s a little bit lower than the year before. The markets were a little bit more volatile. So, in the long run, we anticipate we will make up all that.

There is a total revenue of $1,001,411.00. Expenditures are listed down below. So, it is communications, contributions and donations, lost wages, meetings and functions, professional fees and promotional material for a total expenditure of $260,874.00. That gives us revenue over expenditures of $740,537.00.

That pretty well concludes my financial report.

DINO CHIODO: Way to go. You’re right. You were so good there’s some clapping and some cheering. Can I have a mover on the report? So moved. Can I open up any discussions? Seeing no discussion,

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried. CARRIED
Carried unanimously. Way to go. Slowly, we’re moving on up.

So, I just have a note here that was passed to me. So, if all delegates can please ensure that their Workplace Health and Safety representatives and activists are registered at the Health and Safety table? And, this is just because they’re building a database to make sure that they can capture all of the health and safety activists, so they can email out information to them on a regular ongoing basis. So, if you could please do that, it would be much appreciated.

DISCUSSION ON THE ONTARIO REGIONAL DIRECTOR’S REPORT

DINO CHIODO: What we are going to do, because we’re a little bit earlier -- and, I don’t think that Kevin Flynn is in the room right now. So, we will go to Katha Fortier’s report. And, if anybody wants to go to the mic with reference to Katha Fortier’s report, I will take any of those. Ken Lewenza, mic number 2.

KEN LEWENZA, SR.: Ken Lewenza, Local 444. How are you doing, my good friend, Jerry? Welcome home, buddy. Welcome home. Doing good.

I wanted to raise, on Katha’s report, the task force that our president, Jerry Dias, established through the convention. First of all, I want to acknowledge the members that have participated in the task force. I want to acknowledge the activism and concern for our union as a result of the task force.

And, I want to say to those communities that we have not been to yet, this is not limited. In fact, we would like to see the hall packed; we would like to see our locations packed, because really what it is we are bringing the convention to our members.

We are bringing the union to our members. We are asking our members to understand their union. We are asking our members to understand that throughout Canada, we have 755 local unions. We have 3,500 employers. We have a great deal of diversity in our union.

But, most importantly, we are asking our members, what do you want to see out of your union? What are your expectations out of your union? How can we mobilize collectively together? How could we build stronger community support?
How could we work closer together to ensure not only our members and their families are represented in our community, in our workplaces and in our country, but how do we expand the influence we have in the labour movement? How do we build coalitions? How do we strengthen local unions? How do we participate?

And, I ask the leadership and the rank and file people that come to each and every forum, along with the three elected directors that have been absolutely incredible and influential -- I mean, the fact of the matter is Joie, Katha and Lana have been absolutely good leaders in these particular areas.

Our Research Department has done an excellent job in terms of making presentations, on explaining what their union looks like. And, it is quite educational, I would suggest to you.

I have been around over 40 years. And, each time I listen to the presentation, each time I listen to the presentation I learn something more about our union. I learn something more about our new organization. I get to meet people that I have not met before, and rank and file leadership get an opportunity to talk about their union in a very comfortable and relaxed setting.

So, I wanted to acknowledge again the National Union for putting on this task force. Jerry emphasized at the Founding Convention that it is not business as usual and it isn’t business as usual. The corporate community has a tremendous amount of power, and we see that day in and day out.

We talked about the kind of jobs that are being generated in our community. We talked about the uncertainty of our membership. We talked about the incredible challenges and the difficulties we have in collective bargaining.

But, at the end of the day, this is the time to give our members some space to talk about their union, our union and how do we strengthen our union through the power of local unions, because make no mistake about it, we have got good leadership. I have said this day in and day out.

We have good staff. We have got a great Research Department. We have got good support teams. We have got good local union leadership. There is no question. The people that are participating today show their interest and show their enthusiasm for their union. But, we have got to get in and talk to our rank and file members about how they participate in our union, because not everybody could come to a convention.

So, we have got a few more visits. They are all prescheduled. Everybody has a lot of opportunity. And, again, I would ask for everybody to participate to the degree that they can.

And, get our members out there, the ones that can’t come to convention, the ones that can’t come to conferences, people that have an opinion, people that want to express themselves and give them an opportunity to speak on how we can collectively strengthen our union.

Last, but not least, is the union relevant today? All you’ve got to do is pick up the Globe and Mail today. Pick it up. The first page says, “Executive salaries are increasing 43 percent.” Let me ask anybody in this room. Stand up if any of you bargained a 43 percent increase for your members on an annual basis, and if anybody in this room has an annual salary of $6,300,000.00, please stand up.

Is the union relevant today? We’re going to start taking a chunk of that pie, because that pie is given to a minority of executive officers, and we should raise a lot of shit about the inequality in Canada. Keep up the good work and join the task force.

Dino Chiodo: Thank you, Brother Lewenza. We’ll take the speaker on mic number 4.

Steve Olsen: Ken, great speech as always. And, I can never one up you. The problem with our union task force, I’m going to tell you right now in my local -- Steve Olsen, Local 1359, Sault Ste. Marie. We represent many, many and in the hundreds of precarious workers.
We are primarily health care. We have workers working in several different facilities, trying to get their things together to pay their bills. When we sit there and promote our union, which has given me fantastic tools -- it has given me the ability to do all kind of things I have never been able to do.

But, to talk to the rank and file members at the bottom that are working in three and four places, getting disciplined in all of them, trying to pay their bills, how do we engage these members to come out to the Unifor local union? I would like an answer to that. How do we get them to come out? And, I hope someone has an answer for that.

KATHA FORTIER: Thanks, Steve. You know, this is the question that we ask every single time, every single city that we go to. The reality is that we have had some precarious workers actually come out, some people who work in difficult industries.

For instance, we have had retail workers there from Local 414, and some of them are leadership and activists, but some of them have been just members as well. We try to make it as accessible as we can.

And, Steve, I understand health care and people having to work more than one job, but we try to make it what we thought when we met at the presidents’ meeting was the most accessible time. We provide some dinner for people and an opportunity to know each other and an evening meeting. And, again, I know we have got shift workers and that is difficult as well.

But, also in part of this is that we do have an online survey that every member is invited to participate in. I mentioned it again yesterday in my report. I probably don’t think most of the people in the room have completed it yet, but it is there for our members, to hear from them.

We have got to be creative. And, one thing this task force is telling us is that we have got to think of different ways to reach our members. And, part of that will be social media and the Internet as well. But, again, this is the opportunity to listen. And, I think that we would be doing ourselves a disservice if we didn’t try to do this.

DINO CHIODO: I’ll take a point at mic number 2.

KEN LEWENZA, SR.: Again, I want to say to the brother that everybody in this room understands the changing economy. We don’t like it. We don’t like the precarious state that our members are in.

But, I just want to remind the brothers that that is why yesterday we spent an hour on the Employment Standards Act. That is why yesterday, we emphasized that as an organization, that we have to make some change, because those workers in precarious situations don’t believe, quite frankly, the union is playing much of a role for them, because they feel the uncertainty every single day.

So, the only thing I could say to the brother is the information that we had yesterday in terms of the changes we want to make is in the interest of those workers. And, we have got to make sure that all of the information as provided by the National Union gets to those workers.

They have to feel relevant. They have to feel that each and every day we are speaking on behalf of their issues. And, if we are doing that, quite frankly, they will go into the workplace with more confidence. They will go into the workplace defending their issues with their boss, recognizing that they are in a very fragile and uncertain position. That is what precarious work is all about.

That is what Brother Stanford emphasized yesterday. So, all of us in this room should -- and, that is part of the task force again -- identify all of our employers, identify all of our local unions, introduce each other to each local.

And, we should be supporting each other. When we see a precarious worker in a health care facility or any other place in our organization, we should introduce ourselves and tell them we’re out there fighting for them.
In fact, the majority of our time today is fighting for low-paid workers. The majority of our time today is fighting for job security. The majority of our time today is trying to enhance the Canada Pension Plan for precarious workers.

So, at the end of the day, brothers and sister, no worker in the 310,000 members that we represent should feel isolated. No member of our union, 310,000 strong, should feel like they’re irrelevant.

From that worker that works 10 hours a week in a workplace to the one that works 60 hours in a workplace, they’re part of Unifor, and we’ve got to make sure it’s inclusive, and we’ve got to make sure that they feel confident and we’re fighting for their rights.

But, all the information you shared yesterday on precarious work has got to get in the hands of those workers, and they will feel confident about the direction of their union. So, thank you, brother, for that constructive criticism, because at the end of the day, those are the workers we’re fighting for each and every day. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Speaker on mic 4.

CHRISTINE CONNOR: Christine Connor, president, Local 414, National Executive Board member.

I have gone to a few of the task force meetings. As the local president, we’re an amalgamated local, so we go across the province as well, precarious workers.

What I do is Katha gives me the information prior to the meeting dates, which I am sure everybody has. I re-send them into the unit so that they’re posted. Some places have the lock box, so they stay on the board.

But, even when they have the one in Barrie -- I only have one small unit in Barrie and I thought, well, I’m going to go to the one in Barrie, just to see if any of our members show up. We can only lead the horse to the trough. We can’t force people to go. The onus is on them. But, I think that the interest is out there if they get the information.

And, I did go to the meeting. And, there was one gentleman from our local, and I was shocked. I was actually shocked, because it was a small store. I go in there quite frequently to shop, but they don’t come to unit meetings.

If we have a meeting, there are maybe five or six people. So, I was shocked that the one gentleman showed up. He stayed. He participated. He went back. He went back into the unit when I was in there again. They were all talking about it. So, I think the onus is a little bit on our members to come and get the information.

But, it is word of mouth of people going back and letting them know what the discussions were, what happened. And, maybe they will turn out to the next meeting, because they are going to be all over the province. So, I just wanted to throw that out there.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic number 2.

KEN LEWENZA, JR.: Thanks, Dino. Ken Lewenza, Jr. I, too want to speak a little bit to the brother’s point and to the task force. Again, congratulations to the union for setting up a formalized structure to have this type of conversation.

But, I think it is also important to remember and think about the fact that it is not just thinking about formalized structures, but what type of informal structures and what type of culture that we can be creating in our workplaces, in our community, that actually allow our members to participate where we can have these types of conversations.
To give the brother some form of inspiration, I don’t want to go back 200 years ago, but the reality is there were times when people were working 16 hours a day. And, you would think when people had absolutely nothing left, when there was nothing left, that they actually decided to get together and they needed to start talking about eight-hour work days, so that they could participate in society, enjoy their families and grow. And, that is the reality on how people made a difference.

I just want to share two really important stories. I worked with some CUPW leadership in my community, awesome people. But, they said, “Ken, our members are frustrated. They’re cynical. The government has attacked them. They pushed them into arbitration.”

And, with the recent restructuring at Canada Post, a lot of the workers are going into work in the morning and not being able to leave until 9:30 at night, and they’re delivering mail at night. And, they were frustrated that they had to finish their routes.

We said, “Well, let’s get together.” So, we went in. And, the leadership felt a little insecure, because they didn’t feel like they could really make a difference. We got together with the workers. And, they actually developed the types of strategies where after a four- or five-week period, they actually went to the boss and they found the type of solutions.

But, the interesting part was it was in the morning. They said, “We don’t want to wait till a membership meeting. We don’t want to wait. Come meet us at our workplace.” So, they had meetings at their workplace, half an hour before their workplace started, and that is how they made a difference.

So, my argument is actually thinking about, too, that there are things that our members are doing already in the community that reflect the values that we are always talking about at our conventions.

And, there are a lot of people, our members that are doing things that we have no idea of what it is that they’re doing. So, I think there has got to be a way that we can find a way to tap in and just say that we support them. The union is relevant. The union is a vehicle. And, we are helping to facilitate them making a broader difference in their community.

So, I am glad the brother raised the question. I think it is an ongoing discussion that we have to have about how the union can be more relevant to our members and how our members can be more relevant to make a difference in society. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. I’ll take the speaker at mic number 5.

CHERYL ROBINSON: Thanks, Dino. Cheryl Robinson, president of Unifor Local 2002. It is really tough to follow the Lewenzas with that energy and the passion that they have. But, I would say that most folks in this room have that same passion for their union and for their membership.

So, to Brother Steve, it is tough to get folks out there. I have 10,000 members in 28 different bargaining units in every city across the country as far north as Alert, the farthest place north you could possibly go, I’m sure, in Canada.

And, it is tough to get folks out to it, but it is important for us to encourage their participation. If at the end of the day, they don’t show up, then we will learn something from that after the task force is completed and reports back to us.

I think it is absolutely important for us in those situations where folks aren’t attending the local union task force meetings, as leadership to go out and talk to them. It is hard when you are in a position, a president or a vice-president or a secretary-treasurer or even a workplace rep.

The amount of work that we do every single day for and on behalf of our members is very focused. And, sometimes you have got to kind of pull your head out of it and just go sit down in a lunch room and talk to them or as they’re walking through the workplace and ask them, “How is it?”
A lot of the membership that I represent are, again, in precarious situations, much like Steve has talked about. You know, we are trying to make it better for them. I have got one member that I talk to. It still brings tears to me every time I think about her struggle on whether she was going to vote yes on a collective agreement, because she had three other jobs and if she voted yes on this one -- the only reason she stayed at that job is because it was the one that had benefits and there was a change to the benefit plan that the employer was coming at. So, she said, “It’s a good agreement, but I only work at this job so I can have benefits. I work at my other job, because it pays better, and I work at my other job, because I only work part time at one of them.”

So, it is tough for our membership. There’s no two ways about it. And, we don’t want to add any more pressure to them. As Katha pointed out, it is simple to go on. And, I just did the survey again. Sorry, I did it twice. Online, it takes a few minutes to get it finished. And, it will give us a sense of where we do need to go and what our members expect of us as Unifor starts to get more and more and more and more support out there.

Since we have founded, we have grown so much and we have got the potential to grow more. But, if we don’t know what folks want, then we will never know if we are headed in the right direction. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: No, thank you. I think I see one last speaker on mic number 3.

SHERI LAEKEMAN: Thank you, Dino. I’m Sheri Laekeman, president, Unifor 4212, St. Lawrence Seaway, Welland Canal. I just wanted to take a moment to really thank this particular initiative.

I represent only about 180 members between Niagara and Cornwall, Ontario. And, one of my biggest issues is they are constantly complaining about, what has the union done for me lately? I don’t know if anybody else gets that with some of their members.

Okay. So, I work tirelessly to represent them, to make sure that the conditions that they currently enjoy are maintained. But, this initiative in having Ken Lewenza and Katha come to St. Catharines, and to be able to put out an invitation to those members that continue to say, “Well, I can’t go to the union meeting, because I work shift work. Why don’t you do it on the weekend?” Like, you can’t win with somebody, but at least what I would like to say is thank you very much for doing this.

You get Ken Lewenza in a room, as we just saw, and he can really do a lot of great things. I had five people come out of my 180 members to the St. Catharines meeting and they were really inspired. As we know, Ken is a great speaker. He is very passionate. I certainly encourage you to participate, encourage your members to participate. It is a great opportunity to see, really, the heart and soul of our union.

And, again, I want to thank you, the people who are involved in this, who put this together, because I think it is something that is very important and it is much needed. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: No, thank you, sister. I don’t see any more speakers at the mics.

So, what I am going to do is I will see if we can pass Katha’s report.

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.           CARRIED
Thank you very much, brothers and sisters.

Now, getting on to the business of the day, we do have a guest speaker for you. But, what I am going to do is I am going to call up our National President, Jerry Dias, to introduce our next speaker. Jerry Dias, National President of Unifor.

JERRY DIAS: Well, good morning everybody. I missed you. As I am walking up, Kevin says, “Please be nice, Jerry,” so I will.

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Anyway, it is my pleasure to introduce Kevin Flynn, the Minister of Labour. Kevin was first elected in 2003, re-elected in 2007, 2011, 2014, so I think that makes him the longest elected Member of Provincial Parliament in the Oakville area.

And, being a Liberal and not a Conservative in Oakville and being elected four times in a row in itself is one hell of an accomplishment in right wing Oakville. But, what really tells me the most is I look before people are elected as to what they did.

And, I take a look at Kevin’s role with the Children’s Aid Society and his role as a mentor with Big Brothers. He was the Chair of the standing committee on Mental Health and Addiction, all kinds of things that let him touch the community.

You always get the long list, and I’m not going to read any of that stuff. I want to talk more about personal experiences. I think that is what matters the most, because we have been fighting for over two years as an organization to make sure we have a voice that is heard. And, sometimes we always don’t agree.

And, I know we have members in the room from the OLG and the ONR. And, I’ll say this. Don’t worry, this camera, Kevin, is with us. It is not with CBC or anything else.

There is no question in my mind we ended up having the dispute settled with the OLG, because of our relationship with the provincial government. And, I would suggest to you that we are going to the ONR dispute settled very quickly as a result of our relationship with the provincial government.

But, I want us to think for a moment where we could have been, because it wasn’t very long ago, we were heading into the provincial election and Tim Hudak was leading in the polls who was looking to strip our rights.

Could you imagine if things would have unfolded the way the polls were saying and we ended up with a Hudak government? Do you really think we would have the Minister of Labour under a Tim Hudak government here today? Of course not.

But, here are the types of things that we have been able to do, because I think about my phone call to Kevin and I think about the meeting we had as a result of a Steelworker lockout by Crown Holdings that was into its 22nd month.

And, we sat down and we had a meeting. And, we said, “Listen, Kevin, this isn’t a Steelworker fight. This is a fight about the labour movement in the Province of Ontario. This is a fight about working people being pushed around by major capital. And so, we need your government to play a role, to take a leadership role and bring together the parties. And, tell Crown Holdings that if they don’t find a solution, you’re going to find one for them.”

And, with great leadership, Kevin stood forward, and he called that meeting, and he met with Crown, and there was a settlement reached very shortly afterwards, and I thank Kevin on behalf of working people across the province for having the guts to do that.

I want to finish my lengthy -- by the way, this is only my precursor to my remarks this afternoon. So, if you think my introduction is long, wait until 11:15 rolls around.

We are at a point in our history where we haven’t had any major labour law reform in this province since the early 1990s. It has been a long time. And, we are now embarking on the type of change and legislation that we deserve.

And, yesterday I was in Ottawa. And, I talked to the Federal Minister of Labour. And, I talked about the repealing of Bill 525 and the federal government going back to card check at 50 percent plus one.

So, I say respectfully, my friend, if the federal Liberals are going to go to card check at 50 percent plus one, what the heck is wrong with you? Anyway, I say that in the most respectful of terms, but you better put in card check at 50 percent plus one or I will be all over your ass.
It is our time. It is time that in organizing drives, we took the vote out of the workplace where the management intimidates the workers as they walk up to cast their ballots. It is time that we started talking about electronic balloting.

It is time that some of the most vulnerable workers in Ontario that lose their jobs due to contract flipping have successor rights. So, we are putting together and we have put together a detailed plan. And, frankly, it is a real positive to have an ear in which we can bring our values.

I present to you the Ontario Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn.

ADDRESS: KEVIN FLYNN, ONTARIO MINISTER OF LABOUR

KEVIN FLYNN: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. It certainly is a privilege and a pleasure to be here this morning and to be introduced by Jerry Dias in such a kind way. It could have been worse, let me tell you. I have heard Jerry speak about people he is not very fond of and I never want to be in that category, so I guide myself accordingly as the Minister of Labour.

Having leadership in the labour movement of the quality of the people that you’ve had leading your organization, leading to today with Jerry Dias, is something that I think this province is certainly proud of and something that has certainly led to the successes that we have around the world as the Province of Ontario. It is because of people like Jerry. It is because of the leadership that is shown at Unifor that we have made the progress we have.

As you will know, as Jerry noted, I am not just the Minister of Labour, I am also the MPP of Oakville. I have been in politics now for 30 years. I was first elected in my 20s.

I learned about the UAW from somebody you just lost very recently, but not lost in a bad way. They’re still on Planet Earth. But, they’re not with you anymore. And, that is my good friend, Rita Lori, who is standing over the corner there. Rita and I have known each other since we were teenagers. Certainly, she has left some very, very big shoes to fill.

And, certainly, as Minister of Labour, I honestly wish she was still with you, because she was a pipeline that simply, you just can't buy. You either have that sort of a relationship or you don’t. And, Rita, I truly value the relationship that we had and the relationship we continue to have.

It is also sad to see standing right next to Rita is Jim Stanford, somebody that actually made -- politics is full of ordinary people, some less than ordinary, some better than ordinary. But, it is ordinary people that play various roles in our society.

And, it is wonderful to have somebody that is able to speak everybody’s language when it comes to some of the important issues. And, Jim Stanford puts economics into an understandable frame of comprehension like nobody else I have heard.

And, the fact that you have been able to have him for so long as a person that stands up for you, that advocates for you, is something that you should be very proud of. Certainly, when Jim Stanford speaks, people listen. When Jim Stanford represents Unifor, people listen to Unifor.

So, Jim, thanks for everything you have done for us as well in the Province of Ontario, and good luck in your future endeavours.

I notice later in the agenda, you will be hearing from Mayor of Oakville as well, from Mayor Burton. Certainly, he and I share a wonderful working relationship. As former chair of the Auto Caucus and him being the chair of the mayors, the Auto Mayors in Ontario, the relationship that I enjoy with him is something that I am especially proud of.

And, Local 707 in my own riding of Oakville, I have known from the days of the UAW, the CAW and now Unifor, is an organization that has just been the backbone of our community. It is truly a pleasure to be here this morning and to be able to address you this way, because you are the backbone of our province.
What you do in the sectors of our workforce drives the progress of Ontario on a daily basis. You not only improved the lives of more than 300,000 workers that you represent across Canada, but you make a real difference in the quality of life in the Province of Ontario.

You work in nearly every sector of our community and you share with our government a vision of a society that is more fair, that is more secure for the people that work in this province. That vision is what guides what we do at the Ministry of Labour, day in and day out, and it is why my Ministry launched the Changing Workplaces Review earlier this year.

