Ontario Regional Council

Minutes

Sheraton Centre Hotel, Toronto
December 2-4, 2016
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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016
--- Upon commencing at 9:14 a.m.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

DINO CHIODO: We’re going to get started on our 5th Ontario Regional Council here in Toronto. I would like to just ask everybody to respect the noise levels in here. So, if you can just please put your cell phones on silent or mute over the course of the conference, that would be very much appreciated just so it doesn’t interrupt anybody through the process. At the same time, there is a lot of noise that gets generated in the back of the hall. So, if you have to have a conversation, could you please just take it out into the foyer in respect of others wanting to hear what’s being said over the course of the day?

And, at the same time, just recognizing that there will be coffee this morning and tomorrow morning, so if you haven’t gotten your fill of caffeine and your caffeine fix, there is coffee in the foyer for today and tomorrow.

Also, I would like to recognize that there are accessible mics. Every mic that’s in here is an accessible mic, but at the same time, if there’s anybody that requires an accommodation, please approach somebody from the ORC Executive, and what we will make sure we do is make sure we try to accommodate you as best possible outside of the mics that are already available. In saying that, we’ll get started in the next couple of minutes. We’ll just wait for a few more people to get in, and we’ll start our 5th Ontario Regional Council.

---BREAK

DINO CHIODO: Welcome to the 5th Ontario Regional Council here in Toronto. So, hello, to everybody. Again, hello, to everybody. Way to go, way to go. So, listen, just before we get started in our Ontario Regional Council, 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 we’ve come together, those that are suffering from occupational disease, and anybody that’s having any workplace challenges with reference to illnesses. Please give them a moment of your time.

--- Moment of silence

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. So, everybody who has registered should have received a kit, and in that kit, you will have the minutes from previous meetings.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

DINO CHIODO: At the same time, I’d like to put a motion on the floor to accept those minutes and pass those minutes. Over the course of the next couple days, there will be an opportunity and time to be able to debate the minutes or have points of privilege for those minutes. But, at the same time, I would like to get a mover. Can I get a mover on those minutes? Moved and supported. Any discussion?

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

Thank you very much.

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

DINO CHIODO: Also, I would like to recognize retirees and the retirees executive board. They’ve done a tremendous amount of work over the course of the last year. They have really helped pave the way to make sure that we have a foundation to continue to build off of. And, in saying that, I would like to recognize all the retirees that are in the room, if they could please stand and be recognized?

Also, I would like to recognize a few special guests that are with us here today. I would like to recognize Julie White, previous director of the Women’s Department who is here with us today. Julie. Also, I would like to recognize Ken Lewenza, one of the forefathers helping put Unifor together. Past president of CAW, Ken Lewenza. Also, I would like to recognize Brenda Knight, the past president of CTE, which is the Canadian Telecommunications Employees union. Thank you for being here in support of Ontario Regional Council.
With all their hard work and dedication, I would also like to recognize the National Executive Board for the work that they do day in and day out with regards to leading this great union. So, I don’t have all the names of all the NEB members that are here, so if you could please stand and be recognized among your peers, that would be much appreciated. Please give a round of applause to the National Executive Board.

In our last Regional Council, we worked through some recommendations, some amazing resolutions, and we did a lot of work, and we recognized there were challenges in every sector of our union. At the same time, we recognized that we needed to be politically active. That’s what Unifor was born from, is to make sure that we could sway decisions that were made in government, and make sure that we had a voice in recognizing and representing workers’ rights and abilities. At the same time, we did defeat Stephen Harper. It was us that went forward and did what we needed to do to take him out of office.

But, it seems that every government tends to lose their way. And, on Wednesday, I had the privilege of being at Queen's Park, and in saying that, it was an amazing event that took place with the skilled trades, under Bill C-70, under Schedule 16 and 17. It’s amazing, even at a provincial level, how a government can screw something that’s worked so well for so many years and try to bring workers backwards almost 30 years, with reference to putting in legislation that really affects health and safety for every worker and the ability for them to understand what the trade actually means, and deteriorating what it is to be certified as a skilled trade.

So, I want to commend all of the skilled trades for being there, almost 5,000 people, in a short period of time. And, our director, John Breslin, helping support that initiative with reference to getting people there at Queen’s Park. It was a great rally and you’ll hear a lot more over the next couple of days with reference to that.

At the same time, C-27 at the federal level, when you talk about pensions and prized pensions that we've put in place over years, but at the same time, those pensions being attacked. And, as we take one step forward, it’s almost taking two steps back, it seems. And, in saying that, they’re now moving towards a targeted pension plan, and there’s a lot of information in your kits and, again, there will be a lot of discussion over the next couple of days. But, it’s just, again, to remind us why we need to be politically involved, why we need to stay connected and why we need to educate our membership to make sure that we’re not only working inside of our facilities, but also in the community and in politics at large.

And, in saying that, on another note, each year that goes by provides me a new found respect for the Ontario Regional Council Executive. They all do a tremendous amount of work. The individuals you see up here on stage, they all put their best forward. They all represent their membership. But, at the same time, they do a lot of work on extra time to make sure they represent the Ontario Regional Council.

Their friendship and professionalism is appreciated, and their commitment is to continue to work hard on your behalf. Please help me in recognizing your Regional Council Executive. I will be going through their names, so if you can -- and, I appreciate that, but if you can hold your applause until the very end, I would appreciate it as well.

The vice-chairperson from Local 7-O, Candace Lavalley; your secretary-treasurer from 2458, Tullio DiPonti; your members at large, respectively from Local 229, Kari Jefford; from Local 27, Jim Reid; from Local 199, Tim McKinnon; from Local 4268, Debbie Montgomery; and from Local 333, Ken Cole.

Also, I would love to give special mention to K.H. Wong who won’t be seeking re-election but, nonetheless, did an amazing amount of work, and we appreciate all of his effort. He comes from 87-M. And, at the same time, Anne Marie MacInnis that will no longer seek re-election as an Ontario Regional Council member at large. She comes from Local 598. And, I would also like to give special mention to Maggie Harbert, who comes from 35-O, who has decided to retire. And, she used to take the minutes, and sometimes it gets a little challenging to make sure you have concise minutes, especially when you’ve got 10 type-A personalities in a room all trying to talk at the same time, but I want to thank her for her dedication and her work ethic. And, I want to thank this whole entire executive board for all their hard work and dedication. So, please help me in giving them a warm round of applause.

So, we will be holding our Regional Council elections for the Executive Board of the Ontario Regional Council tomorrow. At around 11:30, we’ll be holding the nominations, and after lunch, if necessary, we’ll hold the elections. At the same time, there will be standing committee elections in each of the caucuses, and that will happen over the next few days. What we will do is try to announce when all the caucuses are so everybody understands where they are, and then we’ll announce all the individuals that have been either acclaimed or elected in their positions.