We all know either from news reports or from just conversations across the dinner table about the growth of what was mentioned just a few minutes ago in this room, precarious work and vulnerable work in this province and across Ontario.

We are seeing the rise of non-standard employment, which includes involuntary part-time work. It includes self-employment. It includes individuals who have to hold down a number of jobs in order to get by.

It has grown more than twice as fast as standard employment in the Province of Ontario since 1997. The laws were written in 1995, 2000. The last time we had any sort of meaningful reform to the *Employment Standards Act* or to the *Labour Relations Act* in this province was 15 and 20 years ago.

The laws we wrote back then simply don’t apply to the reality of today’s workplace. You understand that, I understand that and the Ministry of Labour understands that. And, it is so important that our laws stay relevant to the reality of working in Ontario today. We need to properly protect those who need protections. We also need to let employers understand what the standards are today in the Province of Ontario.

I want to tell you that we asked two very good people to lead that review: one person that has been closely associated with the employer side; one person that has been closely associated with the labour side. And, that is Mike Mitchell from Sack, Goldblatt, Mitchell, and former Judge John Murray from the Ontario Superior Court. They represent, I think, the right elements that are needed to lead this review.

The important thing is they respect and understand each other. They’re a model of what you would like to see in industrial relations. They don’t always agree with each other, but they understand each other and they work together.

So far, they have heard from more than 200 individuals who presented in front of them. Another 300 groups have sent in written submissions. That is a great response that is going to go a long way to helping us get this issue right.

I want to thank the Unifor National Office and the Unifor locals who to date have provided valuable input into the Changing Workplaces Review. I am looking forward to meeting with some of your representatives on Monday to discuss these very submissions.

The two special advisors we appointed are going to be submitting their interim report in early 2016, and I will be looking for input from your organizations once again to help develop the final report and the recommendations that are going to guide our path forward by this summer.

My Ministry is also leading another very important consultation that I would ask you to be aware of and to pay attention to right now. This one is on the gender wage gap. As we all know, even today, women do not have the same opportunities or make as much money as men in Ontario. It is 2015, ladies and gentlemen, and quite simply, they should. We need to change that.

The historic barriers that prevent women from reaching the same level of income or achievement at work affect children, they affect families, they affect our communities and, ultimately, they affect the Ontario economy.
It is also important for us all to remember that this is not just a women’s issue. It is a workplace issue. It’s a societal issue. And, we need each and every man in this province to be involved and to be engaged in helping to fix this problem, be part of the solution and not be part of the problem.

The work of the steering committee on the agenda wage gap filed compliments that many initiatives our government will follow. We have introduced so far things that will help to overcome the barrier that have been put in place over generations.

One of those barriers is the attitude we will have towards sexual violence and harassment. As many of you in this room will know, Premier Kathleen Wynne and the minister responsible for women’s issues, Tracy MacCharles, have released a Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan for Ontario.

The plan is going to be implemented across a number of ministries, including mine. And, the goal, quite simply, is to combat and to raise the awareness of sexual violence, harassment and discrimination, and to improve the support for survivors in this province.

We remember on the National Day of Remembrance an Action on Violence against Women in Canada that was established in 1991. This day marks the anniversary of the tragic killings in 1989 of 14 young women at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, simply because they were women.

Like closing the gender wage gap, our Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan for Ontario is a step towards that increased fairness we all want in this province, because we know fairness for women is much more than being just about money. It is about freedom from harassment. It is about freedom from abuse. It is about having equal opportunity to advance in this society.

Our Gender Wage Gap steering committee is currently conducting provincial consultation meetings in 14 cities across the Ontario. The meetings will be wrapping up soon for the Christmas period and then we will be opening up again the spring.

And, the steering committee will be presenting me with a list of recommendations a little later in 2016. With those recommendations, we have obligated to take the next steps toward levelling the playing field in Ontario. I will be looking for your support at that time. I will be looking for your advice at that time from all partners in business, from government and in labour.

At the Ministry, we have also been making headway on the injured workers’ file in this province, which has needed attention for some time. It is of great importance to me. It is of great importance to the government that we get this right and we properly take care of those who have been injured in the workplace with the respect and with the dignity that they deserve. If passed, the proposed amendments to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act will do just that, ladies and gentlemen.

Since the mid-1990s, other governments have talked about change. They have talked about improvements that need to be made. Not one of them has been able to come up with a plan to do it. Ladies and gentlemen, we are proposing to do that.

By the end of 2017, injured workers on partial disability will receive what they should, and that is annual increased to their benefits of matched inflation, just like those that are on a full disability.

There is no excuse for that, because there was no reason for it in the first place. Ontario should be a province that meets its obligations in this regard. We are bringing forward a plan, a solid concrete plan that is going to help us achieve that. It has been a long time coming.

And, I am proud to be a part of the government that is making that happen. It is going to provide those injured workers who are on a partial disability with some stability, some predictability in their benefits and, quite simply, will put them on the same footing as those that are receiving fully-indexed disability benefits on a full disability.
We are also helping protect injured workers through proposed changes with Bill 109, the *Employment and Labour Statute Amendment Act*. What this proposed legislation would do, it would enable the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to calculate survivor benefits, based on the average earnings at the time of diagnosis of the occupation of which the deceased workers arose. Simply put, people who find themselves in positions where they haven’t been working for a while, haven’t been receiving the money they should. It’s that simple.

These proposed changes would also prohibit those employers that still think it is okay in this province to prevent workers from filing claims for benefits with the WSIB. That simply isn’t on in this province and it shouldn’t be.

We are serious about that. We are proposing to increase the maximum corporate penalty from what is now a $100,000.00 fine to a $500,000.00 for conviction of an offence in this regard. It is something that simply has no place in a fair society.

And, it is important to ensure fairness and compassion for injured workers and to hold those irresponsible employers accountable. We also know it is important to do everything in our power to prevent those injuries in the first place. We are doing a lot on that front.

Since 2003, I am proud to stand before you and tell you the workplace injuries have decreased by 40 percent. Forty percent is a huge number. Ontario is one of the safest jurisdictions in the entire world to work.

I am pleased with that, I am proud of that, but I am nowhere near satisfied with that. We still have work to do in this province. We all know these tragedies. You see them. You know the people that are involved in these tragedies. You represent these people.

They result in injuries. They change families. They change communities forever and sometimes they result in death. And, we know that each and every one of them is preventable. So, we know we have got to push harder. We have got to keep striving to make a real difference.

I had somebody you know very well come into my office just after I was appointed Minister of Labour. I won’t tell you his name, but he is somebody you know very, very well.

And, he said, “You know, it would be really nice if it didn’t matter what audience you were speaking to, whether they be from the educational field or the environmental field or whatever field, to talk a little about health and safety to them.”

And, I find when I talk to some audiences, the health and safety message makes perfect sense with this audience. But, some of the other people, they don’t see a natural affinity. I start talking about health and safety, you can see the eyes glaze over a little bit. You can see the yawns begin.

And, you get the sense of, “Well, that’s not about me. Why are you talking to me about that? It’s about people that work in other high-risk situations. Talk about something else.”

But, I find when I ask them to think of themselves as a role in their family, I ask them to think of themselves as a mother or dad or grandparent perhaps, brother or sister, and think about the first day your son or your daughter or your grandchild came home and they just got their very first job.

They’re walking about four feet off the ground. They have just been through a competitive process. Somebody interviewed a bunch of people and they picked him or her. They’re feeling pretty good about themselves.

They’re feeling so good, they may go into that job and do something stupid. They may go into that job and decide that they’re going to prove the person that picked them was right, and they’re going to work their tails off, which is great, but they’re going to get themselves in some trouble.

And, I am no different than any other parent. My son came home and told me that he got a job at a Dairy Queen. I asked, “How much are you going to make? Did they give you a uniform and do I have to pick you up after work”; right? Three normal questions any parent would ask.
I never thought to ask him if he knew what to do if he was confronted with an unsafe situation, if he was asked to do something that he didn’t understand. And, it’s important at that age, because it’s the time you’re most vulnerable to an injury in your entire working life is those very first few weeks of that very first job you have.

We think it would be later on in life when we’re doing the more complex jobs or the more sophisticated jobs. Ladies and gentlemen, it isn’t. It is in that little envelope when you’re just walking into the workplace. That is when the injuries are likely to happen.

I didn’t make the mistake the second time. My son got a job for a couple of years working on the tunnel under Niagara Falls. And, I don’t know if any of you have seen Big Becky, but it’s about three times the size of this room and the height of this room around a 12-kilometer-long tunnel under Niagara Falls.

It is the biggest drill bit in the world. And, what would happen is the rock would fall off that drill bit and it would go into a series of hoppers on a conveyor belt. The conveyor belt got as long as the tunnel got. The rock came out of the end of the tunnel, went about 200 feet in the air, went over the Niagara River and got dropped about 100 feet onto the island in the middle of the river.

I wasn’t the same parent I was the first time. I said, “Nigel, don’t do anything stupid. You’re going down there with a bunch of smart people that know that job. If there is anything that you don’t understand, you step forward. You stop what you’re doing and you ask them. You don’t have to be disrespectful. You don’t need to be aggressive. Stop and ask questions.”

Well, one day they asked my son to work with an electrician. And, they just asked him to be around him while he was working. And, the electrician told him to get lost, told him he didn’t need him. And, my son said, “Dad, I heard your voice in the back of my head.” He said, “I didn’t get lost. I just went around the corner and I stood there.” He said, “It wasn’t 20 to 30 seconds later that I heard clanging of tools and grunting and groaning.” And, he came out around the corner. The electrician had fallen in the hopper. The hopper had dropped him onto the conveyor belt. The conveyor belt was shrouded so the rock wouldn’t fall off it.

Nobody knew the electrician was on the belt and he had no way of getting off the belt. He was headed for about a seven-kilometre-long ride to be taken 200 feet in the air and to be dropped about 100 feet onto a pile of rock in the middle of the Niagara River.

My son came out. He hit the red button. The conveyor belt stopped. They went in and they pulled the man out. He was injured pretty badly. They fired the man. They gave my son a $75.00 gift certificate to Best Buy. But, it had a happy ending. The gentleman got his job back. And, as it turned out, he owns a bar and a restaurant in Niagara Falls and my son has got free drinks and food for the rest of his life.

So, it is not just the right thing to do, it sometimes could be the profitable thing to do as well. But, I ask you -- that was a 20-to-30-second conversation I had with my son. It was just, “Don’t be stupid. Think about it.” And, you never know, that 20-to-30-second conversation that you might have with someone that respects your opinion, that someone knows that you have been around a while, that someone knows that you understand what workers’ rights are, that you have been in the workplace, you can have that influence.

And, I just ask each and every one of you to take that away from your meetings this weekend. And, if you have a chance -- I don’t expect you all to turning into preaching converts. But, if you have that chance to spend a few minutes with a young person, I would ask that you do that.

You just never know the impact that you might have, because we have got to keep pushing harder. We have got to keep striving. Forty percent is wonderful. Forty percent is something we should be all proud of. But, as I said earlier, not one of us in this room should be satisfied with it.

Two of the main focuses we have had are on mining and construction. Both of those sectors have a hugely disproportionate number of injuries and deaths, and that is why we are focusing our efforts there.
Our Mining Health Safety and Prevention Review was completed early this year, and steps have been taken already to increase mining safety and to decrease the number of injuries and deaths in mining.

We are currently consulting on a regulation. Those of you involved with this will know it is Regulation 854 under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, which applies to all mines and all mining plants and to all mining development across this province.

The consultations are going to end in the middle of next month, January 2016. If you have comments, if you have concerns, if you have got advice, please get it in by that time, because what it is going to do, it is going to strengthen and improve the requirements for workers that work in mines in this province.

It is going to introduce new requirements for risk assessment. That means each and every mine in this province has to take a look at itself as a mine like every other mine in the province, but also take a look at itself as a mine that is unique to hazards that may only exist in that mine itself.

It has got to look at formal traffic management. It has got to look at something that families ask them to do, the families of those people that have lost people in the mines, ask the Mining Review Committee to specifically take a look at water management and take a look at ground control.

It is going to update training requirements right across the mining industry.

I want to thank your organization, Unifor, for your participation in the Mining Health Safety and Prevention Review last year and through your representatives on the Mining Legislative Review Committee.

The input that you had to these amendments is something that simply a Minister of Labour can’t go out and buy. We need to talk to those people that do this job on a daily basis. And, I thank you for your submissions on designated substances in the workplace as well.

We are bringing forward a Construction Health and Safety Action Plan and that is going to attempt to do the same thing that we have been able to do in mining, to make firm progress. Next week, I am going to be announcing the next measure that is going to make construction safer in this province.

We all know we have got so much work to do in other sectors. The highest number of fatalities at workplaces in this province, you will know, occur in the industrial sector. We will be looking to focus on that in the future, because we want to bring those numbers down as well.

I want to mention one more thing before I finish up. The Ministry has recently posted our Occupational Health and Safety Annual Report. It covers the current state of occupational health and safety in our province. I encourage you all to visit that website and to give it a read.

As you can tell, we have got a lot on the go at the Ministry of Labour these days. We’re changing how we approach workplace health and safety, including mental health. But, the only way we are going to be successful in making Ontario workplaces better is by working together. That is not empty rhetoric.

The relationship I have with your organization, the personal relationship I have with Katha and with Jerry is something that I value. It makes my job easier. We don’t always agree. The Minister of Labour doesn’t often agree with a lot of people. It’s part of the job.

But, certainly, I respect the viewpoint. I always listen to the viewpoint that comes from this organization, because as I started from just meeting with Rita Lori a long, long time ago, I was introduced to an organization that has just gotten better over the years, that has been through the tough times, that has seen some of the good times as well, but has always stood behind working people in this province and has always kept that at the forefront of their agenda, that despite internal troubles, internal politics, whatever goes on, your eye is always on the right target. And, that is the people that go to work every day in this province, to make this such a great province.
The initiatives I have talked about today can save lives as well as make our workplaces square up. We cannot go through our plans without support from organizations like you.

Thank you for your continued input. Thank you for the dedication you bring to representing those that work with you, to your colleagues and your peers in the workplace. Thank you for your dedication to the safety of all workers.

I need to be pushed a little bit and I am going to push back a little bit. I am going to push you a little bit. We need to push each other. We need to push each other forward, so we can do our absolute best. We may not get everything done by tomorrow, but I want you to know we’re making progress. We’re getting there, thanks to you, one day at a time.

And, together, we are going to accomplish what we set out to do, to make Ontario the safest place to work, to make Ontario the fairest place to work, to make Ontario the best place to raise a family on the entire planet. Working together, we can do just that.

Thank you so much for your attention this morning. Thank you for the invitation. It has been a pleasure to be here.

**KATHA FORTIER:** So, I should just tell you all that Minister Flynn was not at all responsible for the popping. There is a cable problem. But, I do want to thank him very much on your behalf. And, we do have a small gift for you.

I just want to tell you one quick thing. When Jerry and I first met Minister Flynn as the Minister of Labour, we went to his office. We were shown to the boardroom. And, we were looking around at all of the photographs of the Ministers of Labour over the last couple of decades. And, I don’t think anybody had two years in.

And so, when he entered the room, we said, “How long are you here?” And, he said, “I am here till the end. This is my file. This is what I love. This is my passion.”

And, I think that was very apparent today, that Minister Flynn actually considers workers all the time in everything that he does. So, thank you very much for being with us today.

**DINO CHIODO:** Okay. Just getting on to the next order of business, what I would like to do is I would like to invite Pearl up to introduce our next speaker. And, this will be connected to Recommendation No. 4. So, Pearl, if you could please come up?

And, before I just actually allow Pearl to do the bio and introduction, I believe Lana Payne is in the audience. So, I would like to recognize our Atlantic Regional Director who has come down to support the Ontario Regional Council, Lana Payne.

**PEARL ALMEIDA:** Good morning, ORC delegates. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you today Angela Robertson.

Angela Robertson is the executive director of the Queen West Central Toronto Community Health Centre. Angela has also been a director of Health Equity at the Women’s College Hospital and was the executive director for over a decade at Sistering. It is a drop-in centre for homeless and at-risk women.

Angela is a celebrated activist in the black women and LGBTQ communities. She was recognized by Toronto’s weekly independent newspaper, NOW Magazine, as one of the top ten community activists on a social justice issue.

Angela is currently a board member of Houselink Community Homes, it is a housing service agency for psychiatric survivors, and Stephen Lewis Foundation, and is a past board chair for the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention.

She also received the Rubena Willis Women of Distinction award for her work on violence against women and the Open Alliance on Race Relation award for her work on equality and social justice issues. Angela was a recipient in 2009 of the YWCA Women of Distinction award for social change, and the Fred Victor Centre Mary Sheffield award for her work addressing poverty and homelessness in the City of Toronto.
Please join me in giving Angela a warm Unifor welcome.

**ADDRESS:** ANGELA ROBERTSON, AUTHOR AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVIST

**ANGELA ROBERTSON:** Good morning. Good morning. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I couldn’t find a spot in the parking lot, so I knew you were here. Thank you for this welcome and particularly this invitation to speak to the issues of violence against women and within the context of union movements and what is it that we can do.

It was good to hear Minister Flynn talk about some of the strategies that the provincial government is advancing. And, I think there are some feet to the fire moments that will be your and our collective responsibility to ensure that what is said is what is done.

So, thank you to the organizers for inviting me to participate. And, as I said, it is my privilege to be with as community of workers’ advocate, union activist supporters, committed to working towards creating communities free from violence against women and their children, and creating communities that will act to prevent violence here in workplaces and in communities.

But, it is also with a mixture of sadness, anger and honour that I am here on the eve of December 6th, the day of remembrance for 14 women who were killed, as you heard, in 1989, at Ecole Polytechnique, because of their gender, and to be 26 years later still demanding that we commit ourselves to action to end violence against women.

I believe that violence against women is a silent war. And, as we honour the women, those 14 women and other women who have been killed in that war, I think we also need to use this moment and the resolutions that you will be considering as a point of departure, not just about remembering, but also about taking action.

The frightening reality of that war is that 50 percent of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. That is 50 percent. So, that means our mothers, our daughters, our aunts, our cousins, our nieces.

Sixty-seven percent of all Canadians say that they have personally at least known one woman who has been sexually or physically assaulted. On average, every 60 days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. That’s 60 percent of women with disabilities have experienced violence.

Now, I know these are statistics that are not new to many of you. But, I think to hear them and to think about them in the context of the resolution that you will be considering is important, that while there are over 400,000 women who identify incidents of sexual assault is that only 10 percent of those assaults are reported.

The RCMP just in 2014, when we were talking about murdered and missing indigenous women, and there was community mobilizing wanting to raise awareness about the reality of this coming out of the Picton trials and coming out of that investigation, is that there was kind of a denial that was happening, “Well, it’s really not so, it’s really not that much. People are saying 500, but really is that the case?”

Yes, it was later in 2014 that the RCMP confirmed that it is over 1,000, over 1,200 women, indigenous women that have been reported as murdered or missing. And, yet, we also have the Assembly of First Nation representatives, in response to that RCMP confirmation, their declaration that two or three Aboriginal women are still disappearing each week.

This is not something happening in somebody else’s country, because sometimes we think about violence against women and we think about it happening as in the conditions that it’s happening here. We think that it’s not Canada. And, I would say to you that part of our commitment in the context, again, of this declaration is that we should be saying violence against women, this is not Canada; this should not be happening here.
When we think about the economy and we think about cost and we think about what resources are not available for workers to create real equitable work conditions, I would also suggest to you that the cost of violence against women is spent resource in the wrong place, because violence is present.

So, in Canadian analysis, the federal government’s analysis is that there is over $7.4 billion spent in response to the costs of violence in women’s lives. So, that is monies spent with emergency room for hospital care, for the costs in terms of the loss of income, for the tangible costs in the planning for funerals and the tangible costs in EI, in ongoing health care treatment. So, again, I say violence is a silent war with costs and we must take action.

Violence against women is rooted in your resolution. Comments on it are rooted in patriarchy, in women’s social and economic inequality and, yes, male power and privilege. We must also remember that violence happens in all communities, regardless of face, culture, faith, education, income, sexuality or nationality.

By not remembering and accounting for this in our work, we risk reinforcing stereotypes about particular communities as more prone to violence or pathologizing particular groups as being more violent and violence being more endemic to them and their particular communities.

We need not be, I think, defensive about this reality of violence in our communities as doing so only hides the problem and hinders us from taking action. I think communities free from violence are what we all are striving for.

This is also a political moment where we have a federal government that has recently been elected and elected by members, by votes in this room, because we wanted a change from a really pernicious Conservative government that was really trying to squeeze and -- you know, in a Caribbean term, they say “mash up” -- to mash up labour. Yes, we had a federal government that was trying to mash up labour.

And, in a demand for change, this new government has been re-elected. This is a moment where, I think, Unifor, union movements, need to hold that government accountable for delivering on the promises that they have made, why they got that vote.

And, some of the promises that they made related to issues around violence against women and/or strategies that can support women to leave violent situations. So, they talked about child care. They talked about income. They talked about improving access to EI. So, we have a provincial government that has talked about a poverty-reduction strategy. You have a labour minister who just talked about some other initiatives.

So, I think at the moment, we have a convergence of governments who have said that they are more in alliance with some of the things that we have been demanding than we have had for the last ten years. And, I think this is a moment where we need to hold those governments accountable to delivering on those promises.

Hence, from the social justice advocacy perspective, when we talk about violence against women and consider strategies for eliminating violence, we must also concern ourselves simultaneously with advocating and integrating other issues, so poverty reduction and income support. And, I would throw in there when we say “income support,” raising the minimum wage.

I would say homelessness and housing needs to be our concern, when we talk about violence against women, mental health and addiction support, immigration and settlement services support. We need to talk about criminal justice system reform, because we know that these systems, when they’re not strong, that it does not enable women to leave violence and to remain free from violence in their lives.

Addressing these issues, I believe, will enable successful intervention and sustainable strategies to reduce the incidences of violence in our lives. I am not suggesting that all of this is your individual work or one union’s work, but I believe it is our collective responsibility.
I am suggesting that from where you are located in the workplace as workers, you know the impact of not having adequate income. And, you just heard from a sister, from the floor, Cheryl Robinson, talking about that woman with the three jobs, where one gives you a little bit of piece around access to benefits; one piece gives you more income and another pieces gives you added income so, in fact, you can pay the rent and feed the kids.

So, if that woman were to experience violence in her intimate relationships, which prevented her from having one of those jobs, we know that housing, homelessness becomes a possible reality, and therefore, why we need to be concerned with those conditions.

We know that the justice system costs of policing, courts and incarceration. We know when we look at indigenous communities and we know the generational impact of colonization and the experience of residential schools, we see the costs of not having supports in place.

In our organizations, I think, and in our professions, we need to make these costs visible. We need to be true allies with those fighting to eradicate violence against women, which means as a union movement, as a union, Unifor, you need to be concerned with and in an alliance with the Idle No More movement that is talking about the rights for indigenous women to have land, the right for indigenous communities to have sovereignty.

You need to be concerned and be in alliance with Black Lives Matter, a group who is looking at racism, police violence, incarceration, mistreatment in the criminal justice system, because these are young people who are -- their activist zeal is also part of the continuum of the union activist’s zeal about social change.

As a union, you need to be calling for, and you have it in your resolution, an inquiry into the murdered and missing indigenous women, because women cannot work without their lives. Women cannot work without their health.

As workers, sisters, brothers and trans-folks in the movement, we have a role to play, because we all know in so many ways, shapes and form the reality of violence and the acts that undermine women’s inequality.

The union movement has been a strong and fearless advocate for women’s rights and a range of equality rights, but it is not immune to patriarchy and male privilege. This means that within our movements for equality, there are structural forces at play that enables the continuation of violence against women and women’s inequality.

And, as women in the movement, we know and many of you here know and have been immobilized by these acts of inequality. And, many men in this room, you have witnessed our marginalization. As well, many in this room have your own personal experiences of violence in the workplace and in community.

I am a feminist and at times would count myself as being fearless but I, too, have experience and have experienced this male violence. And, I will share with you what is -- you look at it in the magnitude of what happens in our lives, and I see it as part of an everyday violence that we experience, an experience I had a number of years ago on the subway one late night.

For those in Toronto, you know that the train’s ride between Dupont and St. Clair is a longer one. Well, on this ill-fated night coming from work, I found myself alone in one of those carriages with a young man in the train as the door closed. And, we began that long ride between that tunnel stop.

I am seated in the middle and him at the other end. And, the women in this room, you know the feeling you get in the pit of your stomach, which tells you that you’re not safe. There is something off.

You can’t quite name it, but there is just something that tells you that this does not feel safe. And, that is the sad part of violence against women is that even when we are not physically assaulted, we have experienced the harm of feeling unsafe.
Well, I looked at this young man and he looked back at me. And, without blinking an eye, he unzipped his pants and whipped out his penis and began masturbating while looking at me. In that moment, I froze. I feared that if I moved, he would attack me, that I would not make it to that panic switch -- you know that switch on the subway line -- that I would not make it to the line in time. And that even if I did, who knows the time between the train stopping and what could have happened.

I also thought that I would not make it to the end of the train to open that in-between door to enter into another carriage before he could get to me, that I saw that he was larger than me and that he could physically overpower me, and that if I were to make it to that carriage, what if it, too, was empty?

Well, this feminist organizer sat there in fear looking at this young man, and that train ride to the other stop felt like an eternity. The young man said nothing to me, only looked at me and I could feel him taking my power with each jerk-off action.

Just as the train exited the tunnel, he ejaculated, wiped his hands on the seat and zipped up his business. His body, my body, is poised to flee as the doors open. The train slows. He gets up. The doors open and he goes. I am left with a trickle of passengers boarding and I watch as he darts out of sight. I remember watching the seat where he wiped himself, burning with rage, until I got to the stop at Wilson.

I, like other women, did not report this incident, because he didn’t attack me. He didn’t physically attack me. So, I felt, you know, really and truly, the TTC is going to take this serious in the realm of the things happening? I told friends. And, to this day, I remain hyper-vigilant in subway cars.

This is one small example of the everyday violations and violence that women experience. These acts of patriarchs can stop you in your tracks and take away your power. As women in the workplace, you know this everyday violation from the seemingly benign to the overt, the sexist comments that are made about women’s place in the workplace, the names called and remarks made about women in leadership.

You know the big ‘B’ word, yes. The intimidation, threats and bullying, the violation of personal space, the racialized sexual inferences over lunchroom conversation, the unwanted sexual advances, the gropes and the assaults. As women in our communities, because we know violence in the workplace doesn’t stop in the workplace, it also extends to us in our communities where we live, where we walk.

We know these everyday instances of violence, the gropes on a crowded bus or streetcar; the lecherous glares and remarks about our body parts; the fear when you find yourself alone as a woman in an unsafe situation; that moment in the elevator where you find yourself alone with someone who you feel unsafe with; on the street where you think all of a sudden you’re enter a block where you realize you’re the only one walking in that moment on the street; where you enter the parking lot, even the parking lot across the street here in an underground garage; and the vigilance that we have in watching our glasses and being reminded constantly to watch our glasses in crowded bars; being stalked, being hit, being assaulted, being raped.

These are the acts -- these are the everyday acts that women in this room walk with and we are told to be vigilant about when we think about our personal safety.

So, I want to kind of just remind you that when you think about the acts of violence, that you not just see the woman who is beaten, the woman who is raped, but these everyday acts of violence that are not reported, that are not counted as “crime”.

The elimination of this violence against women also demands systemic local and national change. Your choosing to spotlight this issue is a declaration, a commitment that you will not be silent bystanders, knowing that your silence and inaction leaves women in harm’s way.
By doing so, you join the efforts of women who organize to create shelters for women fleeing violence, rape crisis centres, hotlines for women who are threatened by violence, women who have worked to change laws that says that women who are married are not the personal property of their husbands. These are the changes that your declaration and your motion is seeking to join.

In the interest of time, I will move to kind of -- do I see a hint from the floor? No? Okay, then. I thought I saw a hint from the floor with a card waving. No? No, okay, then. “Don’t worry about them. I’ll tell you,” says the union organizer.

It is important to recognize that the initiatives and the wins that we have gained has come from women organizing, and that they are not the result of governments’ plan to deal with sexist violence, but they are the result of these kinds of moments, these kinds of resolutions where communities and groups of committed people outside of governments have said, “Things need to change, and this is why, and we are demanding change.”

So, this resolution is part of that change. It is part of you joining in alliance with women’s organizing that has led to the changes for violence against women. Women will continue to organize ourselves to stop the violence. And, I implore the men in our communities and in our lives to do the same, because I believe these acts of violence rob men and boys of their humanity.

Men, I also implore you to not be silent bystanders when other men commit these acts of violence and violation. No one man on his own, that is, without the collusion of others, gets into a position to successfully attack a woman and get away with it. Men use their role in the family, their professional credentials, the unlikeliness of being charged or convicted, or the fact that society will believe them over a woman to escape accountability for their violence and sexism.

Men who think differently need to act differently, to hold your brothers accountable in building equity in the workplace and in our communities. As long-time Canadian Violence against Women activist, Lee Lakeman states:

*Violent men, and men in authority over violent men, and the broader public that authorizes those men, are not yet shamed by the harm of coercive control over women.*

Maybe we can rest some hope on the growing activism and the activity of men of goodwill calling on each other to change. When that group hits a critical mass, the majority of men will more likely want to change. I believe this group is part of that growing critical mass.

But, we need more than your personal pledge that violence against women is wrong. We need you to be active allies akin to when you lock arms and when we lock arms at the bargaining tables, at arbitration tables and on the streets demanding employment rights for workers.

To conclude, in a speech to the National Convention in Illinois at the American Federation for Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations, in 1965, Martin Luther King states about the union:

*The labour movement was the principal force that transformed the misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief for the destitute and, above all, new wage levels that meant more than survival, but a tolerable life.*

The captains of industry did not lead this transformation. They resisted until they were overcome. When in the ‘30s the waves of union organization crested over the nation, it carried to secure shores not only itself, but the whole of society.

This is the history of labour movement. It is a history of activism. It is a history of activism against inequality, against injustice. Violence against women is inequality. It is injustice, and this is a moment for Unifor to join and continue that quest in responding to inequality in labour movement and in labour activism.
I therefore conclude by saying if these are our roots, taking the spirit to fight the silent war against women is our project. Let us always be mindful of the pervasiveness and oppressiveness and the oppressive nature of patriarchy, which can roll back our advances and undermine these roots of activism. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: We have to stay vigilant for our sisters, our aunts, our mothers, and continue to make sure that we stay vigilant and we make sure that this doesn’t continue to build and grow into the future, so thank you very much. On behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, we would like to give you a gift.

And, again, this is an excellent segue into the next recommendation, Recommendation No. 4 that I will ask Katha to come up and read. So, thank you very much. Thank you.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

KATHA FORTIER: Ending Violence against Women, Recommendation No. 4.

On December 6, 2015, Unifor recognizes the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. We remember the 14 women who were singled out and murdered on this day in 1989 at the Ecole Polytechnique. We also reflect on the terrible absence left by all women who have died as a result of gender-based violence.

It is unacceptable that violence against women still permeates our society. Violence against women and girls is a devastating consequence of gender inequality. As people gather in communities across Canada to remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence and to reflect on those still living with the daily reality of violence in their lives, Unifor recommits to take concrete action to eliminate violence against all women and girls. As part of this, we are highlighting the connection between sexism and violence. I therefore recommend:

1. Unifor locals continue their activism to eliminate violence against women in all its forms.
2. Delegates participate in Unifor’s “Spot the Sexism” campaign by sharing on social media and local websites and starting conversations based on the message in that campaign.
3. Locals support the “It’s Never Okay” initiative of the Ontario government including its proposed changes to the Occupational Health & Safety Act (Bill 132) strengthening employer obligations and inspector powers.
4. Locals support Unifor’s “domestic violence leave” proposal contained in our Changing Workplaces Review submission.
5. Locals continue to put pressure on the federal government, to fulfil its promise to hold an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.
6. Locals participate in vigils and actions on December 6th and continue to challenge sexism and misogyny throughout the year.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Katha. I’ll take any speakers on the mics.

Oh, sorry. I’ll move the recommendation. Can I have a mover? Moved and seconded. Speaker at mic number 2.

SUSAN McKINNON: Thank you. I rise in support of this recommendation. On an average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her partner. It is 54 percent of the girls between 15 and 19 that experience sexual coercion. In a dating relationship, women 25 to 34 years old are three times more likely to be physical, sexual, assaulted by their partner. For those who are at the age of 45 or older, one out of five Canadian women experienced some of the emotional or economic abuse by their intimate partner.
This year, we even promoted Shine the Light campaign. In Windsor, we promoted it to our workplaces. And, thank you to all chair people from Local 444 that supported this campaign. It sparked a lot of awareness and communication. We were able to raise over $10,000.00. This will actually help the Hiatus House, which supports and shelters the experience of domestic violence of women. The Aboriginal women and girls accounted for almost 20 percent of the victims, despite only being 5 percent of the population.

We support the REDress Campaign Project. This project right now is shown right in front of Local 444 and 200. There are six red dresses swaying in the wind. The red symbolizes life, blood, love and violence. These dresses will be donated to the project.

We must continue to put this pressure on our government for the inquiry and ask for action to be done. All women are important. Women and girls need to be accounted for. Gender-based violence is not just a women’s issue; it’s everyone’s issue.

We have a role to play. We are important to society. We need good-paying jobs. We need approved pensions. We must have a national child care program. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, sister. I’ll take the speaker at mic number 3.

**GARY PARENT:** Thanks very much, Dino. Gary Parent, Local 444. Here we are again, 26 years later, standing here still not getting justice for violence against women.

I stand here today on behalf of my wife, my daughter-in-law and my two grandchildren and their future. And, I say to the men in this room, “We can stop violence against women, because we are the perpetrators. And, it is up to us to educate our sons and our grandsons that violence against women has to come to an end.”

When we looked at the last federal election campaign, there were commitments made, particularly with the government that got elected. But, now it’s up to us as Unifor, as part of a coalition, to make sure that they live up to the commitments that they campaigned on in relationship to having that inquiry that Sister McKinnon talked about just a few minutes ago, and make sure that there is action that is coming out of that inquiry, that it is not just lip service, that we put an end to the assaulting of the women, indigenous women, and find out what has happened to the women that have gone missing, that have been murdered.

And, Sue is right. When you look at the percentage of the amount of women that have been missing or murdered and the indigenous people of this country, it is shameful. We shouldn’t be proud of that.

Every Canadian from coast to coast to coast should be standing up in an outrage. And, we should be supporting our women. We should be supporting the sisters in this union. And, more importantly, supporting all women across this country and put an end to violence against women, and every man in this room should stand up and say, “We will stop it. We will put an end to it.”

And, God, we have got to stop coming here every December 6th. Yes, we’re remembering and it’s a Remembrance Day, but we still have not stopped the violence and we have to stop it. Thank you very much.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, speaker. I’ll take the speaker at mic number 4.

**GWEN CAMPBELL:** Gwen Campbell, Local 1285, a member of the Women’s Committee. I’m a fierce feminist. What does that mean? It means I want the exact same opportunities that men do, whether it’s political, social or economics. We’re all equal. That is what we need. And, that is what will help to stop violence against women.

As our speaker Angela said, violence against women is a silent war and it starts with sexism. Every six days, a woman is killed. It is a tragedy. But, it starts with sexism. It starts with the little things. Judging a woman as she walks by, saying something derogatory, talking about the way she is dressed or the shape of her body, all those little things, that is what starts it.

And, men in this room, I know you’re supporters of women, but you need to stop that. You need to not be silent when you hear your brothers in the workplaces saying things like that.
Posting, and I would certainly hope most workplaces now don’t have posters of Sunshine Girls or Playboy or whatever. But, I know it still happens in some workplaces. We need to stop that kind of stuff. That’s all the sexism. Don’t be silent bystanders. That is how we are going to make a difference.

We must look at the causes of what happens with patriarchy. We have women who have low wages, precarious jobs, no benefits. We don’t have child care. Why do we still not have a National Child Care program? We don’t have affordable housing.

These are all the things that will make a difference in women’s lives. It will give us the opportunity to leave those violent relationships. That is what will make a difference. So, please, please don’t be silent, brothers. Sisters, you know, we’re all equal. We understand that. So, please, make a difference, brothers. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker at mic 5.

PEARL ALMEIDA: Hi. Pearl Almeida, President of Local 6006 and also a member of the Ontario Region Women’s Committee. I rise in support of this motion, and there have been several points that have been spoken about already.

The one that I want to look at is the Changing Workplaces Review because, yes, sexism is there. Violence against women is there. When that is recognized, when we have tools in place to support these women, what happens next? What do we have as support for women that want to leave a domestic situation?

We have a great program in Unifor, which is the Women’s Advocate program, where they have tools and resources to leave these situations. What does the employer offer them? Nothing. So, as Unifor, when we do our proposal and it has in there the domestic violence leave, we need to support it.

When we lobby, we need to champion that cause, because women need to be paid when they are dealing with a situation, because can you imagine not having any support financially and the added stress of dealing with that violent situation? Therefore, I urge you to support that when you are doing your consults. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker at mic number 6.

BILL GIBSON: Good morning. Bill Gibson, staff. I rise in complete support of this resolution. I have spoken on this before, and I do share Brother Parent’s frustration that we come here after 26 years after one of the worst moments in Canadian history.

But, we continually have to recognize this, and I do want to speak to the men in the room, because Gary is absolutely bang on. The men are the problem. So, I am going to address my comments to you.

It is something to take a pledge that you are here to eradicate violence against women. The follow-up to that is action. And, until we get action, until we get the complete mindset and buy-in that this type of discrimination, sexism and violence has got to be eradicated from our very souls, we are not going to get anywhere.

Sister Robertson made a very, very compelling presentation there, too. And, one of the things she did say was it robs us of our humanity. I would submit to you we’ll go one step further. It robs us of every single piece that we stand for as trade unions: equality, a better life for all, not segregating people and keeping one group down at the expense of another.

We have to continue to educate our families, our co-workers and our employers at the bargaining table that this problem will not go away with lip service. We need action, we need commitment and we need to really give it to it from the very soul of who we are as trade unionists and humanitarians. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: No, thank you. Speaker at Mic 1.
ROB GIOVAGNOLI: Rob Giovagnoli, Local 1359. I rise in support of this resolution.

Two weeks ago, my family became -- well, my daughter became a survivor of domestic violence. And, it is something that you feel. We talk about it all the time. And, you never think it is going to happen to you or family; right? Just give me a moment.

DINO CHIODO: Take your time, brother.

ROB GIOVAGNOLI: So, my 18-year-old daughter was hanging out with her boyfriend at the time. And, he felt that -- you know, I don’t know what had happened, but he started getting aggressive with her. He was strangling her, smothering her, choking her, fighting her, smashing her head off the floor, for three hours holding her against her will.

I woke up in the morning after having my phone shut off. She lives here in Toronto. I’m from Sault Ste. Marie. And, I had an idea I was going to get a call, but you just hope it doesn’t come. Anyway, he did rob her of some things. We shared some movies together, good times. He just put her down. He cut her up. So, this has always been an issue that has been close to my heart, but now it’s even more important that we fight for these individuals.

My daughter, she doesn’t want to get any help, because she thinks she can fight through it. Anyway, all the guys in here, I just want to grab the son-of-a-bitch. I want to kick his freaking ass. I think it’s an important cause and I think that we need to stand together. And, no matter whether you’re in a workplace, you’re in school, you’re in no matter what, nobody deserves to be treated like that, man, woman or child, nobody. And, we’ve got to do what we can to prevent this, because it could happen to anybody. If it could happen to my family, I know now, it could happen to anybody. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Speaker on Mic 2.

BRUCE ALLEN: Bruce Allen, Local 199. I am quite pleased with this recommendation specifically because for the first time that I can ever recall, this union is formally recognizing that gender inequality is the root cause of violence against women and misogyny. All the times these issues have been discussed before at this body and at other Unifor events, that has never been identified, so I think that is real progress.

However, there is still one thing that I think needs to be added, and that is there is no inclusion of any references to patriarchy. The simple fact of the matter is that patriarchy is the institutional expression of these phenomena and the root cause of these phenomena.

It logically follows from that, that uprooting and eradicating patriarchy is the indispensable prerequisite for eliminating violence against women and eliminating misogyny. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. I’ll take the speaker at mic 3.

CHERYL ROBINSON: Thanks. I’m Cheryl Robinson, Unifor Local 2002. I just want to echo some of the sentiments that we have heard here this morning. We have been challenged for many, many, many years in fighting to end violence against women. And, I want to say thanks to our union for taking on that challenge and continuing every single day, in my opinion.

And, since we founded Unifor, I am seeing more and more progressive things and different approaches to how we deal with and how we take on as we have talked about, the sexism that exists and how that continues to perpetrate the violence against women.

I want to say thanks especially to our president, Jerry Dias. I don’t know if folks have had the opportunity. But, Jerry, working with the Women’s Department, put together a YouTube video that if folks in this room haven’t seen it yet, I think it is important for you to make sure that your members are seeing it.
We have all been here. We come to these events every year. And, Ontario Regional Council typically happens around December 6th. And, we hear the same messages over and over and over again.

But, in Jerry’s YouTube video, he talks about himself, being on the shop floor when he was 18, 19 years old, participating in I’m guessing what lots of folks in this room have participated in, and that’s sexism, not realizing at the time that that is exactly part of the problem. It is a big part of the problem.

So, if you haven’t had an opportunity, I really encourage folks to take a few minutes to see the YouTube video, to see the materials that the Unifor Women’s Department has put together and support the recommendation.

I know it won’t be an issue here today, but it can’t be just left in this room. What we have to do is continue to push forward in our workplaces, share those simple examples. Again, that video, it came at an interesting time.

We had a workplace. Actually, one of our managers decided it would be funny to send out a very sexist email and he copied the entire workforce on it. I did send a copy of Jerry’s YouTube clip, because it was so relevant. And, I asked him to share that with management, because if the president of 315,000 Unifor members can stand up and say, “I did something wrong and I have learned from it and I’m not going to do it again,” then maybe his management can take on that challenge and share that with their membership as well.

So, thanks so much to the Unifor Women’s Department for putting together this year’s statements, the video, and the campaign that exists. It is very important that this information gets shared with as many people as possible. Again, there are 700 of us in the room, but there are 315,000 members that can benefit from the information that we have. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker at mic 4.

SHAWN ROUSE: Thank you very much. Shawn Rouse, Unifor Health Care Council president. I definitely want to start out by thanking Rob for his definitely very emotional words that affect him directly and part of his family.

I stand in support of this resolution in its entirety. And, I would like to take you to -- we can all tell our personal stories about what has happened in the past. But, what we want to do is also look forward and how we are going to take the steps.

Like Gary Parent earlier said, we have to take action. We have to make changes. We have to bring forward education and empowerment to our sisters and also knowledge to our brothers that we are the key to the success of ending violence against women.

In health care, violence is a pandemic. Violence is faced by women, because women are the majority of the workforce in health care every single day. And, women face violence on a whole range of issues, whether it be sexual violence, physical violence or emotional violence.

And, it comes from a whole variety of different directions. It comes from their employer. It can at times come from their co-workers. And, it can come from the people that they care for, their residents, their patients and their clients.

And, what we in the Health Care Council have decided to do is develop an action plan to fight back against violence in the workplace and to support our sisters in the work they do caring for others when not at their best, and we call it our Caring Plan.

We’re going to have a specific health care section, visually and specifically addressing increasing incidents and harm caused by workplace violence directed towards workers. They are potentially relevant in other sectors of Unifor, in the fashion of workplace harassment posters and material.
This would be the initial phase of a broader and deeper campaign to ensure that our workplace leadership are equipped with the tools and understanding to demand action to prevent workplace violence and address chronic overwork and overload that increasingly leads to psychological evaluation in compassion fatigue and PTSD in our first responders sector especially.