I wish everybody the best in their election, and at the same time, it’s about representing our members. It’s about doing what we do best, and that’s making sure that we’re talking about the important initiatives for working class people on a regular basis, and there’s no higher honour than being recognized amongst your peers to lead. So, thank
you very much to all those that will be seeking election, at the same time, those that do get elected, but we’ll go through that later on.

I do want to go through a number of announcements that we’re going to have to walk through just so we’re on the same page. We are doing something a little bit different at this Ontario Regional Council. What we’re going to be doing is we’re going to be having our standing committees come up and give reports. They’re going to be pretty short reports, probably about 5 minutes in length. And, what’s going to happen is they’re going to talk about some of the initiatives that took part over the course of the last year, but at the same time, there will be some discussion on upcoming projects and upcoming programs that they’ll be working on, and they’ll give those reports over the course of the next two days.

At the same time, because of the complexity of our agenda, we probably won’t be able to do question and answers, but what we will do is we will identify who the directors are of those particular standing committees. So, if you have any questions, we’ll make sure we identify them, and you will be able to bring your questions up and concerns with them at the respective time.

At the same time, I want to recognize that on Sunday, there’s going to be -- the ORC, obviously, is hosting an optional workshop that you can attend. It was in your call letter. Everybody got a copy of it. And, again, there’s limited space and that’s why we’re raising it, so people, if they’re interested in participating, it’s a great program. It’s a great workshop that really is a deep dive on mental illness. It identifies coping skills for individuals that are suffering from mental illness, but at the same time, it gives workplace representatives the tools to be able to work with individuals or at least identify some of the concerns, and basically looking at some of the people that are suffering from that would be well received and give you the skills and ability to work with that. And, again, if you need to register, because you have to register to participate, and you haven’t yet, please make sure you let us know so we can get you on the list.

Also, today, there will be a Women’s Committee caucus that will be held at lunch time in the Sheraton Hall E as recognized. If any changes come up, we’ll make sure we make an announcement with reference to that. And, we will be holding a Unity Team caucus meeting upon adjournment today. Everybody is welcome, and that will be held in the Grand Ballroom for anybody to participate. And, also, today, your Aboriginal and Workers of Colour equity caucus will follow the Unity Team caucus, but they will be in Sheraton Hall A.

So, as we get into our 5th Ontario Regional Council, we’ll once again have some great speakers. We’ll have some great presentations. There’s a number of prepared documents in your kits, a number of tables outside where you’ll be able to get information to bring back to your respective locals. And, the reason why we wanted to make sure we raised it, it’s because last time at the Ontario Regional Council, there were a lot of papers, documents that were left on the tables, and we’re asking you to bring that information back to share with your executive, to share with your leadership, to share with some of your membership, because there’s a lot of great information that we put together in order to make sure we have the proper direction.

But, at the same time, as our governing body, you all help make a lot of decisions to make sure we’re steering the ship in the right direction, and it really gives us insight with reference to the direction we need to go in well into the future and, of course, over the next year and into the next council. So, please note we will try to deal with all the resolutions that we have today that you see in your kit. If we’re not able to get to some of those resolutions, what we will do is we will make sure we try to get to those resolutions tomorrow. But, at the same time, recommendations are going to be a large part of tomorrow’s schedule, so we will be needing to go through all of the recommendations as well at that time, and I’ll be sure to make sure I give people a head’s up with reference to if they’re going to be in the morning or in the afternoon so people can prepare and get their documents together, or at least make sure that they’re in the room.

Understanding that, we will have a tight schedule. What I would like to do is have a motion just put on the floor because in our bylaws, it stipulates that you basically have 5 minutes to speak, but in the auspice of making sure we can get as many speakers through and have as many people talk on the issues that are important and relevant to them, I would like to have a motion that states that we go from a 5-minute speaker to a 3-minute speaker. And, I just think that that would be a good process for us to make sure we keep the flow of the council going, and at the same time, have proper people speaking at the mics, and at the same time, making sure that we’re moving things along. Can I have a mover on that? Moved and supported.

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

Carried. CARRIED.

I thank you very much for that.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

DINO CHIODO: So, usually, we have an anti-harassment statement and we read it out loud, and I want to remind everybody that, obviously, this is an anti-harassment policy venue, whether it be in this council or in any of the committee meetings, we don’t want to see any type of incidents. We basically have a zero-tolerance rule with reference to harassment. So, in saying that, what we did is we’ve placed the statement in your kits, and what I would like to do is cue up the video on anti-harassment, so we can play it for you now.

--- Whereupon the anti-harassment video is played

DINO CHIODO: So, please note, if you need any more information, you can find the statement within your kits. At the same time, if you need to contact a person, Niki Lundquist and Mohamad Alsadi’s name will be in there with their personal cell phones and e-mail addresses. Any violations will not be tolerated, and we just want to make sure we make that clear.

And, now, brothers and sisters, to kick off our 5th Ontario Regional Council, please help me in welcoming Candace Lavalley and Marilyn Netemegesic for an Aboriginal greeting.

ABORIGINAL GREETING

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Good morning, everyone. I’m Candace Lavalley. I come from the Peguis Band. My sister, Marilyn, here will introduce herself. We are here to do the Aboriginal greeting, and we would like to give thanks to the Mississaugi First Nation for letting us meet here on their land. We greatly appreciate it. Chi Meegwetch.

MARILYN NETEMEGESIC: Hi, I’m Marilyn Netemegesic. And, I’m from the Red Rock Indian Band. The Red Rock Indian Band is located where the bridge split in half. And, I’m originally from Rocky Bay. My Anishinabe name is Zhaawanong Nimkil Kwew, and that is the Southern Thunderbird Woman. And, my Dodem is the Makwa. Meegwetch. We’re just going to smudge up here for my drumming here.

I just want to thank Candace Lavalley for asking me to do the opening with her, and I just want to say Chi Meegwetch to the spirits and our creator for this beautiful day we have here, and for all the people I can’t see, and just for a safe arrival of everyone. And, we just want to say Meegwetch to all our grandfathers and our grandmothers, and to watch over us today to make good choices, and to hear us in positive ways. And, we want to offer all our prayers to our ancestors, and -- oh, boy.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: We’re really smoking up here.

MARILYN NETEMEGESIC: What I’m going to do is I’m going to -- I’ve brought my drum with me, so we’ll -- I’ll be singing a song, and it’s Manidoo. And, it’s welcoming in the spirits, speaking to the spirits, and the spirits answering us. Meegwetch.