We have decided we are going to take action. Violence against women cannot be tolerated and it cannot be just understood as being part of the job. And, we are going to go forward with it. And, we are inviting all sectors of Unifor to join with us as our campaign is built and takes off, to bring it to other sectors and to champion an anti-violence campaign that has results and actually has real consequences in the workplace and at the front lines where our workers, our members, our sisters are every single day. And, I thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on mic 5.

JODY POWERS: Jody Powers, Local 229, Thunder Bay. I, too, rise in support of this document. I would also like to thank Rob for sharing what was a very difficult thing and something really personal to share with us.

But, again, I first spoke on this about four years ago. And, I am looking around the room today and listening to the speakers that are coming to the mic. And, I am noticing something that really disappoints me. It seems to be the same people coming up year after year after year.

So, clearly the message isn’t getting out there. This isn’t a female issue. This is a male problem. This is a man thing. We are the only ones who are going to be able to fix this. We have to man up and we have to take control of our own behaviours.

Our kids are watching. Our grandkids are watching. Heck, our parents and grandparents are watching. If we don’t take the first steps to change this, nothing is going to change. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Right on. Thank you very much, speaker. Speaker on mic 1.

RANDY KITT: Thanks, Dino. It’s Randy Kitt, president of 79-M and an NEB board member.

I rise in support of this recommendation. I just wanted to tell you a little bit about my experience. As a little kid, I had a family member who was abused and I couldn’t really imagine what was happening in that house when we were playing out on the lawn, and the screaming and yelling and when that family member would come out all bruised and beaten.

And, the cops would be called. And, there would be such a scene in the neighbourhood. It was horrific. And, the explanation later in the car on the way home was, well, there was nothing they could do and it is just going to continue.

And, it continued for years and years and years until she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. And, it turns out that back then, I guess it was 20 years ago, that it was okay, and this is what society, I guess, was saying that it was okay that this man could abuse my aunt that way. But, when she was diagnosed with a disability, then it wasn’t okay. So, she was removed from the house at that point.

And, we have to change our attitudes. I do not understand what the heck is going on. And, that was the explanation. Although she was removed from the house and there was a restraining order, but nothing happened to him. He walks free to this day. So, that, I don’t understand.

And, other things, I don’t understand. In the newspaper yesterday, there was a young woman, Lynelle Cantwell, who at her school discovered online that she was rated one of the ugliest girls in the school.

And, just this year -- I can’t remember how long ago, but it wasn’t that long ago -- there were 13 dentists in Halifax that were participating in online hate/sex comments and conversations about drugging women.
And, when you read the discussion, the discussion isn’t about what are we going to do and how are we going to not tolerate this behavior, because we have to have a zero tolerance to this kind of behavior, zero tolerance.

But, instead, the discussion is, “Oh, those poor dentists. They might not graduate.” And, included in that discussion is, “Oh, these poor dentists, they are talking about suicide,” and the poor dentists this and the poor dentists that.

And, where is the discussion about the women that are affected here? Where is the discussion about this young woman who has been abused in her school? It has got to be zero tolerance. We have to discuss this. We have to, as the gentleman said, raise the awareness and there’s got to be zero tolerance. Zero tolerance.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker at mic 2.

KEN LEWENZA, JR.: Ken Lewenza, Jr. I just want to make I think it’s so important that we continue to have these spaces where we can talk about our values and our cultures. And, I just want to share with you one quick thing.

Probably at the time when I was the most -- I’m going to make some broad strokes here to just talk about violence in general. Probably the time when I was most proud of my father that I look back on it was the time when they were talking about going and dropping bombs on Iraq. And, he said, “You can’t do that. Violence breeds violence.” And, I remember even at that time, it was probably the first time that even his brothers and sisters were questioning his sanity, because they were thinking about that we respond with violence with violence.

And then I can’t help but to look at what is happening in the United States today. You look at what happened in San Bernardino just two weeks ago, an incident before that. And, you see the political leadership, for example, of the Donald Trumps of the world that are actually creating divisions in society and promoting hate, because what the Republican Party has turned into in the United States is actually a hate group.

And, I don’t want to sound so far skeptical and cynical, but I think this is how this is relevant. There was a Yale study or a Harvard study done in the last little bit, saying that the average American has absolutely no political influence over the system.

And, what I think is that the corporates have actually gained so much control over the system that they’re using the Trumps of the world to actually spread those types of divisions, ensure that people stay divided.

I hear women talking about those types of systematic and structural reasons why there’s violence and problems in society. And, the reality is you just have to look to that particular society to see those systemic and structural challenges growing even deeper.

And, this is where I think we should take a real credit to being Canadians, to being members of Unifor, is that we defeated Stephen Harper, because we saw his views in terms of murdered and missing indigenous women. We saw how he would use and promote racism and violence against one another, so that they can continue to advance their agenda.

And, I think there is a lot to be frustrated about in terms of the violence against women. People are saying it hasn’t gone down and that is absolutely true. So, we do have to start. And, I think our union does an awesome job at starting to address those systematic and structural challenges.

But, I want to bring it to Windsor again. I spoke to a person that sat on City Council with us. And, this was just last week. She says, “Ken, after addressing violence against women for the last 40 years, things are continuing to go backwards.”

And, it was the first time where I heard her say that if we don’t start tackling the issue of good jobs and poverty and inequality like the other sister said, then these types of things continue to manifest themselves.
So, I just can’t help but to say again, although we are incredibly frustrated, we should be proud of the values. We should be proud of the culture that our union sets and what it is that we propose, a different version of society where we can again reclaim and maintain our humanity.

KEN LEWENZA, JR.: And, again, every year, year after year, it doesn’t matter how many times we come in here, it’s awesome to listen to people actually share their stories, because it reinvigorates us as to who we are. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Speaker on mic number 4.

RUTH PRYCE: Hello. Good morning. Excuse my voice. I have a bit of a cold, so I am very husky. I am Ruth Pryce, vice-president of 1106 and an NEB member.

I stand in support of this recommendation and listened to our guest speaker that we had, Angela Robertson, that spoke so eloquently on the violence against women. And, we speak so much. Our union is involved and gets involved in all these.

But, when we stand here on the eve of the massacre and we talk about violence, we see violence every day to women. And, as Angela said, some of this violence that takes place, it could be prevented if there were things that were put into place, especially if that woman has several kids and she cannot leave the violent environment, because she has nowhere to go.

So, I am standing here also to speak about -- I think it’s under Recommendation No. 6 that said -- No. 5, I think it is, that we are going to be holding the present government’s promise to the inquiry into the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Each year, I stand up for them and I speak about this. And, I am very happy to know that they are looking into it with this government. They will be doing something starting next year. Katha Fortier mentioned it in her report. The president of the OFL spoke about it. So, I am encouraging everybody here. Let us keep this government’s feet to the fire and make sure that this starts next year. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. There is a speaker at mic 7; right?

PAUL LOURA: Paul Loura, Local 636. I just wanted to let every brother and sister know here I rise in support of this motion. But, I wanted to give you some positive news about this type of attitude and environment that we live in today, so I was going to tell you a little story.

In my house, there is equality. I have a son that is 14 years old and very active in martial arts. My son went to a competition in Stratford last year. He is 14 years old. He has got a trophy shelf, about ten first places, half a dozen second places and he is very active in that sport.

When he entered the competition, there were two female competitors at his age level that he had to be involved with. And, as being brought up in the atmosphere that he has in my household and my wife and I, and how we communicate and how we do things, my son felt that he couldn’t compete against them, because he didn’t want to be active and wrestle with the girls.

They scored one to five. This girl had 4-0 on him. And, I said, “Bud, what is going on? You usually do better than this.” He says, “I don’t feel right, Dad. I don’t feel right hitting a girl.”

So, like one of the brothers said earlier, it starts right at home. If you can change it in your home and you can bring that attitude to your kids as they bring it out to society, eventually everybody is going to get the message.

It has taken a long time obviously. We all realize that from bringing this up year after year. One of the brothers said that it is always the same faces on the speakers. I am a new face and I am trying to bring some positive attitude towards this problem that we have with violence against women.

And, I believe at the home-point base is a very good place to start to educate your children and make sure that they give the upbringing that they need to, to their children, so that this problem will go away in the future. Thank you.
DINO CHIODO: Right on, brother. I don’t see any more speakers at the mic. Earlier on, we had a speaker at the microphone that has asked to put an amendment with adding the word “patriarchy”, which we are fine with making that friendly amendment.

So, I just wanted to make sure that people knew that, that we would be adding “patriarchy” to the document, so it would be inclusive of Recommendation No. 4, in ending violence against women.

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.  CARRIED

Thank you very much, brothers and sisters, for a great discussion. Much appreciated. Thank you.

I will ask Katha Fortier to bring up our next speaker.

KATHA FORTIER: We ask a lot of our National President in this union. We ask him to be an expert in bargaining and we ask him to be at all sorts of bargaining tables across the country. We expect that he should be a media expert and be available for television whenever they want him or in the radio. Go ahead.

DEREK MacLEOD: Hi, Katha.

KATHA FORTIER: You can interrupt my introduction of your president. That’s okay.

POINT OF PRIVILEGE: WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

DEREK MacLEOD: Sorry for interrupting, Katha. I just want to bring a point of privilege. It’s Derek MacLeod with Local 6004 and the Workers with Disabilities Committee. I want to just raise two things, a couple of things.

Some of you may have seen the information that was sent out to locals. There were some letters sent from Jerry Dias for December 3rd, which is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. We do have more information at our table. We’re between the last two doors here. We want everyone to come by, pick up the information about the day, what its significance is and the importance. Bring some of the posters back to your locals and put them up in your workplaces.

The other thing was another organization that we’re supporting, which is Barrier-Free Canada. And, they have been doing great work to try to get a Canadians with Disabilities Act, so a law to have minimum standards for disabilities rights and benefits. We also have information there about that. We’re asking as well if you could stop by and pick that up.

The last thing is our caucus is going in Sheraton Hall A at lunch. We have food. And, I have been told that the ‘A’ for Sheraton Hall A stands for awesome. So, please come to our awesome caucus. We hope to see you there.

KATHA FORTIER: No, that’s good. We don’t have to start over. We’re good.

So, again as I was saying, we do ask a lot of our National President. We ask him to put forward our political agenda. And, we know we need to have relationships with the government. And, we see that our president actually does that, because we know that we’re never going to get anywhere, obviously, if we don’t have dialogue and if we don’t have conversations.

And, we also expect him to carry through with our social agenda in our union and issues like we just talked about of violence against women. Cheryl raised how active he has been on that issue, and also Syrian refugees, and so many other social issues that our union asks him to be a spokesperson and be a leader on. He is absolutely doing that every single day.
So, I want to say, Jerry, our union is absolutely incredibly proud of all you do. And, I would like you to joint me all in welcoming Jerry Dias to our council, Ontario Regional Council this week.

And, before we actually hear from Jerry, we are going to go to a very short video clip, because I think it’s important to see this.

--- Whereupon a video clip was played

ADDRESS: JERRY DIAS, UNIFOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JERRY DIAS: Well, good morning. I would like to say to Ed Fast and Stephen Harper, “You can kiss our collective union asses.” I can say that, now that I don’t work for Rita anymore, because by the time I would get back to the office tomorrow, I would be hearing about it.

Look, this is an incredible time for us. And, I think it is incredible that the Ontario Regional Council meets in December. Why? Because December is the time of the year that we really start to reflect. We reflect on the year. We reflect on our challenges. We reflect on our victories. We reflect on our losses.

But, it really is a time for personal reflection, time to think about family, time to think about what we have accomplished collectively. But, you also think about the highs and the lows of the year and that includes everything. That includes your personal life. It includes your professional life.

And, I know the low for my year was in January when my mother passed away, because my mother was an incredible person. She was, without a doubt, the most decent person I ever knew. She never said a bad word about a soul.

So, when I was thinking last night about my comments and I couldn’t sleep very well, I was thinking about all of us in the room. I had spoken to a brother outside about personal challenges and family challenges. So, I just want to start off my remarks by saying to so many of us in this room that we have lost so many people that we love. So, I would actually like if we can just join our hearts together into one collective heart to let them all know that they might not be here today, but we certainly aren’t forgetting them.

Anyway, when we go through these challenges, you think about the political agenda. You think about what we are talking about, the impact and the politics of the country. You know, I think a heck of a lot about the $36 billion that Harper was taking out of the Health Care Accord.

And, I talk about that and I think about that, of course, because of the challenges my mother went through living in a long-term care facility for about a year-and-a-half before she passed away. And, I think about our brothers and sisters in nursing homes, hospital, retirement homes, I think about the work they do every day. I think about the difficulty they went through in collective bargaining.

And so, I think about the challenges that we are faced with as an organization, and why it is so important that we pull together as a collective to make sure that our political work leads to the success that we need and we desire, because our political success takes us to our collective bargaining success.

And then I think about the lows, but then I think about the highs. I think about my daughter, Carly, who was struggling to have children, who had twin boys, Max and Evan in July, which really brings a lot of happiness to our lives.

So, when I think about the Unifor family, which is really -- and, we are. We are a family no matter how you look at it, because we stick with each other. We stick with each other through thick and thin. We believe in each other. We hug each other. We feel. We respect.

And, let me give you a small example of the things that, really, I appreciate. I got a text last night. I was in Ottawa last night, because I was in Ottawa for the throne speech. And, I got a text last night from Kelly Dobbs, the president of Local 723-M to say, “Hey, Jerry, we’re having a celebration at the Union Hall for Dave Lewington. Please come and join us.”
I couldn’t, of course, because I was in Ottawa. But, I thought what a classy thing. I really appreciated it. But, more importantly, I started to think about the contribution of Dave Lewington who is going to retire after 28 years on staff.

So, Dave, I don’t know if you’re in the room. Are you around? There he is. Dave, thank you very much for your contribution to the union. And, my friend, Jim Stanford. What can you say about Jim Stanford? What do you say about a person that makes the world’s most boring subject actually interesting? A personal friend, a friend to the labour movement, a person who has brought so much pride and energy and respect to our organization, because of the way he handles himself with such intelligence, but with such humour.

So, on behalf on everyone in this room, I would like to thank Jim Stanford for the incredible contribution he has made for so many years. Thanks, Jim.

And, I don’t know if Rita is in the room. Rita, are you in the room? I know she was around earlier. There she is, my Rita. I’ll tell you, it was wonderful coming into work, into the office, and Rita will tell you not often enough, and that was an understatement.

But, you have no idea what it is like to come into work and you could always tell within the first three seconds what was on Rita’s mind -- actually, that’s about three seconds too long -- because she loves the union. And, she was very quick to point out that “What I do is not for you, it’s for the union, so here is what you better think about doing better today.” And, she did that, because she loves all of you in the room and loves our movement. And, Rita, I’m missing you so much already. Thank you so much, sister. You’re an incredible trade unionist.

I can’t go through the list of the retirees or that will take up my remaining 25 minutes. But, you know what? I stopped to think about the year. Things happened so quickly. We are so busy, because this organization has so many moving parts.

So, I just go back to yesterday. And, I’m thinking about it in Ottawa, in the Senate, which for me was kind of odd, because I was calling for the abolition of the Senate after Bill 377.

So, for me to sit in the Senate listening to the Governor General read the throne speech was an incredible respect for our organization, because think about it. For the last ten years under Harper, do you honestly think a labour representative would have been invited to the throne speech?

The only throne that we would have been invited to was a white porcelain bowl, where they could have hit a switch and we would have been sent into Lake Ontario. So, to be there and listen to it brought incredible satisfaction on behalf of all of us in the Unifor family.

But, before the throne speech was read, I took a look around the Senate Chambers and I saw Don Plett. Don Plett is a Conservative senator that I had the incredible honour of tangling with during the Senate hearings on Bill 377.

And, to say we didn’t get along very well is a bit of an understatement, because everybody in this room will understand that having a speech on democracy and transparency from a Conservative senator really doesn’t go over well with any of us, and it really didn’t go over very well that day.

So, as he was giving us a lecture on democracy and transparency, when he finished, I took the opportunity to tell him exactly what I thought of him, the partisanship with the Senate and, of course, Harper.

And, I said, “You’re going to give us a speech on democracy as an appointed senator? You?” Let’s talk about democracy. Democracy just happened in May, in Alberta, where Rachel Notley’s government just got elected and the Conservatives lost after 42 years of power. That is democracy.

And, let’s talk about transparency. Let’s talk about the Prime Minister’s Office ordering the Senate audit to be changed. Let’s talk about Brazeau. Let’s talk about Wallin. Let’s talk about Duffy. Let’s talk about Nigel Wright.
So, listen, when I was in the Senate yesterday, I saw Don Plett sitting across the aisle. So, I walked up to him. And, I know I shouldn’t do things like this. I promise I’ll grow up sometime later. Maybe not in this life. This one is a bit of a write-off.

But, I walked up and I said to him, “Don, what a wonderful day today; isn’t it? Isn’t it nice to see we have some democracy back here in Canada?” He smiled me at me and you know that kind of -- like, gave me that kind of, you know, the FU look. But, it was beautiful. I loved every minute of it.

So, I listened yesterday, and I listened to the throne speech, and I listened to the government wanting to talk about Aboriginal issues, to a government that talked about finally having an inquiry for the missing and murdered Aboriginal women, a throne speech that talked about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and how there can’t be any justice in Canada until we own up to the mistakes we have made as a nation.

And, I listened to the discussion on women’s issues, the talk about banning handguns and assault rifles as we start to deal with tackling violence against women, because I agree with so many speakers. Violence against women, I would say to you, is being festered by the previous Conservative government, when you strip away the rights from women, when you start to de-fund so many programs, knock so many programs that are so important.

This is a government that was in opposition, in my opinion, to women’s rights, and so I really appreciate it. And, the last recommendation was so important as we continue our fight as an organization to eliminate violence against women.

And, I tell this story, and some of you may have heard this before, but I’m going to tell it again, because people might say, “Why do we always have discussions on eliminating violence against women? Why do we always talk about December 6th?” Because we understand we need to talk about in order to find solutions. And, I raise this and I’m going to raise it again, because my sister asks me to raise this.

After our convention in Vancouver, I got a call from a local union that said -- or an email that said that one of our sisters, when she left the convention, went home and was beaten and hospitalized by her husband.

And, I sent back an email. I just couldn’t believe it. Just like the rest of us all in the room, I was completely disgusted. And so, I sent back an email to say, “Here is my personal cell phone number. If she feels comfortable, call her and have her phone me.”

So, a few days later, I was in a meeting in Terminal 3 here in Toronto and I was in the shuttle that goes back and forth between Terminal 3 and Terminal 1. And, I got a call and it was the sister.

And, she said -- she told me what happened. She said the first time that he assaulted her, she was eight months pregnant. And, she has lived in that cycle of violence her entire married life.

And, what gave her the confidence to go to the police after she was assaulted was sitting in the room with all of us, her Unifor family, as we gave a pledge to eliminating violence against women. She said she realized at that time that she was a part of a bigger family and it really gave her the confidence to break and end the silence.

So, that makes it all worthwhile when we can help one sister, when we continue the discussion, because it will take time, but eventually men are going to understand that we are the cause of the problem; therefore, we must be the solution.

Now, after the discussion in the Senate yesterday, the throne speech, I couldn’t believe the discussion on infrastructure spending, jobs, youth, all of the things that we talk about. And, that is why it is so important that as we sit here today and, of course, yesterday, we really reflect on what we can accomplish as a collective if we put our minds to it.
After the throne speech, I went to the social afterwards, because the various ministers were there, the Members of Parliament. And, I had Kim Rudd come up to me. I didn’t know who she was. So, she came up to me and said, “Listen, my name is Kim Rudd and I am the elected Member of Parliament for Cobourg, South Peterborough. And, I am here to tell you that the reason that I got elected as a Liberal Member of Parliament was because of the debate and the discussion at the doors on strategic voting and defeating the Conservatives. So, you don’t know me, but I want to let you know that I appreciate the support of so many of your activists within the area, because people understood that they had to defeat Stephen Harper. And, I am here to personally thank you, so you can pass on the thanks to your members in Unifor.”

And then I had a person come up to me afterwards and she introduced herself. First of all, she walked up and she said, “You’re Jerry Dias; right?” And, I said, “Yes, I am.” She goes, “You’re with Unifor.” She says, “I love your union.” And, I said, “I love my union, too.”

And, she says, “I love the work that you do in Thunder Bay.” And, I said, “We have got a lot of great activists in Thunder Bay.” She said, “My son just got a job with Bombardier and they have a lot of challenges there.” And, I said, “Oh, tell me about it. We’re dealing with the provincial government. We’re dealing with Toronto City Council. We’re doing everything we can to make sure we straighten out the problems in Thunder Bay.”

She says, “I love Domenic Pasqualino”, she says, “And, your Unifor activists in Thunder Bay.” Domenic is not here, by the way. He has got some health issues that he is dealing with. So, Domenic, our thoughts are with you, buddy.

I said, “Who are you?” She goes, “My name is Patty Hajdu.” And I said, “Well, who are you?” She goes, “I’m the new minister responsible for the Status of Women.” And, I went, “This is unbelievable.”

And then as I’m talking to Patty, up walks MaryAnn Mihychuk who is the Minister of Labour. So, here I am speaking to MaryAnn. I am speaking to Patty. And, I thought, “My God, we’re talking about women’s issues.”

I’m saying, “Listen, we have got to have a meeting where we bring together our Women’s Committee, our women activists. We have got to talk about the Women’s Advocate Program that we have in our union. We have got to talk about ways and mechanisms to have it go from coast to coast, because the only way we’re really going to eliminate violence against women, is if it becomes a national debate.

So, there are so many things that we need to talk about and I was so enthusiastic. And, I thought as I was looking to MaryAnn and Patty, what a different conversation than if I was speaking with Kellie Leitch, because we had two women that wanted to engage us, that wanted to listen to us, that wanted to learn from our struggles, but more importantly, wanted us to be a part of the debate.

And, MaryAnn said to me as we were having the discussion -- she said, “We are so happy that your union was here today.” She said, “When we asked the bureaucrats to give us a list of people that we should invite, there wasn’t one labour name on the list, because you have to understand the bureaucracy is still a throw-over from the old Conservatives.”

But, she said, “Hold on. There are no labour names on the list. You better get a hold of Jerry Dias and invite him, because I don’t know how we’re going to have representation from labour when you don’t invite representatives from the labour movement.”

And, I tell us and I’m saying this and I’m raising this with all of us today, because things have changed. Think about why we were born. Think about our commitment to each other on September 1, 2013. So, think about 2015 and reflect on how far we came.

So, it is incredible in Canada today for us as an organization to be, above all, respected. And, I thank each and every one of you in this room for doing an incredible job in 2014, 2015. And, look where we are today, brothers and sisters. You owe yourselves one hell of a hand. Thank you.
And, I think about the 61 Unifor families that have stepped forward and are volunteering to work with the Syrian refugee families, friendship, practical assistance. What a commitment that people are making for a year.

And, I know Katha spent a lot of time talking about it yesterday, but this crisis is a moment of truth. It is a moment of truth for the global community, but it is a moment of truth for the labour movement as well.

It is about humanitarianism. It is about solidarity. It is about all of the key things that makes us think, feel, bleed, things that are important to us. So, it is about our principles. It is about our values. So, on behalf of all of you in this room, I want to thank our 61 Unifor heroes for making us all so proud. Thank you very much.

I was in Paris this week, so I am a little jet-lagged. So, if I seem a little under the weather and a little less wound up than usual, I'm a little jet-lagged. But, I was in Paris and it is still in a state of emergency as a result of the terrorist attacks. But, though the city is in mourning, people also realize that they're in a time of a historic breakthrough on the issue of climate change.

Billions of eyes are on Paris this week. And, everyone understands that I was attending the COP 21 conference, that this is a unique opportunity for us today, an opportunity that we have never had. There were over 40 Canadian trade unionists there. There were over 200 global trade unionists there. There was a global trade union forum on climate change and Unifor was a part of all that.

So, in Paris, what was so fulfilling was that the world understood that Canada has changed. Think about that Prime Minister Trudeau, on the first day, the opening day of the conference said, “We are back,” and that it was so important to the citizens of Canada, but to the people around the world to understand that we are a different nation today than we have been in the last 9.5 years, because in the last 9.5 years on the issues of greenhouse gas, on climate change, on the environment, we were a disaster.

As a government, as a nation, we were ridiculed globally. And, it hurt us. It hurt our members in the oil and gas industry. It hurt our reputation as a nation. We were the only nation, if you can imagine, that was a part of Kyoto that withdrew. We were a laughing-stock and it was embarrassing.

So, when Trudeau announces billions of dollars for a global climate fund, it means we are starting to understand once again. It means that we aren’t the embarrassment that we were for the last decade. And, what a change when the Canadian government invited -- the opening day, they had an opening event. They brought in all the negotiators. They welcomed the labour movement, environmental groups.

Couldn't you imagine Harper inviting environmental groups to a social? They gave us daily briefings as to where things were at. They played a hell of a role. They understood and were leading, if you can imagine, the argument about a just transition.

And, there is always the question and there was always some concern about why is the labour movement -- why is Unifor playing such an aggressive role within the environmental movement?

Brothers and sisters, the world is changing. There are no jobs on a dead planet. And, if there is going to be a transition, and if there is going to be a transition of the globe, and if there is going to be a transition of our members’ jobs, well, then we are going to be a part of the debate. We are not going to let our members’ jobs be negatively impacted. We are going to make sure that our voice is heard at the bargaining table. And, if there is going to be a transition, and there will be a transition, then our members are going to be taken care of. And, we’re going to be a part of the discussions, to make sure none of our members get left behind. And, that is why we’re going to be a part of the discussions.
I think about the wealth that was created, because of coal, oil, gas, power workers. I think about the quality of life that our members have in the auto industry, the aerospace industry, the transportation industry and those industries that use fossil fuels.

And, I talk about it and I meet with the people who can have some input. I had two meetings, and we had two meetings with Glen Murray. Who is Glen Murray? Glen Murray is the environment minister here in the Province of Ontario.

And, what did we talk about? We talked about cap and trade. We talked about a fund that is probably going to bring in $7 billion to $8 billion a year into the Ontario coffers, $7 billion to $8 billion that has to get dumped back into the economy.

So, what are the discussions we have? And, I used Tim as an example. Let’s talk about a solution for General Motors in Canada. Can you imagine if we used some of that $7 billion or $8 billion to build the most fuel-efficient engine in the world and we put that engine -- we build it in St. Catharines, and then we built the car in Oshawa and made that fuel-efficient car in Oshawa, so that Canada for once could be a leader in manufacturing and technology?

We can do this. We have the political will. We have the desire. We just need to make sure that we push the government, so that they understand our collective voice. And, that is a collective voice that says we aren’t going to be left behind.

And, when we were in Paris, we met with the Norwegians. And, how is this for ironic? The Norwegians have historically had some of the most progressive social governments in the world. And, today they have a Conservative government. And, I don’t believe for a moment, by the way, that our federal Liberals are a social government. I’ll talk about that in a little while.

But, we met with the Norwegians. And, the Norwegian government was trying to eliminate from the language that they’re putting together in Paris. They don’t want any language in there about just transition for workers. And, they were battling our government and other governments around the world that that language has to be there.

So, we met with our brothers and sisters from Norway. And, we said, “Have things changed a lot over the last ten years.” Because it was our government for so many years that wouldn’t even have talked about a just transition for workers.

And, here is how things changed, the difference between a government that wants to talk about workers and a government that wants nothing to do with workers. But, we also used that opportunity with our brothers and sisters from Norway to talk about, how can we work more collaboratively as a global labour movement?

How can we bring together local union activists and leaders from Norway in the oil industry and the gas industry? Because the workers in Norway all work on offshore rigs. How can we bring them together with our leaders? And, we’re going to do that as we all bring key activists together globally to really talk about how working-class people don’t get left behind during this global transition.

So, we need to make sure coming out of Paris as well that there has to be a major commitment from developed nations to developing nations in the global south. We need to talk about adaptation, because global warming, brothers and sisters, has already gone too far to reverse.

We are on the cusp, hopefully, of making history in Paris. There is a sense of urgency in Paris. There is a sense of urgency when you talk to people in the cafés. There is a sense of urgency when you talk to the delegates that were in Paris. There is a sense of urgency, because the earth is talking to us and we better listen.

Look at what is happening here in Canada. Look what is happening. They’re saying there is going to be an eight-degree warming in the Canadian Arctic, and think about what that means for Arctic ice. Think of what it means for permafrost. Think about what it means for the way of life for those that live up north.
The environment ministers are saying we can’t reverse that. Even if we can control the climate change down to two degrees, it is not going to affect or it can’t change the harm that has already been done.

Look at Atlantic Canada. Think of Atlantic Canada in May, shoveling four metres of snow in May. British Columbia, berry crops wiped out for the entire season. Why? Because they had a false spring in January.

Extreme weather right here in Ontario in the spring that wiped almost the entire apple crop in Ontario. Think about the unprecedented forest fires out west including Alberta, because of the hottest, driest summer that we have had in decades.

Our country is talking to us. The world is talking to us. And, if we can’t hear it, then we better start to listen, because we need to make sure that we listen and we need to make sure that we act. That is a responsibility to ourselves. That is a responsibility to our kids. That is a responsibility to Max and Evan that were born in July.

Chris Buckley was here yesterday from the Ontario Federation of Labour. If we look at the shape of the labour movement in Ontario here, it has been 20 years, at least, since we have had any real harmony. There have always really been two camps here in Ontario in the labour movement, and that was two camps too many, because there should only be one group. There should be one collective voice. And, sometimes we fought each other more than we fought the employers.

So, today, this is a whole new era of politics. And, once again, that new era of politics was born in September of 2013. And, we have got a fed formed team led now by one of ours, Chris. And, Chris, we know Chris. Chris didn’t exactly graduate from any charm school and that’s good, because he is aggressive. He is progressive. He’ll speak his mind, but he can unify. He can bring people together for a common goal. And, he doesn’t have to be told who his friends are and who those are that he has to debate and fight on behalf of working-class people.

So, I want to take this opportunity to recognize the incredible leadership of Katha Fortier, my assistant Jenny Ahn, Shannon Devine and all those others that played such an important role in unifying the Ontario labour movement for the first time in a long time. So, thank you very much for playing a hell of a role.

Now, I want to talk about the federal election. There is a little sunshine in the air, isn’t there, since October 19th? It feels a little better around here lately. Everywhere I go, the people I spoke to, people are feeling great. People are feeling better.

Is it the government that we expected? No. Did we expect a Liberal majority government? The answer is no. So, I hear people say, “And, darn, we got a majority government.” But, you can’t grasp defeat from the jaws of victory, because I remember when the election was called. As we were leading up to the election, the Conservatives were right there. They were equal in the polls.

And, I remember personally thinking, personally, if we ended up with anything besides a Conservative majority government, it was a victory for us. So, when we look today and see that we don’t have a Conservative government at all, I am as happy as the day is long. They’re finally gone.

And, I remember being so mad at Wayne Gretzky. And, I’m a hockey nut. I’m a sports fanatic. And, I remember Wayne Gretzky coming out in support of Harper. And, I remember thinking you rich no-good rotten self-centered piece of hockey player.

But, then you know what? I just realized he helped us. You know why? Because the Conservatives went from 166 seats down to 99 seats. So, I am going to send a personal letter to Wayne Gretzky and ask him to please support the Conservatives in the next federal election, because if they end up with 99 seats, that will be too many. But, once again, that means they’ll be bystanders in politics.
How did Ontario Unifor beat Harper? There were one million more voters in Ontario than there were in the previous federal election. Our discussions internally are always about bringing out people, including people, being an inclusive union, having debate in the communities and having a debate in our workplaces, because the more people that participate in the politics of the country, the better chance we have of making sure that the right wing ideology is defeated. The only way we can take back our country is by a unified voice and by building a movement where people want to participate.

There were 14 defeated Conservatives in this province. I think about the ten auto communities and the incredible role of Dino, Chris Taylor and Greg Moffatt from 222. I think about the leadership of Ford, GM and Chrysler and the battle we took into our workplaces. Fourteen defeated Conservatives in our ten auto communities. Congratulations to our brothers and sisters that led the fight. Tim McKinnon as well, obviously, up on the stage.

So, October 19th is a pivotal turn for Canada, for labour and for Unifor. It fulfilled one of our core missions. We need to put October 19th into the proper context for why we were born.

We had hostile, hostile provincial governments from coast to coast to coast, anti-labour agendas, Alberta, Saskatchewan. They were waiting for the opportunity to launch an all-out assault on labour. They were attacking the fundamental rights to strike.

In Ontario, remember Tim Hudak? Remember what he wanted to do to us? Remember how he was leading in the polls? He was the front man for Right to Work. He wanted to eliminate union security. If he would have got elected, think of the confidence that would have given the Brad Walls of the world, the Christy Clarks, the Stephen McNeils, the right wing Premiers that are from coast to coast to coast.

Hudak was channeling the far right, the ideological right’s victories that they were enjoying in United States, in Wisconsin and Michigan, right in the heart of the U.S. labour movement.

And, of course, we don’t need to talk about what was happening on the federal front with Stephen Harper running a majority government and attacking us all: unions, environmentalists, civil society organizations, our National Health Accord gone, who tweaked Kyoto as I’m talking about, eliminated, discarded all our environmental assessment laws.

He raised retirement from 65 to 67 at a time when we have over 300,000 seniors already living in poverty or, excuse me, over 300,000 seniors a week going to food banks. Things were going the wrong way.

Revenue Canada was attacking civil society or auditing groups like OXFAM, the David Suzuki Society, KAIROS. I don’t know about you, but they have been auditing me every year, for the last two years since Unifor was created. Women’s programs all wiped out.

But, out of Harper’s enemies, the labour movement, we were No. 1. They were attacking us, Bill 525, 377. And, out of all of his enemies, the enemy in the labour movement, who did they hate the most? Us.

And, do you know why Harper despised Unifor the most? Because we deserved it. We were a thorn, a thorn in their side, every day, every demonstration, every press conference. Everything we did as a collective movement was about strengthening our members’ rights, about exposing what they were doing to working-class people.

377 was what? It was about trying to stop us from participating in politics. 525, can you imagine, they took away after 70 years the concept of 50 percent plus one gives workers the right to join a union. C-4 was about the government determining what was essential services in taking away workers’ right to strike.

So, October 19th was about labour’s last stand. That is what the media was saying. That is what the broadcast media was saying, the daily newspapers and they were right.
If Harper was re-elected to another four years, think about the labour movement, the attacks, the continuous attacks. Think about the uphill battle for us as a labour movement. Books were being written in Canada about Canada becoming more Conservative and about how Conservative values were now the mainstream.

So, we were born understanding what our challenge was. We’re a new union. We were a different union. We have a different style. We’re an in-your-face organization. So, September 1st was about labour’s comeback and it has taken us two years. And, in two years, we defeated Hudak decisively.

So, now we’re talking about not imposing right to work here in Ontario, but we’re talking about labour law reform. We’re talking about giving rights to precarious workers. We’re talking about challenges with part-time workers. We’re talking about non-standard work. We’re talking about raising and elevating the profile of working-class people.

In Alberta, we’re talking to the Alberta government. They said that there would be an NDP government in Alberta when hell freezes over. I was in Alberta at the beginning of May and I never thought that I would enjoy seeing hell freeze over like I did when Rachel Notley was elected. Forty-two years of a Conservative dynasty down the toilet, and we can take some credit for that. And, our activists in Alberta can take some credit for that.

So, when I was in Paris, I took the time to speak with Rachel Notley. I took the time to speak with Brian Topper, Chief of Staff. And, what are we doing? We’re meeting with them in January as we start to talk and finalize major law reform in Alberta.

And, I am expecting, if you can imagine, in the Province of Alberta, a government that will put in card check at 50 percent plus one.

So, when we talk about our victories, we talk about Hudak going down. We talk about Rachel Notley and now we talk about the defeat of Stephen Harper. I would like to say to all of you in the room, we are doing the job that we were created for two years ago.

The most important Conservatives that were attacking us provincially and federally are gone; Joe Oliver, gone; Paul Calandra, gone; Chris Alexander, gone; Bernard Valcourt, gone.

Can you imagine when Chief Justice Sinclair was giving his recommendations on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and he talked about having an inquiry for missing and murdered Aboriginal women, when everybody in the room stood and applauded, Bernard Valcourt sat in his chair, and he was the minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. Goodbye, Bernard Valcourt. You make me sick. I’m glad you’re defeated.

Julian Fantino, gone. And, one that is really close to our heart, welcome Tracey Ramsay from Unifor. Goodbye Jeff Watson. You know, it’s our time. Are we safe now? God, no. We know we’re not safe. We have got a lot of work to do. We have a ton of work to do. We need to be on guard against our employers. We need to be on guard against the governments.

We know that things are going to move in a progressive way, to a certain extent. But, we know that it is not just about implementing the agenda that is moving forward today federally, but about what does the agenda look like in Year 2? What does the agenda look like in Year 3? What does the year look like in Year 4?

After 20, 25 years of just holding the line and picking up the pieces from economic disaster, it’s our turn. We talked about this and we talked about it all the time and I’m not kidding.

It’s time for us to start playing offence a little bit around here. We have been doing it now for two years plus. This is not about reverting the clock back to the pre-Harper times. No, no, no, no, no. That is a heck of a start, but this is about pushing the agenda much beyond this.
This is about us enhancing our rights. This is about winning greater equality. This is about shared prosperity for working people. This is about moving the agenda, not settling for the way it was just prior to Harper.

This is about finally capturing the agenda and moving it forward, because working-class people in this great province and great country deserve more than just the pre-Harper days and it is up to us to make sure we lead it.

So, what was our role in the last federal election? The number of members we touched and we engaged and we got involved, for many of them the first time in politics. The media presidents of our campaign and our Communications people who do such an incredible job. They do an incredible job, communicating our message.

They have a tough time with us sometimes. And, I think the Communications people in the room will absolutely understand what I’m saying, because sometimes we tend to get off-script and maybe we don’t handle things as diplomatically as we should, but we have got one heck of a Communications Department. And, the work they did elevated Unifor’s profile higher than any other labour organization by far, during the last federal election. And, I want to personally thank them for an incredible job.

We’re not afraid to put our money where our mouth is. And, if you look at our support of Engage Canada during the federal election, if you listen to the political pundits, if you listen to the media, if you listen to Maclean’s Magazine, the question is, why did Harper drop the writ so early and create the longest federal election in the history of Canada?

The newspapers, the left, the right, the defeated Conservatives are all saying they did it to stop third-party advertising and to silence Engage Canada. And, do you know who the biggest players were in Engage Canada? You.

We were the ones that led. The third party was getting the voice out there. And, here is how important it was. Pre-writ, Harper was just dropping millions of dollars, radio ads, TV ads, “Just Not Ready,” and they were pounding Trudeau into the ground.

And, by the time he dropped the writ, the Conservatives were equal with the other parties. And, we knew that once the writ was dropped, they had millions and tens of millions of dollars more than the NDP or the Liberals did.

It was Engage Canada. It was our work on the ground. It was our work in the workplaces that made sure that when the writ was dropped, that the Conservatives didn’t have a lead. And, everybody is saying, “Why did he drop the writ?” It was to prevent us from stealing the political agenda.

I will never forget this discussion that I had about two weeks ago. And, I was having lunch with Hassan Yussuff and Rob Steiner. Rob Steiner was in Lisa Raitt’s staff and is now appointed to the Transportation Board. So, he understands the insides of the politics very well. So, Hassan said to him, “Why did Harper drop the writ so early?” And, Steiner looked at me and he said, “The federal Conservatives dropped the writ early to stop Unifor.”

So, brothers and sisters, congratulations! We played a hell of a role. We not only put our money where our mouth was, but we put our collective brains to the campaign of Harper.

And, I want to thank Jordan Brennan and I want to thank Jim Stanford to putting out a paper that exposed that Stephen Harper had the worst economic record of any Prime Minister since World War II. And, that debate was echoed through every debate by Liberals, by Conservatives, through social media, through print media, radio, TV. It was one hell of a debate.

So, anyway, look, I will be here till 3:00 and I’m not going to do that to you. This has been a heck of a ride. Think of our success, but more importantly, we need to think of the work in front of us.
There are 16 ministers out of 30 that directly impact us. There are four or five ministers that deal with so many issues that are important to us: pensions, seniors, equity, poverty, child care, health care, so many issues that are important to us as a nation. So, we are not just going to talk about our individual sectors in isolation, because we understand that we represent workers in 20 of the key economic sectors from coast to coast to coast.

So, in the beginning of February, we are going to have a lobby week in Ottawa, where we’re going to have local union leadership from here in Ontario, the National. We are going to spend a week in Ottawa lobbying about our issues that are so important to us, because we need to get our voice heard immediately.

The first year, they will do things that we respect. They will come out, of course, with the inquiry. They will deal with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They will spend millions on infrastructure. They will do a lot of things we support. They will move retirement from 67 to 75. So, we need to show support when the right will be pushing them not to do it. We need to make sure we push twice as hard to make sure it gets done.

But, after the first year, second, third, fourth, we need to make sure that we stir the agenda. We need to make sure that we finally have in place an auto policy that will bring work back into Ontario. We have lost 38,000 jobs in the auto sector. We have lost so many jobs in the aerospace sector. We need governments that understand. We need to contribute. We need to invest.

We need to create hope and opportunity and that only happens when we have governments that understand they have a responsibility to create jobs for young people, so we need to lead the fight. So, we can’t take our foot off the gas pedal.

We’re going to meet with them. We’re going to argue with them and we’re going to fight with them and we’re going to make sure that our voice is heard, because that is our responsibility to the communities we live in. And, that is our responsibilities to our brothers and sisters.

So, we have got a lot of work to do here. I think about our bargaining next year. I think about next year, we’re in bargaining with over 100,000 members in Unifor, in the challenges we have, the challenges in the auto sector, because we will be in major bargaining next year.

The bargaining in the sector is the precarious, retail, wholesale, the struggles, the fights we’re going to have to make sure that we deal with scheduling issues. We deal with $15.00 minimum wage. 2016 is going to be our opportunity to shape the economy, to drive people who are living in poverty, our members that have such challenges.

It is going to be our turn to lead and to stand with them and to stand beside them and to fight with them, and we need to come together as a collective to make sure that our members in the sectors that get paid the lowest have the entire support of the union, because that is our collective responsibility.

And, we have got members that are in difficult spots right now. Our members who are locked out of ONR, we need to find a solution. We have our members in Garda right now that are locked out. We need to find a solution. We have major strikes going on and lockouts.

We have the taxi dispute in Ottawa, which is a mess, and we are doing everything we can. And, we have some local union leadership and staff that have shown real courage as we are being aggressive, trying to find a solution.

But, brothers and sisters, we have accomplished so much. 2015 was a year of great accomplishment. But, as we go to our convention next summer in Ottawa, we need to make sure that 2016 brings more victories, because that is why we were created in 2013. It is our collective responsibility to continue to change the nation. We are going to do it together.

Thank you all very much. Have a great festive season. Thank you all very much. Merry Christmas. Happy New Year.
DINO CHIODO: Talk about passion and conviction. Thank you, Jerry Dias, for those inspiring words. And, I know we have a lot of work ahead of us. We also have a lot of work in this council. So, in saying that, I would just like to make a couple of announcements. I know we have gone 20 minutes past lunch start already.

So, what we are going to do is we are going to give everybody an extra 15 minutes. So, instead of being back for 1:30, please make sure you’re back for 1:45. But, we do know everybody to be back for 1:45, to make sure that we can get back on track and get everything that we need accomplished.