--- Musical presentation

MARILYN NETEMEGESIC: And, we just sang for the four directions because in the east is tobacco, truthfulness, openness, prayers, ancestors. To the south is for southern protection, and it’s the courage and the cleansing, growth, expressing our feelings. The sage is the west, and it is purification, reflection and a quiet prayer. And, the north is for the elders, and it invites all good in, and we use this for our smudging. I want to thank you.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Thank you. Meegwetch. DINO CHIODO: Candace and Marilyn, thank you for that incredible opening. We appreciate it very much for the blessing. I would like to continue on now with our next step in the Ontario Regional Council. We do have a video that’s been prepared that shows 2015, so if we could please cue up and play that video?

--- Whereupon a video is played

DINO CHIODO: Boy, that shows the heartbeat of our union, all of the individuals that participate at a number of rallies and events to show the strength of Unifor, and that’s because of you, our membership, participating in those campaigns, those rallies. So, to each and every one of you, a round of applause because it’s amazing what we can do as a collaborative in solidarity and making sure we stand together.
At the same time, I would like to get to the next order of business. I would like to recognize an individual who was elected the Ontario Regional Council Director. Her name is Naureen Rizvi. She's done an amazing job, obviously, gaining the respect from all of the individuals that stand around her. She's just an amazing young woman. At the same time, comes from telecommunications, but thrown herself into every sector doing already an amazing job, and we appreciate it very much. So, please help me in welcoming our director for the Ontario Regional Council, Naureen Rizvi.

ONTARIO DIRECTOR REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NAUREEN RIZVI: Thanks, Dino. This morning when we were actually sitting in the office upstairs, I said to Dino, I said, “So, it depends on how you introduce me, I have two different introductions for my speech. I’m either going to say ‘Thank you, Dino, for your kind introductions,’ or I’m just going to move on and say good morning to everybody.” So, thank you, Dino, for that kind introduction.

DINO CHIODO: I must have passed.

NAUREEN RIZVI: You must have passed.

DINO CHIODO: Thank, God.

NAUREEN RIZVI: Well, you were listening, for sure. So, first of all, thank you very much, and good morning, sisters and brothers, and welcome to the Ontario Regional Council. I want to just take a minute to give a shout out to Kathleen O’Keefe who just put that video together. She’s right here. She did an absolutely terrific job. Thank you, Kathleen.

I’d like to start off by saying how very much I appreciate the efforts, both thoughtful and physical, that you have made to be here today. It’s a great honour for me to be with you, and to have been elected by the members this past August at our National Convention. It truly is a real privilege to be in a position to advocate for our members, to influence change and to, most importantly, do it collectively.

I cannot start this day out without thanking a great sister who laid out the foundation for all of the work this great council will continue to do in the future, Katha Fortier, Unifor’s first Ontario director. Katha, all of the work and effort you have put into building this council are so evident in this room today, and you will always be a part of this Ontario Regional Council. And, on a very personal note, I want to say how much I appreciate all of your help and support. Thank you.

I also know that what makes our union strong is all of you, the members of our great union, and I sincerely thank you for coming here this weekend to participate in the necessary work to keep Unifor strong. The next two days are going to be a great opportunity for us to gather and to reflect on victories and on our challenges. We have a great selection of speakers for you whom I think will really help us to think more broadly about how we participate in the communities we live in and the challenges that Canadians face every day.

I look forward to hearing from all of you. I especially want to encourage first time speakers to come out to the mics. It can be, sometimes, a very daunting task, but we want to hear from you. We want to share in your stories, and we want to hear your thoughts, and to debate and discuss how, together, we can grow and build this union. Some of the discussions we will have this weekend will bring out the most profound feelings in you. Come to the mic. Share your feelings. It is a safe place. This is your council.

As we decided on the topics that we wanted to bring to you, some key questions guided us on how to get the right speakers to help create the dialogues that lead to the self-reflection and strategies moving forward. These questions are also embedded in the values of our Unifor constitution, questions relevant to all Ontarians. How do we go to work and maintain our lives while coping with mental health issues? One in three today have a mental health issue, so this affects all of us whether it’s co-workers, families or us directly.

On Sunday, we will hold a mental health workshop conducted by Victoria Maxwell who will also be with us here tomorrow to share her experience with mental illness. How do we continue to challenge violence against women who are our allies in the community and what can we do together to help eradicate this? How do we get our political institutions to better reflect our society?

Next year, Ontario will mark the 100th anniversary of women getting the vote. A century later, how do we work to elect more women to all levels of political office in Canada? Later today, you’ll hear about an exciting campaign that Unifor is sponsoring called Daughters of the Vote. I’ll talk more about it this afternoon.

How do we push the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation report forward to create a fair and just treatment of Indigenous peoples and communities? The historical and current mistreatment and injustice towards Indigenous people is our national shame. This was a cultural genocide, and the ramifications are and will be felt for...
generations. And, the fact that the last residential school just closed in 1996. In Hamilton, 20 kilometres from where I live, is enough of a reminder that it was not too long ago and, for many, it will be in their memories forever.

We need to create opportunities for hope for youth, for Indigenous youth. We need to heal our sisters and brothers, and we need to make sure that we never stop the conversation because that’s when we forget. So, with this in mind, we will have a speaker from Indspire who will speak about how our union, Unifor, and the Social Justice Fund is helping Indigenous youth gain access to education.

How do we continue to support the people of Syria through this horrible humanitarian crisis? How can we help them once they’re here in Canada? We will hear from a new Canadian who fled war-torn Syria and is now settled with his family in Antigonish. His family has not only joined Canadian society, but they have built a small business, relying on the entrepreneurial skills they brought with them and with the aid of their new community.

I am extremely excited about the agenda for our council and all of the wonderful speakers that we have here today. But, before getting on with what is to come, I want to reflect on the work that has been done this past year. A few moments ago, we saw the slideshow featuring some of the great work that members, retirees and our union have done over the past year. Members and retirees across the province are engaged, active and involved in both political campaigns and social activism.

In Ontario, we’ve had some great achievements in bargaining since we gathered last November. I would like to highlight a few. Of course, that was a huge year for auto with Detroit Three bargaining, and I would like to congratulate the bargaining committees on achieving a total of $1.5 billion in investment in the Canadian auto industry. In addition, these negotiations also brought jobs back to Canada, reversing a trend that we have seen far too often in the manufacturing sector.

Gains were also made for our members in the grocery store sector. Although retail does not formally use pattern bargaining, the recent collective agreements negotiated with Dominion and Food Basics achieved the same core provisions that were laid out in last year’s Unifor Metro supermarket contract. This is a clear example of how negotiations in one workplace can help to raise the standard across the sector.

Just this week, we saw the true power of the union when Local 199 members at Seneca Manufacturing in Niagara-on-the-Lake were on strike. Now, there are only 14 members in this local. In total, they were on strike with a daunting task of manning a picket line for 24 hours a day. If truck loads of parts managed to get out of the facility, that would just lengthen the strike period that they would be on. Last weekend, the call was put out to our membership and our membership responded. The line was held and the two-week strike ended as the company was forced to come back to the table and negotiate a fair contract. This, brothers and sisters, is what solidarity is about.

This is a vital time, politically, in Ontario. In fact, we’re now less than 18 months away from the next provincial election. There are many key issues and decisions that impact each of our lives that will be determined prior to the next election, so it is key that we ensure that the Liberal majority government hears us and that we in turn hold them accountable, both on past promises and future actions. Now is the time to build a better Ontario.

Tomorrow, we will hear about the Ontario Changing Workplaces Review which was created to respond to concerns over deteriorating working conditions experienced by a number of today’s workers. This review is tasked with examining many of the key challenges that the labour movement faces including precarious work, equal pay, benefits, employment standards and barriers to joining a union, and to achieving collective bargaining rights.

Unifor does not and will not accept the argument that full-time jobs with decent pay are a thing of the past, and that the new economy will consist of precarious work, and the use of low paying part-time jobs or contract-to-contract positions without benefits or security. We do not accept the race to the bottom mentality that is further compounded by erratic schedules, growing income inequality and a lack of work-life balance.

Unifor has been involved in every stage of the Changing Workplaces Review to make our voices heard, to demand a living wage, the creation of good full-time jobs, fair scheduling practices, paid sick days and an end to contract flipping and, of course, the closure of the gender and racialized wage gap.

Just last week, I met with Labour Minister, Kevin Flynn, face-to-face, as part of an OFL delegation. We spoke of the Changing Workplaces Review and we stressed the need for tougher regulations to protect workers and to protect good jobs. Our efforts to craft modern labour laws that support vulnerable workers has also helped bring the stories and struggles of our members to life. And, I can tell you there are a lot of stories that capture the hardship of workers in precarious jobs than those told by our sisters and brothers in the school bus industry.
The school bus services in Ontario are funded publicly, but delivered privately, and have been for decades. As a result, big foreign corporations like First Student and Stock Transportation have profited handsomely. As is the case with most public-private partnerships, it's the workers who have received the least benefit. Perhaps school bus drivers are the lowest paid transit workers in the province. Most earn the minimum wage, with a few topping out at $16.00 per hour. Drivers are only paid for part of their day, which is usually less than four hours a day, and only work for part of the year. Very few have access to workplace benefits.

Despite carrying our most precious cargo, our children, to school each day, employers treat these workers as disposable. As you can expect, turnover is chronic. To make a bad situation even worse for drivers, the Ontario government recently changed how school bus contracts would be awarded. The government felt there was too much fat in the system and weren't getting enough value for the money. So, they instituted a program of competitive bidding forcing big companies, big and small, to compete for routes. The cheaper the cost, the more competitive the bid.

It was this council that, in 2014, warned of the dangers this RFP system would have on the industry. We passed a resolution calling for immediate change to the system and protections for workers to avoid major industry disruptions. I can tell you, at that time, the provincial government half listened to us. They opened their doors. They heard our concerns, but they did little about it. You can almost hear them say, “Here comes the union again complaining, as usual.” I can tell you, sisters and brothers, they’re damn well listening now.

This past fall, the province was rocked with chaos in the school bus system. A massive driver shortage in the Toronto District School Board left thousands of children with no bus service, a mess that has still not been fixed to this day. Parents were left panicking when their children did not arrive home. Boards were left scrambling and set up costly emergency measures. Trustees were left blindsided dealing with irate constituents.

This followed massive school bus contract flips in the Ottawa region, including major yard closures and job losses. Workers who spent their lives in the job were fired, then rehired by a new company and made to start again from the bottom. Our school bus campaign generated massive attention in the wake of this mess. As Ontario’s largest school bus drivers’ union, we were the only ones with both an analysis of the problem and a set of clear solutions, including a provincial fair wage policy for drivers. Today, we are the first phone call made by concerned trustees and provincial politicians. Our efforts have served as a rallying cry for non-union bus drivers as well, looking to join us to take this fight on.

I want to recognize the bargaining committee of Local 4268, Debbie Montgomery, who is also on our Ontario Regional Council Executive, representing the school bus drivers at First Student, for making historical gains that will benefit not just our members, but the industry itself.

Drivers will now be paid for travel time, inspections, refuelling, a change from how the rest of the industry functions. This was not an easy negotiation and, in fact, talks went past the midnight deadline until 6:00 a.m. I want to commend the bargaining committee for their determination in raising the standards that have been in place forever in this province, and for once again putting Unifor on the map as the leader in collective bargaining.

In your kits, you will find a fact sheet on how to contact the Minister of Education, your local MPP and your school trustee. And, on the back, there’s a foldable bus you can cut out and make. The petition is also readily available for you at a table outside. We have two laptops set up, so please take the time to support this initiative.

A little later, I will be bringing a recommendation to the floor for further debate on this during this council. We need to demand action and we need the province to step up its efforts to protect these drivers. But, that is not all we’re calling on the Liberal government to do.

As we heard earlier today from Dino, the introduction of Schedule 17 and Bill 70 is an attack on skilled trades. This amendment, which is buried in an omnibus bill, seeks to change the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, water down the enforcement powers of the College and would devalue certification of qualifications. Workers without the required training would be permitted to perform duties within the scope of skilled trades all around this province, putting themselves and members of the public at risk. I thank you very much for your support at the rally on Wednesday that saw 5,000 members from labour all over Queen’s Park. A true mark of solidarity, showing an attack on one is an attack on all. Thank you so much for being there.

Unifor has been a proud coalition member of the Keep Hydro Public campaign. Wynne did not campaign on privatization, and her government has no mandate to do so. We, the public, still own the majority of hydro, and it is not too late to reverse privatization. Increased hydro costs is a true bread and butter issue for all Ontarians. Right now, even our own members are struggling to pay hydro bills, and manufacturers threaten to take their business elsewhere. The trend of rising costs will only increase as privatization of hydro continues and shareholders want a bigger piece of the pie.
We, along with our coalition partners, demand that the Liberal government immediately halt the sale of Hydro One and get the soaring hydro costs under control.

As Ontario tries to convert its energy to green sources, we’re also nearing January 1st, when the province’s new cap and trade regulations will officially come into effect. Unifor members work at about 30 of the 150 largest emitters listed in Ontario’s database. As a union, we support the goals of the Ontario’s climate change program, but workers cannot be left behind. Just transition is needed to protect jobs from the impact of any climate change policies. As members of the Blue Green Alliance, our union is working to protect workers from the economic fallout of environmental change. So, tomorrow, Jamie Kirkpatrick from Blue Green will be here to share the message that we do not have to pick between good jobs and a healthy economy; that we can and we must choose both.