In saying that, there are a couple of announcements. Aboriginal/Workers of Colour caucus will be meeting. They will be in Sheraton Hall E. That will be at, well, right now, as a matter of fact.

And then there will be the Workers with Disabilities meeting. That will be in Sheraton Hall E right now as well.

And, for the Cavan draw that took part in the hallway, there was a Cavan draw for the Lindt chocolates. There were two winners. The two winners are Adriano Day and Brian Wannamaker. So, Adriano Day and Brian Wannamaker, when you’re on your way out, please stop at the Cavan booth, and you can pick up your prize there.

And, again, we’ll see everybody back here at 1:45. Thank you very much.

Oh, yes. And, again, we did say we were going to send a box around. So, in saying that, if you get the opportunity, please go to the bank machine and grab a couple of dollars, so you can throw it in the box, so we can make sure we can get that money to our locked-out workers and our workers that are on strike for the Christmas season.

All the very best and have a great lunch.

--- Whereupon the meeting was in recess

from 12:25 p.m. to 2:04 p.m.

POINTS OF PRIVILEGE

DINO CHIODO: What I would like to do is I would like to congratulate two individuals; namely, Carly Sonier who was elected last night to the Young Workers Caucus. So, I want to congratulate Carly for her hard work and her efforts in getting elected to that committee. And, I also want to recognize Tammy Lafreniere, who got elected to the Aboriginal/Workers of Colour caucus today. So, I just wanted to make sure I could recognize them.

And, at the same time, we do have an election that is going to happen today at 5:00 p.m. And, we won’t be swearing them in, because we would like to swear them all in together. And, unfortunately, that will be at our next Ontario Regional Council.

I will take the point of privilege at mic number 3.

MARY-ELLEN DANCE: Hi, sisters and brothers. I am Mary-Ellen Dance from Local 1524, proud member, chairperson and delegate. We have a table out here for Unifor group insurance with Breckles Insurance Brokers. Kevin Kiely is here with me. He is from the brokerage.

And, we did have a ballot box there for members to fill out their name and phone number for a draw for Metro gift cards. We have five winners for $100.00 Metro gift cards. And, the names are: Humphrey McDonald, Tally Beltman, Sultans Jahangir -- sorry if I have messed up your name -- Larry Ziegler and Ardis Snow. The gift cards will be out at the table at the Unifor Group Insurance table out here as you go out in the hall on the right-hand side for you to pick them up over the afternoon today.

Thank you very much. And, we look forward for all of you to give us a call to get home and auto quotes with us. We are the Unifor group insurance for home and auto for all Unifor members, retirees, actives and national reps. Thanks.
DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Thank you, sister. Point of privilege at mic number 1.

RICK MacLEAN: I’m Rick MacLean, president of Unifor Local 127 in Chatham.

There is a 50/50 draw. We are going to be selling tickets till about a quarter to 3:00 right out in the main lobby there. It is in support of the labour programs and services for the United Way of Chatham-Kent. They’re $5.00 a ticket. And, right now we are very close to the prize being over $1,000.00. So, please support us.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, brother. Speaker at mic number 4.

ALLISON GIBSON: Allison Gibson, Local 1090. I represent the Workers at GBH Casino. I wanted to say thank you for everybody that has purchased a bracelet for the War family so far. We are up over $700.00. I still have this half bag left. So, if anybody needs any, please come and see me at the back of the room.

DINO CHIODO: Yes. Thank you, sister. Point of privilege, mic number 2.

SHERI LAEKEMAN: Yes. Sheri Laekeman, Unifor 4212, president. I am just letting everybody know, this iWatch, there has only been about 100 tickets sold. We are right outside this door over here, $10.00 each, three for $20.00. Come and get your tickets. We are going to draw at about 3:15 or so. It is a great cause.

And, I just want to mention that I talked to Dino earlier and they have pledged $500.00 from -- is it 444, Dino?

DINO CHIODO: Yes.

SHERI LAEKEMAN: So, thank you to 444. And, thanks for everybody’s support so far. There’s a great opportunity here. Come and get your tickets just outside that door. Thanks very much.

DINO CHIODO: See that guy right there, sitting right next to you? He’ll take care of you. Way to go. I don’t see any more points of privilege.

Point of privilege at mic number 3.

STEVE TAYLOR: Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. My name is Steve Taylor. I am the president of Local 2027, representing the workers at the Hiram Walkers and Sons Distillery in Windsor, Ontario.

I hope some of you have had some time to review our information sheet that we have provided. Please take them back to your workplaces and let your members know what products are made by your fellow union brothers and sisters.

We are having a raffle containing some of our fine products in the hallway. All proceeds go to the United Way. We will be drawing a winning ticket shortly. So, if you haven’t had a chance to get your tickets, get your tickets now. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: I think I might enjoy a couple of those products later today.

So, in saying that, I don’t see any more points or privilege. I do have one on the stage right here. And, they tell me this is out of Local 247, American Income Life. You have to be here to win this prize. It’s a Fit Band. And, we are going to have Katha draw the winning ticket. Again, you have to be here. Lina Moore out of Local 229. Lina is in the house? All right. Okay, great. Lina, congratulations. Always the same people winning.

Now, brothers and sisters, getting into our agenda again for the afternoon part of today, I would like to introduce the individual that is going to be calling up, Tracey Ramsay, and that will be the president of Local 200, Chris Taylor. Thank you.
CHRIS TAYLOR: Thank you, Dino. Thank you, delegates. We have talked a lot. You heard Jerry and Katha talk about the federal election and it was a victory. But, there is no prouder moment for a local union president or our local in Windsor, Local 200, than to hear your own sister, Tracey Ramsay, become an MP in the riding of Essex, and defeat probably what was the worst MP ever in the history of Conservatives, Jeff Watson. And, that is the last time I will ever on this floor or any other floor have to mention his name, thank God.

Tracey is a member of Local 200. She has had her full upbringing within the union movement. She is a hell of an activist, an advocate on behalf of women’s rights, workers’ rights. She did a fantastic job getting her message out to the people in the riding of Essex. She went door to door, day by day.

I can remember one of the first meetings with her, when she came to see me to tell me that she was going to run. And, she told me. She said, “I promise you I will work as hard as I possibly can to get out there, so that people know that I am the candidate that they should be picking, going into the next election.”

And, I can tell you that she did more than that. We are so proud at Local 200 to say that Tracey Ramsay, our sister, is the new MP in the riding of Essex. We know that she is going to bring a voice of change to that riding. She will bring our issues forward from Windsor and Essex.

And, I can’t tell you, Tracey, how proud we are to have you here today. So, come on up and address the delegates. Thank you.

ADDRESS: TRACEY RAMSAY, NDP MP ESSEX COUNTY

TRACEY RAMSAY: Thank you so much, everyone. Thank you, Chris, for that wonderful introduction. And, I honestly don’t know where I would be without my union family. And, my local will always be my home. So, even though my new home is now in the House of Commons, Local 200 and all of you are always in my heart.

I want to thank Dino for inviting me here and Katha. It is a great honour to come and speak to all of you today.

This year, I went on a journey, but I didn’t go alone. My sisters and brothers were with me every step of the way. We laughed. We fought harder than we ever have. We worked harder than we ever imagined that we could, and we pushed ourselves to do things that we had never done.

People asked me what gave me the courage to run. And, quite simply, it was knowing that there was not one point in time that I stood alone. I was never by myself. And, every time that I needed help, every time I made a phone call, it was answered. My brothers and sisters came out and they came out in droves for me, and I cannot thank you enough for that support. Thank you to all of you.

As Chris said, I have gone through, I think, every union training that was ever available to me as most of you probably have. And, I really firmly believe that our education in Unifor is second to none. Week after week, we invest in ourselves by educating our members from coast to coast. I had the incredible honour of being a discussion leader for Unifor. And, that has afforded me the opportunity to watch people grow, people from rank and file to activists, people from activists to leadership.

And, I believe that our union gives us all the tools that are necessary to move mountains, to do anything that we want to do. We have every tool available to us. And, we can do and become whatever we want to achieve. And, mostly what that involves is helping others. And, I am so proud of our union for that.

Brothers and sisters worked their hearts out, and I want to thank all the local presidents in Windsor, but I also want to thank the brothers and sisters who sent me messages from coast to coast to coast, who talked to family that they had in the riding, who put a sign on their lawn, who donated to my campaign.
I want to ask everyone in this room who helped in my campaign to stand up, please. Everyone stay standing, because now I want everyone who worked on my campaign, everyone who worked on a federal campaign, to stand up.

This is the dedication that we have in our union. I firmly believe that it is because of all of our efforts that we have changed the landscape of our country for the better. We worked tirelessly.

And, this was the longest election period in our history. We have never seen anything like this, but groups came together. I have been an activist for many, many years. Many groups in my community came together, groups that I was a part of.

The Labour Council came together. Making Waves came together. The Ontario Health Care Coalition came together, groups that I had worked and fought with. But, brothers and sisters of Unifor came together like I had never seen.

And so, I really believe that when we stand up and when we put our collective efforts together, we are going to be successful every single time. We have a political power that can shape our country with the people in this room.

I want to mention a couple of people and I wish I could mention everyone, because everyone worked so very hard. I look out and I see faces of people who worked on my campaign tirelessly. But, there is one sister -- actually, two sisters that I have to mention. The first one is Terry Weymouth. And, Terry, please stand. I know she is in the room. Get up.

When you get a call from Terry Weymouth, it doesn’t start off with a “Hey, how is it going, sister?” But, it starts off with, “Would you consider running for political office?” You start to think, “Well, yes, maybe I would.”

I teach the Women, Power and Political Action. We talk about this all the time in our union. We talk about that the personal is political. We talk about everything that we have been fighting in this union, every worker’s right boils down to a political will.

And so, when you get a call like that from someone like Terry who believes you in the very beginning, please believe it. When a brother or sister in our union sees something in you that is special and tells you, “I think you should do this. I think you should run for this,” please believe it. Please believe in yourself and go and do it, because our union and our country will be a better place for it.

I also want to thank Sister Jodi Nesbitt from Local 240. Jodi, where is she at? She has got to get up. Jodi Nesbitt is a dynamo. If you need people to go and do something, you better call Jodi Nesbitt, because she knows so many people.

She will pick up the phone of the retirees. She will pick up the phone of the community groups. She will pick up the phone of her members. And, I am telling you that she worked her heart out. She came out with me every week on the doorsteps and she had never been on doorsteps. And, she was nervous and she wasn’t sure she could do it. But, she grew and grew in those conversations that we had over that time. Jodi was already a leader, but now she is a spectacular leader and we are very fortunate to have her in our union.

So, everywhere I go, I run into our members, whether I’m in the airport or yesterday in Ottawa, when I took a taxi. And, I got into the taxi. And, I said, “How is it going? What is your name?” The guy’s name was Sam. Sam is a Unifor member. I said, “Sam, we’re brother and sister.” And, we started to chat.

And, Sam really blew me away, because Sam was talking to me about what is going on in Ottawa. Living there, he has a unique perspective about what has been happening in the last ten years, what is happening now since the election.
And, Sam and I were talking about the division and fear that the Conservatives brought to this election campaign. We talked about the election and the state of our country now. We talked about the throne speech. We talked about refugees, the Middle East. We talked about how people can't find decent jobs in our country.

And, we have so many members like Sam, people who have so much to offer. And, this is where the heart of the priority of the NDP lies, with working people, with real people who are struggling every single day in this country.

And, I promise you that the NDP is going to fight for your jobs, your community and your family. We are going to fight for health care. We are going to protect the most vulnerable and leave no one behind.

We are going to fight to protect our planet. We are going to fight to strengthen democracy. And, this includes the fight around the TPP. I am extremely honoured to be named the International Trade Critic for the NDP and it's a perfect fit.

For me, an auto worker, and for my riding of Essex, the TPP is incredibly threatening. It is an incredibly important piece of trade legislation that could harm our region. And so, we have to have a very serious conversation in our country and I promise you that I take that role seriously.

And, as the trade critic, I am going to be calling on Justin Trudeau to stand up and get a better deal for Canadians. We want a deal that doesn't sacrifice 20,000 auto jobs. We want a deal that won't lock Canadians into high drug prices. We want a deal that will create IP rules that benefit innovators and consumers, not big U.S. interests.

Stephen Harper signed a bad deal in the dying days of his government. Canadians shouldn’t be bound by it. We were promised public consultations on the campaign trail. And, we want to know why Trudeau is now telling world leaders like Obama that we are going to push this through. I promise you that I will be there fighting for you as the trade critic.

The Liberals made ambitious promises to deliver change. And, many of them, we will stand with them in the NDP. Yesterday, in the House of Commons following the throne speech, we had some statements that were delivered. In one of those statements was a promise to have an inquiry into the murdered and missing indigenous women. I almost cried. I stood up and applauded as hard as I possibly could, joined by my fellow NDP caucus.

And, I want to tell you that not one Conservative stood, including Rona Ambrose who has recently been in the media saying that they would be go along with the murdered and missing indigenous women investigation, even though as the Status of Women minister, she did nothing.

So, I am happy to stand with the Liberals when they are pushing for progressive things that will impact Canadians’ lives in a positive way. The Conservatives cannot be counted on to deliver opposition. You can count on the NDP to be the progressive opposition inside our House of Commons.

We are the voice of working people. Our party has suffered a tremendous loss and in that loss, Sister Peggy Nash, which is incredibly difficult not just for myself, but for all of us in our union. She was a strong voice for our interests. She represented us inside the House of Commons. And so, I wish Peggy all the best in her future endeavours and send her much love from her brothers and sisters.

Something that Peggy said. I know she addressed the women’s lunch the other day. And, she said that our union prepares you well to become a Member of Parliament. And, I couldn’t agree more for all the reasons that I stated earlier. We really do have everything necessary to go and challenge the government, to push for progressive change, and that is what I will be doing.

So, I know how tough it is to have such a loss. I work at Ford Motor Company or I guess I worked at Ford Motor Company. Now, I’m on a leave. But, we went from 6,500 members when I started 20 years ago down to 1,500. I know what that feels like.
I know how tough that is, how tough it is on the local, how tough it is on people that are not only your colleagues and your brothers and sisters, but your friends and almost like your family. I know what it is like to be the lucky one who gets to continue working while others have lost their jobs. But, I also know that small things can be mighty.

And, I know that in the NDP caucus, we have an incredible team. And, we are already creating our strategy. We are already working towards progressive change. And, we are watching every single thing that this government does, to make sure that those progressive promises come through.

So, I want to applaud all of the members here who put themselves out every day, whether it’s in their community, whether it’s in a political way, whether it’s for their workplace. Everyone in here is connected in some way.

And, I want to thank you for all the hard work that you do. And, I also want to thank all the brothers and sisters who ran in this election, but weren’t successful. They all deserve a round of applause. You know, it is one of the most challenging things that I have ever done in my life and I am sure that they would all say the same. And, I hope that they run again in the future.

I want to thank you all for your time today. And, I want to thank you all for everything that you have done, not just to help me elected, but to help change our country. I want you to know that we will be holding the Liberal government accountable to their promises.

We need to be vigilant. We need to be vigilant about the fight for fairness. Whether it’s poverty, the environment, women, families or youth, we all have to be watching what this government is doing and not doing. There is work to be done, but it is work that we can all do together. I know that you can count on me to work hard, not just for the people of Essex, but for all Canadians and all of my brothers and sisters. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Obviously, I just wanted to say thank you to Tracey. We are proud to have her in Windsor and Essex County, representing workers in Essex and, obviously, the constituents of Essex.

And, at the same time, we know that we are going to have a long and proud history working together collaborative with you, Tracey. So, all the very best, and a gift from the Ontario Regional Council. Thank you for everything you stand for.

Okay. Getting on to the next order of business, I would like to ask Deb Montgomery to come up and introduce our next speaker.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: Good afternoon, everyone. Our next speaker is Susan Delacourt. Susan Delacourt is a political columnist with the Toronto Star and iPolitics, as well as a regular panelist on CTV, CBC Radio and Global TV. She also teaches Strategic Communications and Journalism at Carleton University, in Ottawa.

Since arriving on Parliament Hill to report for the Globe and Mail in the late 1980s, Susan Delacourt has covered many major political events, the Constitutional battles, the ups and downs of the federal Liberal party, right up to the leadership campaign and victory of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

She writes often on political culture. And, her last book, Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them, focused on the influence of marketing and consumerism over the past half century in Canadian politics.

Her book was the finalist for the prestigious Hilary Weston Writers’ Trust Prize for Canadian non-fiction in 2014 and for the Dafoe prize in Canadian history that same year.

Delacourt’s previous books include: United We Fall in 1993, the story of the failed Charlottetown Constitutional Accord; Shaughnessy in 2000, a biography of the late MP, Shaughnessy Cohen; and Juggernaut in 2003, the story of Paul Martin’s ascent to the Liberal leadership.

Please help me in welcoming Susan Delacourt.
ADDRESS: SUSAN DELACOURT, JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR

SUSAN DELACOURT: Well, hello and thank you for having me here. It’s weird to see your own face up, and I’ll try not to watch.

So, I am going to talk about two books today. I am going to first talk about a little eBook that the Toronto Star had me write back in 2012, 2013, when Justin Trudeau was running for the leadership.

It was never a hard-cover published book, but I did do a little -- and, I keep calling it a little eBook. It was about 30,000 words. So, I spent some time following Justin Trudeau around the country when other people were not really doing that. I was sort of on the road all by myself.

And, I don’t know if any of you have written a book, but there comes a time when you have done all the interviews and you have got to put things in chronological order.

And, I was trying to sort out when there had been this big meeting at Mont Tremblant that was the initial meeting of Justin Trudeau’s leadership team. And, I was trying to create the point in time where it happened. And, somebody said, “Well, you know. You were there.” And, I went, “I was there?”

And, apparently this crack investigative reporter here was staying three doors down from Justin Trudeau and his leadership team when they were plotting this thing. And, they had even seen that I was there. And, they were having meetings around their table. “What do we say if we see her? What will we tell her that we are here for?”

And, they needn’t have worried, because I was on holiday and blissfully unaware that the man who is now Prime Minister was plotting with all his friends, about 30 of them, three doors away from me.

So, I put that little story on a blog post when the eBook came out with a picture of a baby deer that had come up to my doorstep while I was at Tremblant and said -- made a joke in the blog that you had to literally walk to my doorstep for me to notice you that weekend.

And, Justin Trudeau came into the Star’s Editorial Board, and they mentioned that I had been working on this book, and he said, “Yes, and I think she should be fired for that deer picture,” because I was clearly not the great crack investigative reporter that I thought I was.

In all seriousness, I think we have gone past the time now where Prime Ministers or Prime Ministers-to-be were trying to get journalists fired. I think we are in a new era in Ottawa. I say that in a non-partisan way.

And, I think to my other book which was made reference -- do we have the slides? Good, okay. This is a bit from the cover of my book, which I had the honour of having Jim Stanford -- thank you. He has a lovely blurb on there, too.

I want to talk to you this afternoon about how Justin Trudeau’s leadership has made me rethink a lot of the premises of this book. The book, for those who haven’t read it, and that is probably most Canadians, is about how politics has turned politicians into marketers and citizens into consumers.

And, I really did think that Stephen Harper was the ultimate marketing Prime Minister. In the ten-past years, I think people forgot that they were citizens and voted more as consumers. And, we saw people vote with their wallets, et cetera.

So, there are a few things that happen in politics when citizens are consumers. Value for money trumps values of the head and heart. We don’t talk about that as much. Bargains on taxes trumps social investments. Micro-targeting becomes more effective than mass-targeting. And, advertising is more powerful than traditional news media.
So, I want to tell you a bit about how I am thinking in the last campaign through a bit of that up on its head. First of all, this was a rare campaign in which foreign policy actually got us talking about Canadian values and the searing image, of course, of Alan Kurdi, the young boy washing up on the shore, not to mention the knee cap debate -- had us talking about what it is to be Canadian. And, I think in one way -- I think in many ways, this election was a watershed. But, I think in this way, that we actually got Canadians talking about values of the head and heart, rather than value for dollar.

You will remember, in the last week of the campaign, Stephen Harper was throwing dollars around on a stage with some characters, like Rob Ford. And, my joke about that had been, “Sometimes elections aren’t about dollars; they’re about change.” And, I think we really did have an election about Canadian values.

Just last week, I was at a presentation in Ottawa by some pollsters, and they were showing that Canadians, by and large, voted to be a progressive nation again, and that there had been a deliberate decision by people on issues like this to have something more; a politics that was more than about value for the dollar.

Another turning point in the campaign was when Justin Trudeau took the orthodoxy about deficits and decided that rather than talk about perpetual balanced budgets, et cetera, that he was going to take the risk and talk about investments.

And, even though he was mocked by Stephen Harper, it seemed that Canadians were in the mood for a conversation, not just about what was in their own wallets, but what was in the wallets of other people, too, and about investing in a collective idea of ourselves again.

When citizens are consumers, they only think of themselves and they only think about what is good for them. But, I think in this last election, Canadians were willing to talk about what the community or the collective needed again. And, I think that was also unexpected.

In the throne speech yesterday that was delivered, it was interesting to see how much talk there was about working together. I counted 18 mentions of negotiation, processes to work together, collaboration, cooperation. And, this is not the thing a government can do if they decided that everybody is rugged individuals.

So, I think we’re into -- at least temporarily anyway or at least initially, we’re into a time where people are going to start talking about working together again as opposed to the rugged individualism the last time.

Another place the rules were broken in this election campaign was with advertising. I still think it was hugely important, but the “Just not Ready” ads, much as they were on everybody’s lips and much as they seemed to work eventually did not. And, I think the old saying that negative advertising works, I think we are going to have to rethink that.

I also think there were all kinds of ways in which -- I was talking about this at lunch, actually, with Ken Lewenza. The final ad, the Better is Always Possible ad -- I don’t know if you guys have seen it, but it really was one of those -- it evoked the era of the 1980s or even the 1950’s. It was the Better is Always Possible ad was like Reagan’s Morning in America ad or more recently, maybe the Molson I am Canadian ad.

But, it has been a long time since we have seen an ad that sort of tried to whip up patriotism in that way. It again wasn’t talking to people as consumers; it was talking to them as citizens.

The other way in which I think politics has been changed -- and, again, I’m going to have to sort of still figure this out, but micro-targeting. The Conservatives had become very good at finding little pockets of constituencies all over the country to get their minimum winning coalition. So, they buy people with snowmobiles, snowmobile owners or fitness tax credits.

I have been covering the Liberals a long time. And, I was at a convention a few years ago where they were getting a big rallying speech about why they had to get better at micro-targeting. And, the people in the audience, you could see were, “No, we don’t like all that data politics and mass marketing, micro-targeting.” So, I was trying to explain this to somebody. I was having dinner in Ottawa on a patio. And, I was pointing in the direction of where I had seen this happening.
And, Justin Trudeau -- like the time in the Woody Allen movie where Marshall McLuhan walks in. I was trying to explain to my friend why Liberals didn’t like micro-targeting and all those boutique-y tax credits and all that stuff. And, Justin Trudeau actually walked up to the restaurant and stood there.

So, I got him to explain why he wasn’t a micro-targeter. And, I have got the quotes up here. I liked what he said so much, that I put it in the book. But, basically he said, “We don’t have the natural constituencies of activists groups or anything. We are trying to appeal to a broad swath of people.”

And, I think that in this campaign, Liberals brought back the idea of mass marketing again, but that is not to say that they excused themselves from the big data revolution. And, I don’t know if all of you have had any involvement in politics. Now, you know how all the parties have been trying to catch up on building these databases and following the consumer world in trying to build strategy on data. This is a trend that surfaced in the United States and it has made its way up here.

On this score, the Liberals have -- despite their initial reservations, they have got very enthusiastic about big data. And, they are also very enthusiastic about what has been going on in the United States.

So, this is the day after the election. If any of you read Politico, it is sort of the iPolitics, if you read that here. Politico is the big online news and analysis thing for Washington insiders. And, in this feature playbook, Trudeau advisors are being congratulated for the role they played, precision strategy.

So, despite the Liberal’s initial reservations about data and politics and modern tools of campaigning, they have been relying on U.S. people and they were micro-targeting in an enormous degree.

But, what happened in the United States over the past ten years was that even though the Republicans had pioneered the use of consumer data in politics, the Democrats beat them by getting better at committing sociology. The Democrats went looking for people’s families, their interests, keeping track of people’s communities, keeping in touch with them. And, I love this quote from an Obama guy. “We are trying to predict political preference; we are not trying to predict whether you buy a car.”

So, just as the U.S. Democrats had been gathering up all kinds of information and reaching people through sociological ways and Facebook, so too did the Liberals. And, again, we are still sifting through the data, but we know that Facebook was a huge part of this.

Midway through the campaign, we started to hear that the Conservatives were relying on a guy named Lynton Crosby, if the name is familiar. He was called the Wizard of Oz or sometimes the Lizard of Oz, because he delivered surprised election victories.

My bosses sent me out trying to find him and see what role he was playing in Harper’s campaign. The answer was none, but I did find him. In the first week of October, he was at a convention in the U.K., the Manchester gathering of the British Conservative party.

And, he was giving them a big speech there about why they had to use Facebook, that Twitter is useless, but Facebook was going to be the next realm of politics. And, I think we did see that happen in this campaign, that Facebook was used by all the political leaders to an extreme degree, and it is because that is where they can find people. That is where they’re finding people who weren’t engaged with politics anymore.

And, rather than talking to the same tiny universe on Twitter that is exchanging, depending on the day, either profound things or silly things about politics, Facebook is where you find people that have largely checked out of politics. And, post-election analyses have shown that the Liberals were using that most effectively.

So, rather than, again, talking to people as consumers and trying to reach them in consumer ways, they went right to try to get them in their houses. And, I think this is the face of campaigning we’re going to see in the years ahead. Apparently, the U.S. Democrats learned some things from this campaign.

Google is keeping track of what people were interested in, in this campaign as well. And, I think we are seeing that these kind of -- Google and Facebook are probably better at telling us now how politics is working.

I don't know if you can see the numbers there, but this is before the election, an enterprising -- I don’t know if he is an editor or a writer at Maclean’s -- did a projection of the election based on Google searches. And, look, he is pretty close. He undersells the NDP, but he has pretty well got the Liberals and Conservatives there at 189, 109 and 34.

So, this tells us that the underreported story of this election was about people and about the idea that people are not consumers. They aren’t their wallets, that people are voting with their heads and their hearts and that they are voting about things on which they want to work together.

And, the data that is most useful in modern digital campaigning and politics is not what you buy, but it’s your friends, your families, your interests and all the things that are social, putting the social in social media.

The really under reported story of the campaign is all the new voters, and I think turnout went up massively. And, this is something that happened in the United States, too, when the Democrats there started focusing on talking to people where they lived, rather than where they bought things.

And, you’ll see that the numbers are -- we had nearly 3 million new voters in Canada last year in this last election, nearly 3 million new voters in between 2011 and 2015. And, the increase in the Liberal vote between 2011 and 2015 was over 4 million.

So, the big story of this election then in short and the big thing that is making me -- the challenge for me is -- I am trying to update the book I wrote about voters as consumers -- is that I think voters decided in this election that they weren’t consumers.

I think voters decided that they were people and that committing sociology and talking about working together and the progressive side of the political spectrum has now become the new kind of shopping for votes, which really isn’t shopping at all.

So, in all these ways, I think we are just finishing an important election, one that changed the game and, in most ways, I think in positive ways.

So, thank you for going through that with me. As I said, I think we’re all still trying to figure out what happened in that campaign. But, I think it is mainly a good news story.

DINO CHIODO: Susan just informed us that she would be happy to take any questions, if anybody has any questions that they would like to ask. I see no questions. Susan, on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, we just want to provide you with a gift of our appreciation for coming and speaking to us about the issues that are important. So, thank you very much.

Okay. So, moving on to the next order of business, it will be with Recommendation No. 3. So, that will be in the recommendations that you have in front of you. And, I am going to ask Kari Jefford to come up and read out Recommendation No. 3 on political action and Ontario Good Jobs Campaign.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3: POLITICAL ACTION AND ONTARIO GOOD JOBS CAMPAIGN

KARI JEFFORD: Thanks, Dino. So, you will find this on page 2 of Katha’s recommendations, No. 3, Political Action and Ontario Good Jobs Campaign.
Ontario played a decisive role in the defeat of the Harper Conservative government. In Ontario, the Harper Conservatives lost 40 seats and earned 1,700,000 less votes than in 2011, despite the overall votes in Ontario increasing by 1 million and Ontario having 15 additional seats.

Unifor played an important role in the defeat of the Conservatives, especially by exposing Harper’s economic record as the worst of any Prime Minister since World War II, and by focusing attention on the economic harm to Ontario that could be inflicted by the Trans Pacific Partnership.

Austerity under the Harper decade has been bad for Ontario. In 2013, the Mowat Centre calculated that there was an $11 billion gap between what Ontarians pay to the federal government and what they receive back. This gap is almost entirely a result of federal spending and program decisions that leave Ontarians receiving less than their per capita share of spending and transfers.

With the defeat of the Conservatives and the election of a new government with new policies and many election promises affecting Ontario’s economy, it is time to grow Ontario’s economy around an “Ontario Good Jobs Agenda.”

I therefore recommend:

1. The Ontario Regional Council, local unions and industry councils articulate and fight for an Ontario Good Jobs Agenda which includes, but not limited, to the following:
   a) The renewal of a Canada Health Accord to provide increased, stable funding for the Ontario health care system and to put an immediate stop to health care funding shortfalls and layoffs at Ontario hospitals.
   b) A Canada-Ontario infrastructure program commencing in 2016 with new funding commitments in Ontario for mass transit, high speed rail, green energy, seaway and inland canals; parks, culture and Canadian heritage; and
   c) The Ontario infrastructure program incorporates the following features: local and provincial procurement, skills training and upgrading, a Canada-Ontario living wage policy, and a community benefits program to ensure that marginalized workers and communities are beneficiaries of public investment.
   d) Targeted federal-provincial assistance to Ontario manufacturing sectors.
   e) Continued support for Ontario’s film and television industry and CRTC regulations that keep local television news in all markets, including ethnic communities.

2. That Ontario local unions contact MPs of all Parties who are most relevant to the local membership on a community and industry sectoral basis to open lines of communication and to emphasize the importance of an Ontario Good Jobs Agenda.

3. That Ontario locals respond as needed to join in the Unifor lobby on Parliament Hill in February 2016.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Kari. Do we have any speakers at the mics? Speaker at mic number 2.

BRIAN STEVENS: Brian Stevens, staff. And, I want to thank Katha and the Ontario Regional Council for this recommendation. And, it is one that we should wholly support. And, I think it is timely and we don’t have to wait until February to start any kind of rallies.

There is a rally coming up next weekend in North Bay, Ontario. And, you have heard Jerry speak of it in his comments as well as Katha, about a labour dispute that is going on in North Bay at Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, which is Ontario’s first Crown Corporation.

It was founded back in 1902 and 1903, and it is one of the last publicly-owned freight and railway transportation companies in Canada and in North America and it is under threat. The Premier -- it was terrific. We welcome the Minister of Labour. But, the Premier herself is in charge of bargaining here.
And, at the bargaining table, they are looking to create precarious work. They are looking to convert good jobs that we have in Northern Ontario into bad jobs. They are looking to convert those jobs so that they work precarious hours, different locations across Northern Ontario.

And, really, it’s a poison pill, in the sense of poison pill agreement that really, they don’t want us to bring it back to our members to have even an attempt to ratify it, because they know it won’t be ratified.

This is the same government, when we talk about infrastructure in Northern Ontario, they have cut passenger rail service. They have cut motor-coach service in the communities, further isolating the communities in Northern Ontario.

Our hospital in North Bay is one of the first 3P hospitals that was created by the predecessor, Dalton McGuinty. And, it now has a layoff of about 300 staff. And, it is a new billion-dollar hospital.

It is nice that it has got bricks and mortars and glass, but the beds are closed. And, for those who work in the health care sector knows what that means. When they close a bed, they actually convert that into a closet, and that is where everything goes, and that is what we have.

So, there is a rally this coming weekend in North Bay. I look at Rolly Kiehne and Local 112. I know it’s only about a 2.5 drive up the highway. There are no stoplights. It is all four lanes.

I just came down from there last night, so I can tell you there is no snow on the highways. The contractors don’t have to get out on the highways to keep them clean. So, there is an opportunity right away.

So, Jerry intends to be there. Hassan Yussuff will be there. Chris Buckley will be there. Fred Hahn will be there. So, it will be a large rally and we welcome everybody to it. And, it is right on the recommendation. And, again, I come back to the recommendation. Katha, it is an excellent one and we need to support that in every community across the province. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on mic number 1.

KEN LEWENZA, SR.: Dino, I took want to recognize the Ontario Council Executive, Katha, the leadership of our union for putting a Good Jobs Summit on the public agenda, on the consciousness of Ontario, on the consciousness of Canada, because if you look at the first statement, “The Ontario Regional Council, local unions and industrial councils articulate and fight for Ontario Good Jobs Agenda, which include but not limited to the following.”

But, all of the following is based on people having decent jobs, decent income to pay taxes, to allow us to have the economic and social benefits as a result of paying taxes. And, those of us that make a reasonable income because we belong to a union -- because in most unionized workplaces, we make 35 or 40 percent more than a non-union workplace.

As a result of that, we are comfortable in paying taxes. We are comfortable in sharing the wealth. We are comfortable in making sure that our universal accessible health care is paid for by our tax dollars. We are comfortable that the hospital is paid for by our public dollars. We are comfortable that nurses, doctors, health care providers, teachers and others are paid for by our tax-paid dollars. It provides some equality to an economic system that is in disarray as a result of the lack of good, decent jobs.

When I look around this convention and I look at the history of our union, we have always fought for good jobs. We have always fought for the quality of life for ourselves and our families. But, we always expected that our success would spin off to other sectors of the economy, including those that were not represented.

So, brothers and sisters, we should not walk into a coffee shop and not be able to defend good wages, defend good jobs, defend our ability to bring people along with us today. There is nothing more frustrating today when you hear in the public domain, “What the heck is going on with those auto workers? They already got good pensions. They already got wages.”
And, do you know what I tell people each and every time? My personal inspiration as a result of my union is to someday be able to tell you that you are entitled to good wages, good benefits, and a good pension plan. And, where there is a weakness, our social programs will pick it up to include some equality.

So, today, brothers and sisters, we should celebrate, celebrate the political changes we made in the last year, but recognize there are so many people that want to work, have decent jobs, build upon a good quality of life, pay taxes and provide the social benefits that are included in this.

And, my concluding remarks -- and this is part of these council meetings. You know, we had a Lear plant in Kitchener, represented by -- I believe it is 1524, that have been around our union forever. They were part of the Fleck strike in a very strong way. And, the Fleck strike back in the ‘70s was to defend women’s rights to work in a workplace. It was about equality. It was about women joining the workplace without discrimination.

We had a major strike and that local was one of the locals that was front and centre on that particular issue. And, that Lear workplace closed since our last meeting. And, I just wanted to recognize the local union. I wanted to recognize our National Union. I want to recognize those members that lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

And, I want to remind everybody in here every day that when you’re in your workplace and you can fight and win for one job, one job -- if we all fight and get one job each and every day in our workplace in a unionized environment, paying decent wages, decent benefits and decent conditions, then we will be glad to pay the taxes that provide us the social security of equality.

Thank you, brothers and sisters.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Ken. I’ll take the speaker on mic number 2.

CHRIS TAYLOR: Thanks, Dino. Chris Taylor, president of Local 200 and National Executive Board member. Brothers and sisters, I don’t think it’s any secret that we need to support the resolution that is in front of us.

When we look at what Tracey asked this room -- she asked how many people took part in the federal election. Everybody in this room stood up. We all knew what we had to do to invoke change in this country and we did it.

But, that doesn’t mean now we can sit back on our laurels, sit back and say, “Whew, Stephen Harper is gone,” because if we don’t continue carrying our agenda and carrying the message and the requirements of working people, we will have another government by the end of four years and we are going to be scratching our head and saying, “What the heck happened?” We can’t be the fault for that.

We have got work to do. The lobbying effort is going to be extremely important. The TPP -- if the TPP is allowed to go through as it is, then we haven’t done anything except change the name who is going to do some signing on the final document. That is our responsibility. That is what we have to do.

So, I commend the ORC for putting this resolution out. I appreciate the discussion around it. But, let’s not sit back now and not finish the job that we started by getting rid of Stephen Harper. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Seeing no other speakers at the mic,

All those in favour? (favouring votes shown)

Down.

Opposed if any? (opposing votes shown, if any)

Carried. CARRIED

Thank you very much, brothers and sisters. Thank you.
Going on to the last speaker of the day, and I will call up K.H. Wong to recognize our next speaker.

K.H. WONG: Mayor Rob Burton has been the Mayor of Oakville for three terms, having been elected in October 2014. During his time as mayor, he has prioritized many ground-breaking initiatives that protect Halton and Oakville’s natural and built environments, as well as the health and safety of citizens and the community.

These initiatives include Oakville’s and Halton’s Natural Heritage Systems, the town’s Energy Management Plan, the Health Protection Air Quality bylaw, the new Official Plans, Livable Oakville and Sustainable Halton, as well as the Oakville Climate Change Adaptation Plan and the North Oakville Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan.

Before running for public office, Mayor Burton was best known for starting YTV and has a successful career as a businessperson, director and producer in journalism, film and television.

Mayor Burton co-chairs the Municipal Leaders for the Greenbelt, and Environmental Defence Canada calls him the greenest mayor in Canada. Mayor Burton also chairs the Ontario Auto Mayors Caucus and the Canadian Nuclear Technology Mayors Association. Please join me to welcome Mayor Rob Burton.

ADDRESS: ROB BURTON, MAYOR OF OAKVILLE

ROB BURTON: Thank you very much. When I was brand new to the job of mayoring, being called the greenest mayor had a double entendre, you know, because “green” also means beginning.

But, anyway, I want to make sure that I thank my good friend, Scotty McColeman from Oakville for all that he did to make sure that I was in touch with what is going on here today and getting me here.

I want to thank Katha Fortier for her warm welcome. And, above all, I want to thank Jim Stanford, not only for his role in bringing me here today, but I have to say, as the founder of the Auto Mayors, the most valuable resource I had to call on, the best resource that I had to call on, the most helpful and insightful source that I had to call on is this character who I understand is running away to Australia, Mr. Stanford.

I am telling you, when I was running YTV, it’s all about talent. And, you do anything to keep talent. So, I’ve got ask Unifor, “What did you do wrong here?”

So, look, we started the Auto Mayors in 2008 in a desperate time, in a great recession, and we built it pretty well through there. I am going to tell you what we have achieved. And, we are heading up now to a summit in 2016, which I believe for the first time will finally have the feds as well as the Province of Ontario at the table.

And, I am looking forward to receiving the positive results of the promises that we were given by Kathleen Wynne and by Justin Trudeau that Canada would at last have an advance manufacturing policy, and the hallmark of that, the centre-stone of that would be an automotive policy. And, I think that is huge and I think that is long, long overdue.

Now, I want to finish by talking about what is in the future for the Auto Mayors. But, before I do that, I am burning to say something about the TPP. The Auto Mayors worked really hard during the run-up to the election on trying to focus attention of the voters on this really, really bad deal that Stephen Harper signed.

And, it looks like, to me, no form of trade deal at all. What this really looks like to me is a regulation and personal rights prevention deal. This is not a trade deal. This is a deal to prevent regulation to protect people and to take away people’s rights.
Trade deals, you usually gain something. Has anybody found anything in these 6,000 pages yet that does anything for anybody in Canada, besides maybe the top 10\textsuperscript{th} of one percent? Anybody? I haven’t found it. So, my word on the TPP is, I hope to heck it dies. There is opposition to it. Thank you.

So, now, I want to go back to the Auto Mayors because, really, that is what started me here. I am trying to enlarge the work of the Auto Mayors to become a broader sector. Sometimes, I think we should have called it the industry mayors, the mayors who are in favour of industrial jobs. But, in any event, we have what we have.

And, what has been going on since Premier Wynne agreed that they would work with us to create a national or provincial auto policy is we have been waiting in a hopeful way for a good result from the federal election.

And, when we went around to talk to the three federal parties about the need for a national auto and manufacturing policy, we got earnest yeses from Justin Trudeau and from Thomas Mulcair.

And, this is what we got from the Harper government. I was told, “Well, we have this program here and we have this measure there and if you want us to wrap a ribbon around it and call it an auto policy, we will.” And, that is not what we want.

What we really want is an advance manufacturing policy that understands that Canada’s future is in manufacturing. Resources run out. And, the other thing about resources that nobody likes to remember is that there is a thing called the business cycle and there is a resource cycle.

So, do you want to live in a boom-and-bust world for the rest of your life? I don’t. And, that is why Canada must be an industrial power and we need a government that gets that.

So, now I hope that Ontario and Canada can get on with it, now that we have got the result we worked for. No matter who we were working for, we were working against continuing more of the Harper government. So, I think, in a sense, we all got what we were working for.

So, I will take one last crack at the TPP. The TPP looks like an own net goal by guys who had no business being on the ice, because they couldn’t skate. That is what the TPP looks like to me.

So, now, my hopes and prayers, and I hope for your help in this, is to get the Ontario and the Canadian government to work on the auto and manufacturing policies that we need, because soon it is going to be 2016 and better, better be possible. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Mayor Burton, thank you for your kind words of support on the TPP. And, again, we appreciate you letting us know that the Wynne government and the Trudeau government are both looking at making sure that they are going to instill that. But, on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, we just want to say thank you for coming out here and addressing the audience.

**ROB BURTON:** Help me hold them to it. Thank you very much.

**DINO CHIODO:** We will. He said, “Help me hold them to it,” and by God, that’s our job and we will for sure. Point at mic number 3.

**POINT OF PRIVILEGE**

**BILL ZILIO:** Thank you, Brother Dino. My name is Bill Zilio (phon.) I am retired staff out of Chatham. And, I just want to thank everyone on behalf of the United Way in Chatham for taking part in the 50/50 draw. And, the tickets are on their way up there. And, the winner is going to receive $1,225.00.

**DINO CHIODO:** Local 8300, Kim Hatfield. Somebody has got to be happy. Congratulations.
So, we talked a few times earlier with reference to a box going around and just doing a collection for the striking workers, taxicab drivers, Garda and ONR. So, in saying that, the boxes will be on the tables actually going out right now.

So, if you could please dig deep and support those individual striking workers, we would very much appreciate that. And, that will go on over the next hour, while we are going through the next recommendation.

The next recommendation is Recommendation No. 5. This will be on page 4 of the recommendation document. It is with reference to the Auto Policy and the TPP, and I will be reading that.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5: AUTO POLICY AND THE TPP

Ontario’s automobile industry is at a critical turning point when public policy and corporate decisions must come together to provide a secure future for what is once again Canada’s most important export industry.

Job security and automobile production in Ontario will be defining issues of auto bargaining in 2016.

The proposed Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement lowers regional content requirements from 62.5 percent to 45 percent for vehicles, and from 60 percent to as low as 35 percent for parts. It phases out Canadian tariffs on imported autos faster than any other TPP country (in just five years versus up to 30 years for the United States). It will exacerbate our existing one-way trade imbalance with Asia in auto products, including our $5 billion auto trade deficit with Japan, with no meaningful opportunity to sell significant volumes of Canadian-made products anywhere in Asia. There are no meaningful limits on one-way trade imbalances, nor on the active manipulation of currencies to attain advantages in trade.