Unifor has also been a strong supporter of the Make it Fair campaign, led by our good friend, Chris Buckley, who we will hear from shortly this morning. On October 1st, Unifor members turned out in force to join over 5,000 activists to rally at Queen’s Park to demand decent work for all. On the very day of the rally, Ontario’s minimum wage increased from $11.25 to $11.40, 15 cents. Alberta’s NDP government has shown true leadership with a minimum $15.00 minimum wage for all. It is this kind of leadership that we need in this province. The path to a $15.00 minimum is possible. It just takes the commitment and political will of the politicians to implement it. There is no reason for our province to lag behind, and we must continue to fight for a living wage for all Ontarians.

Now, of course, there is multiple issues that tie into this. The minimum wage applies to women in larger numbers. In addition to addressing the gender wage gap, the government must also address the need to create affordable, accessible, public childcare spaces, and the implementation of paid domestic violence leave.

I’m proud to say that our union has been an advocate for paid domestic violence leave, pushing for legislation right across this country. Just last week, again, collectively with our OFL and affiliate partners, we met with the Premier to push for Bill 177, which would amend the Employment Standards Act to provide up to 10 days of paid leave. We’re also making a difference through bargaining by negotiating these paid leaves into provisions, into our own collective agreements and, as well, with inclusion of our ground breaking Women’s Advocate programs in workplaces nationwide.

This program trains representatives to assist women with issues of workplace harassment, intimate violence and abuse with the aim to create healthier workplaces, secure homes and safer communities. This year, Unifor donated almost $150,000.00 to women’s shelters across the country. In addition, the Ontario brothers raised $80,000.00 in pledges to aid Halton Women’s Place at the Hope in High Heels fundraisers.

We’re working on the prevention of violence, including pushing for a national action plan on gender-based violence. Next week, we will mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on Tuesday, December 6th, when we remember the 14 young women who were gunned down in their classroom at L’École Polytechnique in Montreal. I urge you, sisters and brothers, to take part in your locals and your community candlelight vigils, and to continue your activism in every way possible to end the violence and to speak up when you see it happening.

Of course, here in Canada, it wasn’t that long ago when women were not, in fact, considered to be people. On October 18th, we marked Persons Day. This day was established after the 1929 proclamation that marked women as persons and provided the right to political participation, and to sit in the Canadian Senate. So, stop and think about that for a moment. Less than 90 years ago, women were not legally considered in this country. For many of us in this room, that would mean our grandmother’s generations, so this is not ancient history. And, as recent as that basic recognition is, the day also highlights how much work there is to go on gender equality issues which are, at the end of the day, simply, equality issues.

This year marks 100 years since the first women in Canada gained the vote in Manitoba, but were not represented in proportion. This afternoon, we will hear from Nancy Peckford from Equal Voice, a non-partisan group dedicated to electing more women at all levels of government, and Unifor sisters are involved. We’re involved in the selection process of the Daughters of the Vote that you are going to hear about later this afternoon.

We will work with the Daughters of the Vote and the young women selected in each federal riding across the country as Unifor women will participate in these workshops, providing valuable insight on how to smash through those glass ceilings and find your place in leadership. We will continue to fight for the advancement of women and for all who are marginalized.

This summer, Unifor members stood in solidarity at pride events in communities right across the country. But, right here in Ontario, we had a unique opportunity to showcase our pride and solidarity at the national convention in Ottawa. Together, we marched with an important message to stop the hate. While for many of us, we may not see
or feel the daily lived experience of homophobia and transphobia, but it does exist all around us, and the shootings in Orlando were a reminder of that hate that lies beneath.

As trade unionists and activists, we have an obligation to speak loudly and in unison to stop hate. We need to recognize the importance of these events of showing our solidarity not only in our workplaces, but in the public. This week, there was a tremendous victory for equality right here in Ontario as NDP MPP, Cherie De Novo’s Bill 28, parental equality law was passed giving LGBTQ family members long, overdue rights.

The bill allows same-sex parents to be registered on their child’s birth certificate without having to go to court. Although this bill passed with unanimous support, it is worth noting that a fair number of PC MPPs did not attend the vote, a telling sign that we cannot be complacent. The politics of division do not stop at the border. We are not immune to the rise of the right that we have witnessed across Europe and, most recently, in the U.S. And, I am certain that all of you here in this room are still reeling from the results of the election down south. I certainly am.

Donald Trump ran one of the most divisive campaigns in U.S. history, categorizing people with labels of rapists, criminals, druggies, terrorists, calling for a ban on Muslims, databases to register them, referring to women as fat or dogs, exuding sexist and harassing behaviour on videotapes with his most candid feelings on women’s bodies and how they should be handled and, of course, there is his big dream of building walls instead of bridges. And, we saw the outcry and we heard people take to the streets to condemn his actions and his words, yet what seemed unthinkable has now come to pass.

The world has a painful history of captivity and concentration that has left scars still very raw, examples that we as a people of the world decided would never define us again. Yet, here we are. The fight can never end, sisters and brothers. We cannot be complacent.

While Trump swept to power on his anti-immigration, anti-refugee policies, I am proud to say that Unifor, our union, has been actively providing humanitarian aid to people whose lives have been devastated by the terrible war in Syria. The Social Justice Fund provides direct support to 100 Syrian families who have fled and now live in the City of Amman in Jordan. Here at home, we have sponsored families to come to Canada who are now living in a free and safe environment. Thanks to the dedicated members who have volunteered their support. Later today, we’re going to see a video on the work of our volunteers.

These families will now be safe and will be able to restart their lives with the very basic necessities that we all need to be able to access. Work, housing, food and health care. Next year, the Canada Health Transfer, the amount of money the federal government gives the provinces each year to pay for health care, will stop increasing by 6 percent and, instead, will only increase by 3 percent. We’re already at a crisis situation here in Ontario. You have to look no further to gather the evidence that is needed to see how the suffering from these cuts are hitting both ends of the spectrum.

You will agree with me that when you or your loved ones need care that the wait times are longer; that care for those who cannot look after themselves is rushed and scheduled minute-to-minute, and all you have to do is talk to a health care worker, any health care worker anywhere in the province and you will get the same response. Our health care workers suffer from the highest levels of work-related stress, resulting from unjust expectations coupled with insufficient time, increased workloads and a lack of social support at work.

Yesterday, I was in Local 229’s delegates meeting, and let me tell you that the emotions were running high in that room. And, the discussion was not about themselves, but the overwhelming feelings of feeling helplessness in not being able to deliver the level of care that is dignified in a way that our members feel good about.

The tears in the room were from feeling like they were failing at taking care of those who were most vulnerable. The federal government promised to invest $3 billion in home care during last year’s election campaign, but that money was not part of the Liberal’s first budget this spring. We not only need the support in areas like home care, but it’s going to take more than just that to allow to deliver the service that the Canadians are expecting of their health care system.