Of course, in addition to these auto-related concerns, there are many other problems with the TPP text, agreed to by the Harper government with no public consultation, in a desperate attempt to get re-elected. It will cause major damage in dairy, poultry and food processing. It maintains the anti-democratic practice of investor-state dispute settlement, whereby corporations can sue governments, in their own private kangaroo court system, for virtually anything that undermines their profits. It extends monopoly protection for brand-name drugs, costing billions for Canadian consumers and governments. It threatens the integrity of the Internet and Canadian content in our media. Unifor will carefully review all aspects of the deal, with an eye to its many impacts on Unifor members and other working people, and will participate energetically in the federal government’s upcoming consultations.

I therefore recommend:

1. Ontario locals circulate and promote Unifor’s Auto policy materials, and be prepared to respond to the call for action from the Unifor Auto and IPS Councils as they coordinate a campaign to defend the industry.

2. Unifor and the ORC call upon the federal Liberal government to hold a comprehensive review of the impacts of the TPP on auto, dairy and other Ontario sectors, including public hearings by the appropriate Parliamentary Committees, and including hearings in Ontario auto communities or communities with other impacted sectors.

3. Unifor and the ORC call on the federal government to renegotiate the most destructive aspects of the TPP text, including its auto provisions, to ensure that any future trade deal in the Pacific region works for working Canadians instead of against us.

4. The ORC calls on the provincial Liberal government to clarify and emphasize its opposition to any trade deal that would harm Ontario’s OEM and parts sector.

5. The ORC calls on the federal and Ontario provincial governments to declare their opposition to Investor State Dispute Settlement provisions in TPP or any trade agreement.

6. The ORC calls for significant new federal provincial initiatives, consistent with Unifor’s auto policy vision, to retain and attract new auto investment, address the challenge of globalized production, improve Canadian technology and infrastructure and take other measures to ensure the continued recovery and growth of the auto and auto parts industries in Ontario.
7. The ORC and Ontario locals work with the Auto Council to bring these concerns to Ontario communities and municipalities, building on the active role already being played by Ontario’s Auto Mayors, and secure their support for a vigorous Ontario strategy.

**DINO CHIODO:** I’ll open up the mics for any discussion and debate. Speaker at mic number 2.

**BRUCE ALLEN:** Thank you. Bruce Allen, Local 199. I just want to let the delegates to this council know that if the TPP goes ahead, the Niagara Regional Labour Council has sent a letter to the Canadian Labour Congress with copies to every labour council in the country, calling for a mass march on Ottawa at the end of March or early April, with the demand to stop the TPP.

As I see it, if the students in Quebec can put 250,000 people on the streets to win their demands, the labour movement and its allies, they are certainly capable of paralyzing the City of Ottawa by putting 100,000 people on the streets of Ottawa.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, brother. Speaker on mic number 4.

**LEN HOPE:** Len Hope, Retired Workers, Executive Council president. I want to thank everybody first of all for your participation in our rally yesterday. It was really, really good.

And, for a lot of people here, you may not have seen that before, but we have done this demonstration prior to any major auto bargaining. And, if it makes you feel enthusiastic about it, it makes us feel even better. 450 retired workers are good.

Dealing with the TPP, I think the mayor of Oakville is exactly right. It’s the wrong way to go. One of the things that hasn’t been mentioned yet -- and a lot of people here already know it.

When you take a look at 20,000 people losing their jobs, that’s 20,000 people and that’s auto jobs. That is not all of the community. That is not the grocery stores, food stores, hospitals, all the people that will get laid off, because of the TPP and the loss of auto jobs in the province.

It works on our economy. The young children that we have, our grandchildren, they’re looking for jobs. They will be looking for jobs. And, that will destroy the chances of them getting a decent job.

The marketing boards that we have in Canada -- if you remember, not too long, there was a lot of grain that was stuck in the Prairies. That was because the federal government destroyed the marketing board for grain.

Now, when you take a look at the next issue that Harper put out, he is saying that the U.S. can ship their milk into Canada. And, when they ship their milk into Canada, it is milk and milk by-products.

And, I am sure that everybody here eats cheese. And, cheese is a by-product of milk. And, when you take a look at all of the products that are coming into Canada, even though it’s a percentage, the milk and milk by-products are full of hormones.

And, it will get mixed in with our milk products and it will only make money for the people who are at the top. It won’t make money for the people at the bottom. And, God knows how that is going to affect our health when they have those by-products out there.

You talk about equality. We have to stop the TPP and renegotiate it, whatever is necessary, so that we end up with the value of jobs. Canada has a good system. We have good products. We want to produce our own products. We don’t need the Americans making more money off of our lifestyle. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you very much, brother. Speaker at mic number 7.

**CHUCK REDDEN:** Thank you, Brother Chair. Chuck Redden, president of Local 462 and Chair of the Retail, Wholesale and Food and Fluid Council. I rise in favour of the recommendations. And, I just wanted to touch on the second part that was mentioned in No. 2, in regards to the dairies. And, I understand that the resources and access of the union in regards to statistics within the dairy industry are limited, whereas in the auto sector they’re much higher.
So, I was recently in the last couple of months given an analysis of the potential impacts of the end-of-supply management on the Canadian industry, and I would like to share some of that with the brothers and the sisters.

There’s a Big Three in the dairy industry in Canada: Agropur, Parmalat and Saputo Group. Well, most of these dairies, because they were worried about the impact of deregulation, hired firms, and I have one of those firm’s reports and some of the stats.

So, Agropur, who is Canadian based, one of the larger Canadian-based dairies, commissioned Boston Consulting Group to conduct an independent study on the impact that a banning of supply management could have on Canada’s dairy industry. And, I am briefly going to tell you about it.

Canada, since 2006, has entered into 38 trade pacts, 43 in total. And, every time, other than once, were able to fight off the attack on deregulation of the dairy industry. One of those was a European pact with Canada, where there was an agreement to allow the import of an additional 17,700 tons of cheese at the loss of 178,000 litres of milk. I don’t have to tell you what impact that has on the people that are working in the dairy industry out there.

The 12 member states met in Hawaii from July 28th to 31st. And, certainly, due to the differences between auto, pharmaceuticals and dairy, those talks failed. And, the Harper government rammed through legislation that hurts Canadian workers.

Brother Len Hope mentioned 20,000 jobs. Brothers and sisters, it is actually 44,000; 24,000 in the dairy industry, direct jobs that would be impacted by opening up the borders. The biggest risk to Canada is the U.S.

The pressure was coming from Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. And, certainly, the deregulation or part deregulation in Australia and New Zealand has really done little growth. And, really, there has been very little passed on down to the consumer.

Concentrating on the U.S., I would like to let you know that 250 kilometres from our plants here in Canada, the herds, the dairy herds of the U.S. are as large as the whole of Canada combined.

The farmers -- I mean, the Harper government, he mummed them. He threw a lot of cash that way, short-term fix. But, the dairies themselves are in jeopardy and in opening the system would represent a risk-net loss of $2.1 billion to $3 billion to the Canadian GDP and would threaten 24,000 direct jobs, as I said. Right now, because of our supply management system, $13.1 billion is contributed to the Canadian GDP.

I know I’m out of time, brothers and sisters. I do have a lot of information. I have talked to Jim Stanford. And, I would certainly be willing to talk to the Research Department and provide them with additional information. We need to fight this and we need all the information available at our hands to do it. Thank you, brothers and sisters.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on mic number 1.

GRANT ORCHARD: Thank you. It’s Grant Orchard from Local 4268. I support the recommendations, the thrust of them.

The only question I have would be Recommendation No. 3. I think it would be easier to push for an outright rejection, a non-ratification of the TPP, as other speakers have said and the Mayor of Oakville, because it would be easier than trying to call 11 countries back to renegotiate the deal.

We have all seen the devastation of the high costs in our country of the precursors to this one: the Free Trade Agreement and the NAFTA, the loss of good jobs, the rise in precarious work, cuts in funding to almost every sector in the country, our provincial governments desperately trying to raise revenue from selling out our public institutions.
And, as trade experts have said, including Thomas Mulcair, if we reject this deal, it won’t leave us out in the cold. We can trade with whoever we want. And, we need to scrap the existing Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA. We can do that with six months’ notice and build or rebuild our economy and build an amazing Canadian economy. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you brother. Speaker at mic number 3.

GARY PARENT: Thanks very much, Dino. Gary Parent, Local 444 Retirees.

There is probably not a more important recommendation that we have discussed this weekend than this one. When you look at Windsor that just this Friday reached double digit unemployment rates, which we in Windsor already know that it already had double digits, so now we’re probably in the 20 percent bracket of unemployment -- if this thing passes in the City of Windsor, you may as well wipe Windsor right off.

And, just like our mayor in the City of Windsor said, that we have entered into a political wasteland, because we elected three NDP federal members which was crap, we are going to be in an economic wasteland in Windsor and Essex County when they wipe out the auto industry. So, this is important.

And, I don’t normally agree with everything that Bruce Allen says. But, one thing I do agree with him, we have got to get the message to Ottawa. I am suggesting possibly that we have some kind of a forum with our NDP Caucus and make sure that they are onboard with our position as far as TPP is concerned, because I certainly wasn’t in favour of the Korean free trade deal like Tom Mulcair stated.

Going back to 1988 when the labour movement opposed the introduction of the U.S. Canada Free Trade Agreement, when we took over the Ambassador Bridge -- even though I told people not to go on the bridge, but some people went on the bridge. We got charged. We fought it. No one went to jail.

I can remember the debate between Bob White and Maude Barlow. That should be replayed in every free trade deal that has ever been negotiated, because everything that was stated in that debate, which took place over two nights, has come true since 1988. We don’t need more free trade deals. We need more fair trade deals, not free trade deals.

So, I stand in absolute favour of the recommendations that you have before you. But, it is going to take more than just words. We have to make sure that we lobby. We have to make sure that we take it to the streets. We have got to make sure that we have people that are going to be up in arms.

And, we go to our municipal councils. We get resolutions in there. And, we go to Ottawa en masse. Let’s not take trains though. For those who are a little young, they won’t understand what that means, but we old farts do. There hasn’t been a train ride to Ottawa since that train ride took place.

And, in fact, guess who was Prime Minister at the time when we were going to Ottawa to protest? His name was Trudeau. So, let’s go back and visit Trudeau once more and say no to TPP.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks, Gary. Speaker on mic number 1.

ANDY SAVELLA: Thank you, Dino. Andy Savella, staff, Thunder Bay.

And, I just feel compelled to get up and talk about the importance of procurement and trade policies. And, when you look at the City of Thunder Bay and our plant and our work at Bombardier, through the 80s, our community was decimated with the downturn in the lumber and forestry sector and our natural resource sector as we fought through the trade deals of the free trade and the softwood lumber dispute.

And, the only bright light in our community, in a community of 100,000 people, we now have 1,100 Unifor jobs in our Bombardier plant, about 1,600 jobs in total. And, that was the only bright light in our city through the ‘80s.
And, believe me, Thunder Bay was devastated. And, after that, we began to work
diligently on trade and procurement policies. And, one of the things we were able to do is work with
different levels of government in the Province of Ontario to get a 25 percent procurement policy on
mass transit.

And, if you look at what has happened in the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay
and if you read the papers with the problems with the TTC, if we didn’t have that 25 percent policy,
Bombardier wouldn’t be in Ontario, they wouldn’t be in our community and our community would be a
different place.

So, I just rise to say that it is very important that we be proactive as we are. We
support our involvement in these trade and procurement policies. And, we can have successes on
behalf of all our members. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on mic number 3.

SHERI LAEKEMAN: Thanks, Dino. I am Sheri Laekeman, president, Unifor 4212,
St. Lawrence Seaway and Welland Canal. I know that I have been up to the mic a few times and just this
is so important, this TPP that I couldn’t sit still, so I’ve got to stand up and say something.

I have been working with a couple of other activist groups as well. And, I don’t
know if the people and I don’t even know if this delegation recognizes how important this issue is.

In any other trade agreement that is happening right now, of course, it only takes
going on the Internet and seeking out some information around this trade agreement and a few others
that the U.S. is at the core of.

You know, beyond the labour, there are communities. There’s our water. There
are our natural resources. There are all sorts of things of things that are at stake here. Obviously, it’s
good-paying jobs and a right to the conditions that we currently appreciate and understand in the
workplace.

But, this trade deal really does stand to undermine our whole way of life in
Canada. As many people know, it is going to potentially put our water at risk. Our Great Lakes are
awesome resources. And, it is because of this, what is involved in this, with the investor dispute
resolution process that the investor comes before pretty much anything else. And, that includes any
sort of protections that Prime Minister Trudeau has tried to get back in terms of protecting our water.

So, I am hoping that everybody takes this to heart. We have been working down
in St. Catharines with a small group. But, I am really looking not only to the delegation here, but I am
looking to the regional and National Office to really take this seriously.

Build some bridges with some other groups, some other well-known Canadian
activist groups. And, we really need to take this very seriously, because in my view, this is the most
important thing right now that we are dealing with.

If we do not get the ratification of this TPP off, if we cannot get that eliminated,
then everything else we are doing is for nothing. So, I was compelled to stand up and say a few things.
Thanks very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Thank you, sister, for getting up and saying a
few things. Going to mic number 4.

HERB JOHN: Herb John, Retired Workers Executive. I rise in support of the
resolution.

I wanted to make a couple of points about the TPP that haven’t been raised. Gus
Van Harten is an author from Osgoode Hall. He spoke at the conference a month ago that the Council
of Canadians put on in Windsor and talked about FIPA, which is the agreement with China.

The biggest problem and the reason why all of these things are at risk is because
these agreements give up our sovereignty. They give up the power that municipal, provincial and
federal governments have to make decisions on how this country is going to look.
And, I am not sure what happened over the last number of years, but it used to be called treason. You can’t give up government sovereignty. People protect sovereignty, because they expect governments to govern. And, these agreements with the dispute resolution don’t allow that process to work anymore, because it undermines the very sovereignty of the country. And, maybe we should consider some legal action, based on challenging the fact that sovereignty cannot be given away by anybody, including a federal government or a trade deal. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, brother. I don’t think I see any more speakers at the mic. Seeing no speakers,

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried. CARRIED

Thank you very much, brothers and sisters. Thank you for all your hard work and all your input on all the recommendations.

Before we do wrap things up, can I ask Sister Katha to come up and give her closing remarks, can the sister that was selling the bracelet -- we were trying to get the email so we could put it on the board, so we could try and sell all those bracelets for her.

But, if she is in the room or even in the hallway, could she just come up and make sure we get her email address, so we could connect with her? There have been a few people that have come up to the front and asked how we can get in touch with her directly for support from each local.

**CREDENTIALS REPORT**

**DINO CHIODO:** And, also I have a Credentials Report that I do want to read, so it is in the minutes. The Ontario Director’s Office sent out 736 credentials to 259 local unions. In addition, the office sent credentials to National Executive Board members and National Council of Retired Workers Executive members.

As of 3:17 p.m. today, registered for the convention were 436 delegates, representing 126 local unions, the National Executive Board and the National Council of Retired Workers Executive.

In addition, there were 134 National representatives and 13 special delegates with voice and no vote. There are also 20 alternates, three special guests, 70 observers, 13 other staff and one media in attendance. So, that gives us a total in attendance for our Ontario Regional Council over the last two days of 690 members. So, thank you very much to all of you, brothers and sisters.

In saying that, I will call up Katha for her closing remarks. Is that point of privilege? Okay, I’ll take the point first.

**POINTS OF PRIVILEGE**

**SHERI LAEKEMAN:** Thanks, Dino. I am hoping the lucky winner of this Apple watch is in the room. We have got three prizes. First prize is the Apple watch. Take your tickets out. This is for the Welland Canal Fallen Worker Memorial Fund. The number is 5230620. 5230620. Excellent. What is your name?

**WILLIAM ROGERS:** William.

**SHERI LAEKEMAN:** William what?

**WILLIAM ROGERS:** Rogers.

**SHERI LAEKEMAN:** William Rogers. The second prize is Samsung Galaxy Tab 4. And, the winning ticket number is 5230435.

**DINO CHIODO:** Oh, Logan. You’re a winner.
SHERI LAEKEMAN: And, finally, the third prize for $50.00 and a Welland Canal Fallen Worker T-shirt, which is women’s, by the way, so let’s hope it’s a woman. 5230478. 5230478.

DINO CHIODO: It must have been planned. It’s a woman.

SHERI LAEKEMAN: Awesome.

DINO CHIODO: Way to go. Point on mic number -- is that not mic number 4? Mic number 4, please.

RAWL FINGAL: I don’t have a point. My name is Rawl Fingal from Local 1090. It is a privilege to be here this weekend.

I just want to say that Mr. Trudeau being elected as the new Prime Minister of this great country of ours, I think it’s a great thing, because most of my immediate family, meaning my children, are in the Canadian Air Force.

The day last year when I was here, I listened to Mike Harris’ speech. And, as I was listening to him, I was emailing my children, encouraging them that we’ve got to get rid of Harper. I don’t know if some of the delegates that were here last year remember Mr. Mike Harris’ speech. But, I went home and I went on Facebook and YouTube. And, I YouTubed him and I spread his videos like cancer. And, it caught on, as we can see today.

My son called me two days after the election from Iraq, from some of his sorties. And, he said, “Dad, you’re right. I’m coming home. I am coming home and my comrades, they’re all coming home. How did you know this?” And, as we know today that there are no more sorties by the Canadian troops in Iraq.

A couple of weeks ago or a week-and-a-half ago, my daughter said to me, “How many refugees are you taking in, Dad?” I said, “Oh, gees, I never thought about that.” She said, “Well, Justin and I are taking two.” And, my other daughter called me up from Calgary. She is single. She is doing great. She says, “I need a sister. I’m taking one.”

I went to work and I was really surprised. I said to my sisters and brothers at work hypothetically, “I have applications in my car, so would you guys like to fill out applications to adopt refugees?” “You’ve got to be frigging kidding me. Those people are not coming here.”

I couldn’t believe my ears. And, these are sisters and brothers that I have known for 13 years and I have represented them in every way for 13 years. And, to hear them say that, it was like a knife in my heart. And, sisters and brothers, that was not a joke. They were serious.

I even went so far -- the one person told me they’re going to get into my car and tear up those applications. So, we have got to really be careful with some of our sisters and brothers. I trust that none of them are in this delegation.

I want to thank you for the time and thanks for your support for the Canadian troops that serve overseas. Have a great weekend.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. I think I’ve got two more points. We’ll do mic number 4 again. I think that is for the email that we are looking for; right?

ALLISON GIBSON: That is for the email. It is cawagibson@gmail.com.

DINO CHIODO: So, that is cawagibson@gmail.com; correct? Okay, thank you very much. Point on the mic number 6.

STEVE TAYLOR: Thank you, Dino. I just want to update everybody on our United Way raffle that we had with the products from Hiram Walker. We raised $2,410.00 for the United Way campaign.

And, the winner of the first prize was from Local 200, D.J. Lacey. And, the winner of the second prize from Local 2458 was Bruce Dickie. Thanks again everybody.

DINO CHIODO: It sure went to the right two guys, that’s for sure. Go figure.
Anyways, I do want to make a short announcement with reference to the money that was collected to the ONR, taxi and Garda employees that are locked out and on strike. And, we raised $3,723.00. So, I want to thank everybody in here.

In saying that, I think it is fitting that we round that up to at least $5,000.00. So, I would like a motion to make up the difference between $3,723.00 to $5,000.00. Any questions?

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.

And, I had a conversation with Bob Orr just a minute ago. And, I’m sorry, what we put forward was to make sure that we could double that. So, that will be a total of $10,000.00 for those workers at ONR, the taxicab drivers and Garda. So, thank you very much for making sure that we could make them have a great Christmas.

In saying that, I will bring up Katha Fortier for some closing remarks.

**CLOSING REMARKS BY KATHA FORTIER**

**KATHA FORTIER:** Thanks, Dino and thanks, sisters and brothers, for your generosity. You know, you never, ever fail to deliver when we ask of you. And, I can tell you that 2015 has been an exceptional year, where we have seen that happen.

Tracey Ramsey is an incredible example of what we can do together. And, I know that Local 200’s pride that they take in Tracey being a member, our entire union shares that pride with Local 200 and Tracey Ramsey for all she has done and all she will do as a parliamentarian and as an MP.

And, when we talk about our parliament, though, we have got to remember we have got a lobby coming up in February. And, you know, we talk about the recommendations and so many of them, so many of the recommendations and the resolutions that we passed this weekend are all related.

They’re all about good jobs. They’re all about services and social services and the kind of country and the kind of province and the kind of communities that we want to build and we want to have, but we are going to have to fight for them.

And, I appreciate all of the speakers that were at the mic this week. I think that people understand that this is a fight that we are in this together. Your National Union, your Ontario Regional Council Executive Board, everybody is in this fight, all of our leadership. And, we will fight to get the kind of Canada that we want.

We understand that Trudeau is not going to hand it over. We understand that we are going to see some progress. But, we also know that we are going to have to stand together and we are going to have to fight.

So, we are going to start early in February, the first week. We will have a lobby on Parliament Hill. And, we are going to call on all of you to be at that lobby, to bring leadership there, and to have the conversations with the MP’s that are elected and make sure that they know that this is our country and we elected them and we put them there, and they owe it to us to fix Canada.

Finally, everybody, we have adjourned a little bit earlier this year. Last year, I think we kept you till almost 6:00. But, there is a good opportunity to make friends in solidarity and share some cocktails tonight. Apparently, if you can find D.J. or Bruce Dickie there, they’ve got -- if you find their room numbers, that’s the place to go.

But, I know that, you know, we get the opportunity at these councils to enjoy each other’s company. It is so important that we build friendship and solidarity at these events. So, I hope everybody takes the opportunity to do that.
I also wish everybody a very, very safe and happy holiday season this year. In 2016, there's much to be done. So, get ready, folks, because we'll be there to do it. Thank you very much, in solidarity.

Can we have Solidarity Forever? Can we play our song?

DINO CHIODO: We need a motion to adjourn.

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.
Opposed if any?
(opposing votes shown, if any)
Carried.                CARRIED

Now, you can play your song. Thank you. Guys, have a great holiday season.

Merry Christmas.

--- Whereupon the meeting was concluded at 3:49 p.m.