The Health Accord is still not signed, funding is getting cut and our health care workers are under the most incredible strain of any workers in this province. We cannot and will not turn our backs on those who take care of us in our most vulnerable time. We cannot ever thank you enough for all that you do. I urge you, sisters and brothers, to continue your activism and demand a better health care system for everyone involved.

Tomorrow, during our council, we will mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The day highlights the need for awareness of disabilities, both those we can see and those that we cannot. In your kit, you will find a copy of Unifor’s submission on accessibility legislation as we call for the creation of a federal Canadian Disabilities Act. I urge you to read it and to take action. Also included in your kit is a t-shirt that I ask you to wear tomorrow in a mark of solidarity to support the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
This year, Ontario set the bar for improvements to our government pensions. Unifor members and retired workers have long been part of the campaign to improve the CPP, and in 2016, we realized a significant victory as the creation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan pushed the federal government and the other participating provinces and territories to enhance the CPP.

The result was the first benefit increase in the plan’s 50-year history. This is a significant victory for the labour movement. However, the expanded portion of the plan will not allow people to exclude child rearing years or time spent on disability, which means for people in those situations, the increased benefits will not be afforded to them the same way in this calculation. The legislation, unless amended, discriminates against anyone who leaves the workforce to care for children or for health reasons disproportionately disadvantages women and workers with disabilities. We need the government to work with the provinces to amend the legislation as soon as possible and correct this oversight.

In addition, a new threat to pensions has emerged in the introduction of Bill C-27 a few weeks ago in Ottawa. This legislation would allow Crown corporations and employers in federally regulated sectors to offer single employer target benefit pension plans. It would also allow for the conversion of existing defined benefit pension plans to target benefit pension plans. Unifor is opposing to changing the rules for past defined benefit services that under this legislation could be converted as well. Retirees’ pensions could also change to target benefit pension plans, risking the secure payments they so depend on.

In the last campaign, Justin Trudeau, the then leader of the opposition, made it clear that he would oppose this exact change and he did it in writing, and now we must hold him accountable for it. Outside, there is a table that is specifically for dealing with Bill C-27. There is a lot of information. There is also a letter writing campaign. I urge you to take that opportunity over the next two days to please get in touch with our Pensions and Benefits Department at that table, and take the time to write this letter. Thank you very much.

Additionally, we continue to advocate for much needed changes to our voting system. Yesterday, a federal committee recommended that a referendum be held on electoral reform. While this will delay the process, it will also provide an opportunity to make sure that when the referendum vote comes out that our members are poised to demand a fair election system where every vote counts. Of course, every one of your votes does count here, and I look forward to two days of discussion and debate as we chart our political action and social justice campaigns for the next year.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of our COPE staff in organizing this council. Their hard work day in and day out is truly appreciated, and our council meeting could not happen without them. They’re not in this room. They’re everywhere in this hotel making sure that everything is running smoothly for us, so when you do see them, please give them a round of applause.

Also, I want to thank all of the staff and the local leadership for your dedication and commitment to social justice and for making Unifor as a union to be proud of. I want to thank our executive board and the standing committees of the Ontario Regional Council for their continued dedication. And, lastly, thanks to all of you, once again, for being here, for your solidarity, for your commitment. And, now let’s kick off the 2016 Ontario Regional Council meeting. Let’s have a great two days.

DINO CHIODO: Naureen, thank you for diving right in, giving us that comprehensive report. Like I said, she’s touched almost everything in our Ontario and, again, I’m just proud to be working with her. I know she’s dedicated. She’s a hard worker. And, in saying that, I look forward to working with you in the future, so thank you very much for that report.

Also, I would like to also recognize Katha Fortier. Katha Fortier, obviously, was the previous director to Ontario, but Katha was always involved, participated with a lot of things throughout the province, was transparent, shared with the Ontario Regional Council Executive all the things that were going on, and I know she’s going to do an absolutely fabulous job as the assistant to Jerry Dias. So, congratulations and we wish you all the very best, Katha.

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

DINO CHIODO: So, I need to get on with the order of the day, but before we ask Tullio to come up and recognize our next guest speaker, I would like to actually -- I’ve already done it, actually, just to quicken up the pace a little bit, I had to pull some names with reference to individuals that would participate in our Elections Committee and also our Credentials Report Committee. So, this is kind of a little bit of a volun-told process. So, everybody that actually put their credentials in, we had a box and put their names in a box, and I picked the names as the report was going on up here from Naureen.
So, what we’re going to do is we’re going to have seven individuals that are going to be required for the Elections Committee. You will be required only if an election is needed, and you will be meeting tomorrow at lunch time, and we’ll announce where that meeting place is going to be. Those individuals are going to consist of Jo-Ann Newell, out of Local 414; Jason Charbonneau, out of Local 1999; Christina De Melo, out of Local 72-M; Gerald Curnew, out of Local 4207; Sherrie Filograna, out of Local 229; Mario Moceri, out of Local 195, and as the alternate, Nicole Bernier, out of Local 229.

So, again, what we’ll do is we’ll make sure that if there is an election that needs to happen, we’ll let you know the place, and we’ll do that tomorrow so we can give instruction as to how it will be conducted, and you will participate at that point. You won’t be required before then. With regards to the credentials report, I’ll ask that the Credentials Committee come up to the front so we can get through the credentials report for today. It will be after the next guest speaker.

So, these three individuals, again, one will be an alternate, but it is David Cayer, out of Local 4266; Shelley Smith, out of Local 2458 and David Clark, out of Local 333. If those three individuals could please come up to the front, I would like to meet with you. And, now, what I’ll do to get back to the order of the business of the day is call up Tullio, our financial secretary, to recognize the next guest speaker. Thank you.

TULLIO DIPONTI: Okay. Thank you, Brother Chair. Our next speaker is no stranger to our union. He’s our brother. A former president of Local 222. Chris Buckley was a member of the committee that oversaw the formation of Unifor. Still a proud Unifor member, he is now the President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Canada’s largest provincial labour federation. The OFL has grown to represent over 1 million Ontario workers belonging to more than 1,500 locals from 54 affiliate units.

In just over a year, we have seen the incredible work and results that Chris and the OFL team has been able to do to build and to unite the labour movement in Ontario. Chris has championed the OFL Make it Fair campaign to mobilize labour unions to fight for labour raw reforms and stronger rights for all workers. He was also a staunch, vocal advocate to stand in solidarity with the Fight for $15.00 and Fairness campaign.

What I will say, Chris is one of us. He’s a long-time trade unionist that has dedicated himself to improving the lives of every worker in the province and united the labour movement around the shared goals of equality, good jobs, political influence and stronger labour rights. Please join me in welcoming our brother, Unifor member, Chris Buckley.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR, PRESIDENT, CHRIS BUCKLEY

CHRIS BUCKLEY: Wow. Good morning, sisters and brothers. Good morning, Unifor. You know, I couldn’t help but notice over the last several months how busy Unifor has been, how busy you have been not only representing your members on a day-to-day basis, but at the bargaining table, bargaining on behalf of school bus drivers, raising the bar for retail workers, auto parts workers, airport workers at the GTAA, and the list goes on and on because that’s what Unifor does every day on behalf of their members.

An extremely successful set of negotiations with the Detroit Three. In fact, sisters and brothers, Unifor saved the auto industry in this country. Unifor secured hundreds of thousands of good paying jobs for auto workers and their families in the Province of Ontario, helped secure hundreds and thousands of jobs in the auto parts sector. And, we know, sisters and brothers, that if our government, both at the federal and provincial level, don’t wake up and put in place policies that support our auto industry, in four years’ time, it’s going to be just as difficult. But, I commend Jerry Dias and the leadership team for going to the table, and I believe the strategy to pick General Motors as a target was absolutely remarkable. Absolutely remarkable.

So, you’ve done your job. But, again, it is time for our federal government and our provincial government to sit down and put their heads together to bargain and put in place a strategy so we are never, ever on the verge of extinction again in this country.

Right across the board, Unifor has been fighting for its members. You know? After a 5-week strike, a new collective agreement has been ratified at the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board. Congratulations, sisters and brothers. Congratulations to Unifor and thank you for the work you do every day not only for members of Unifor, but for workers and their families across the Province of Ontario.

I also want to thank you for the role you play at the Ontario Federation of Labour. Your participation in our campaigns and actions is greatly appreciated and never goes unnoticed. Your work makes our movement and my federation stronger with your presence. Unifor is at the forefront of meetings, calling out precarious work and naming it for what it is, sisters and brothers. We all know that precarious jobs are not good jobs. Unfortunately, they have become the norm across the Province of Ontario. In fact, 52 percent, 52 percent of jobs in the GTA are precarious jobs, part-time
jobs, contract jobs or working for a temporary hiring agency. Sisters and brothers, that is not the Ontario we want, and that is not the Ontario we’re going to accept.

We need to stop this, and we can do it together. We can fight the rise in precarious work. We have to fight like hell to give all workers in this province some hope and some optimism; fight like hell to make this the Ontario we want.

You know, it’s been a year now. It’s been a year since the new leadership at the Ontario Federation of Labour was elected. And, once again, I want to thank Unifor for your support and for your confidence in the new leadership team. Now, it’s been a very busy and challenging year to say the least. We’ve engaged in a serious rebuilding effort at the federation. We’ve been successful in having OPSEU re-affiliate with the Ontario Federation of Labour; SEIU re-affiliate with the Ontario Federation of Labour, and I’m hopeful we will have ONA back at the federation early in the new year.

Later on this morning when I leave here, I’m going to go down the hallway and I’m going to have the opportunity to address AMAPCEO delegates, that for the first time will vote in their convention to affiliate with the Ontario Federation of Labour. Sisters and brothers, we know we’re stronger when we’re together. As long as I’m the President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, I want to build the strongest labour movement this province has seen in a long, long time. I want all unions to come together and fight to make this the best Ontario we can, and not just for union workers, for every worker and their family in the Province of Ontario, and when we work together, we can get this done, sisters and brothers.

At the Ontario Federation of Labour, you heard it. We’ve launched our campaign called Make it Fair. Our literature is in your kits. Please take this literature. Take it and talk to your families and friends, participate in the Make it Fair campaign because Unifor has been a huge part of this campaign. In fact, Unifor was the first union to come to the table with financial support when we launched our campaign, so thank you once again to my family.

And, we’ve been successful in launching the new health and safety program. It’s called Prevention Link. Some of you will remember for over 25 years at the Ontario Federation of Labour, there was a program called the ODRT. The ODRT was forced to wind up operations because of the state of the fed a year ago. I promised the delegates a year ago in this hotel, if I was elected, I would do everything I can to get a new program back up and running, and I’m pleased to announce we have a new program up and running, and it’s called Prevention Link.

We have been able to hire new staff at the federation, the most diverse staff of any labour organization in this country. This is a fact that I’m extremely proud of. We’re working with affiliates to ensure the government lives up to anti-racism directorates. We have to ensure that they put their money where their mouth is and make sure they live up to this mandate. We’re active on the issue of the gender wage gap to ensure that labour has a strong voice and a strong influence. The gender wage gap in the Province of Ontario today sits at 31 percent. We have to eliminate that gap right across the board, right across this province.

We’re also advocating on behalf of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assaults. We want to get them the days off with pay, with job protection, the time and space they need to rebuild their lives. We want to make it a bargaining mandate, and I know Unifor will make it a mandate at every set of negotiations they are faced with. Your regional director, Naureen Rizvi, was with us last week when we met with the Premier, when we met with Kevin Flynn, and we are not going to give up. We are going to make sure this is in place because it’s long overdue, and we know that there’s going to be significant pushback from employers, but the labour movement will pushback even harder, sisters and brothers.

This is also part of our Make it Fair campaign. You know, you’ve heard it during Naureen’s remarks. We have a once in a generation opportunity, a once in a generation opportunity to make positive change for workers across the Province of Ontario. We need workers to be protected, have rights and secure jobs. You know, the landscape of Ontario, when it comes to employment, has shifted dramatically, sisters and brothers, but we’re going to make sure that workers have fair standards, workers have fair hours, fair scheduling, fair wages, fair working conditions because that’s the Ontario we want, sisters and brothers.

And, I don’t know about you folks, but I’m extremely worried. I’m extremely worried about the future of our youth, and I say this wherever I go. Whether you’re a parent or not, our youth have been robbed. Gone are the days, gone are the days where you walk out of school and you walk into a good paying job with good benefits with a pension plan. Our youth are now graduating, for the most part, to the unemployment line with huge student debt, and that is totally unfair. We have to do everything we can, everything we can to give our youth the same opportunities most of us in this room have had the luxury of for a long, long time. And, we know, we know whether it’s government or employers, they’re not going to give it to us. We’re going to have to fight like hell to make sure it happens, to make sure that
our youth get the opportunity, to make sure that our youth feel better about their future, give them some hope, give
them some optimism, give them a future. That’s the Ontario we want and that’s the Ontario we will build, sisters and
brothers.

You know, when you look at our Make it Fair campaign, it’s not just about workers who belong to a union. That’s
what gets people’s attention. You know, how many of you know someone who is forced to work for minimum wage?
Someone who is working two and three minimum wage jobs in this province, and then forced to go to the food bank at
the end of the week to provide for themselves and their families? How many of you know of a family whose kids can’t
afford to move out of the house in their 20s, or even older because minimum wage is at $14.20 an hour?

We’ve partnered, we’ve partnered demanding a $15.00 an hour minimum wage immediately, and that’s the start
in the Province of Ontario. It’s been done in Alberta; it can be done in Ontario. We can build a safer, a fairer and better
Ontario when we all work together.

I want to thank Unifor. I want to thank the work you do every day. On October 1st, we held a rally. A rainy,
Saturday afternoon at Queen’s Park, and we had over 5,000 activists and a huge show of support from Unifor showing
the government that we are demanding change related to employment standards and labour law and we are not going
to settle for less because if we don’t do it, sisters and brothers, who will?

The businesses are going to pushback and we’re going to pushback harder. I’ve met with the President of the
Ontario Chamber of Commerce, not a bad fellow. He went on to tell me that he represents 60,000 businesses in the
Province of Ontario, and I reminded him that I represent a million workers in the Province of Ontario, and we’re not
going to settle for less.

So, let me close off, sisters and brothers. You will always be my family, and I’ve had some great opportunities in
our movement. And, I thank you once again for giving me the opportunity to be the President of the Ontario Federation
of Labour, but I know you will agree with me that our job is far from over. Our challenges are far from over. We’re going
to have to push like we’ve never pushed before to make this the Ontario we want, to give our young people some hope,
some optimism, a better future.

At this time of year, for those of us that have a decent life, we can’t forget there are so many outside of this
convention that are struggling everyday to survive, and Christmas is tough enough on families that are struggling to get
by. So, what I would ask you is don’t forget those that are less fortunate than us. Give where you can give and make
somebody’s Christmas as merry as you possibly can.

And, in closing, when we’re in these jobs for as long as we have been, we know they’re extremely challenging.
We know there are days and months and weeks away from our families. We know that we miss events with our kids
and our loved ones because we’re part of the labour movement. But, I want to tell you, sisters and brothers, the first
opportunity you get when you leave your Ontario Regional Council this weekend, the first chance you get when you get
home is you hug your children. You tell your kids you love them and you hug your loved ones and you tell them how
much you love them because that’s the most important thing we have in our lives, sisters and brothers. Have a very
good council this weekend. Thank you for your support. Solidarity, Unifor.

TULLIO DIPONTI: Chris, come on up here again, buddy. We’ve got something for you. That was a powerful
speech. So, on behalf of Unifor and the Ontario Regional Council, Chris, we want to give you a little token of appreciation
for what you do for us and everything that you represent. Thank you very much.

CHRIS BUCKLEY: Thank you very much. Thank you, sisters and brothers. And, now for the second half of my
speech. I’m kidding. Merry Christmas, everyone.

DINO CHIODO: All right. So, going through that process we did a little bit earlier with regards to getting the
Election Committee and the Credentials Committee together, I would like to ask the Credentials Committee, who is made
up of David Cayer and Shelley Smith. David Cayer from Local 4266 and Shelley Smith from Local 2458 are going to give
the credentials report.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

DAVID CAYER: Good morning. So, we have the first credentials report for today. The Ontario Director’s
office sent out 758 credentials to 252 local unions. In addition, the office sent credentials to National Executive Board
members and National Council of Retired Workers Executive members.

As of December 2nd, 2016, the Ontario Director received 459 credentials, representing 119 local unions, the
National Executive Board and the National Council of Retired Workers. As of 9:22 a.m. this morning, registered for the
convention are 405 delegates representing 108 locals, the National Executive Board and the National Council of Retired Workers Executive.

The delegation is represented by 118 female and 186 male delegates. In addition, there are now 114 national representatives and 15 special delegates with voice and no vote. There are also 23 alternates, 8 special guests, 51 observers, 13 other staff and 0 media in attendance. In total, there are 205 female attendees and 426 male attendees. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you very much for that credentials report. Now, I would like to call the Resolutions Committee up, Candace Lavallee and Jim Reid, to give that report. Sorry, the lights are kind of tough, so I apologize for that. Cheryl. Mic 2. Sorry.

**CHERYL ROBINSON:** Thanks, Dino. I appreciate it. I rise on a point of privilege. I want to draw attention to folks that have been watching closely and sending lots of love and prayers to our brother, Jeff Hatt. Probably lots of folks in this room attended the convention in Ottawa this past year, and they got up -- you’ll remember from that convention, actually, that I asked folks to get up and sing happy birthday to Jeff because he was celebrating an especially important birthday.

He’s been battling cancer for the last few years, and he’s been fighting like nobody I have ever seen fight. So -- sorry. I just want to bring attention to the fact that we’re selling t-shirts for the At Bat for Hatt campaign to raise awareness on cancer and how important it is that we make every effort to fight this terrible, terrible disease. It has affected so many of us. We’re selling the shirts for $20.00, if you could help us support Jeff. I, actually -- he's kind of taken a turn for the worst in the last little while. He’s in a hospice right now as of Monday this week, so things are headed in a different direction than he had hoped and we had all hoped, obviously.

But, yesterday, I went down to see Jeff in Kitchener at the Innisfree Hospice, and he’s been at me about these t-shirts. It’s kind of a funny story actually about Jeff and I and t-shirts. He’s -- a member of our executive board always wants to buy t-shirts, “We should give t-shirts,” t-shirts, t-shirts, and I was like, “No, I hate t-shirts.” Anyway, a group of folks decided that they would put together these t-shirts, again, as part of the awareness on what we can do to fight cancer.

And, I spoke with him yesterday and he asked me to apologize to folks, if you can imagine, in this room, that he wasn’t here. He wanted to be here to talk about it, but he just couldn’t do it. In November, the Skilled Trades Council actually -- I had an idea. I spoke with Dave Cassidy, the Chair of the Skilled Trades Council on supporting the At Bat for Hatt campaign as Jeff is a skilled trades worker from the GTAA, actually, bringing in probably close to 900 members many years ago. Again, a fighter, he was told it wasn’t going to happen in a representational vote. He ended up bringing in 750 new members at the time to one of our former organizations even though he was told he couldn’t do it, and that’s why we started this campaign, At Bat for Hatt.

So, just to give folks a bit of an update. Again, he apologizes that he can’t be here, if you can imagine, in his last few days left on earth. He wanted to make sure that folks aren’t going to let this campaign die with him. So, we’re going to do everything we can from Local 2002 to keep this alive. For sure, right now, what we’re doing is raising money. He wanted to, actually, donate all the proceeds to the hospice that he’s in, because he’s explained to us that it’s $5,000.00 a day to run a facility like that, and he wants to make sure that Unifor is involved in that great work, and all of the different community things in Kitchener.

He’s asked that the proceeds from the sale of these shirts go towards hospice this year. And, again, he’s on his death bed and he’s explaining to me that this needs to be the plan going forward, and we’re going to make sure that we do everything we can to have that happen for him. But, next year, he wants to donate, and in his words, “I’m really proud of what our brother, Jerry Dias, does around the Walk in High Heels,” and next year, he wants all of the proceeds that we raise to go towards either that or another women’s shelter community event in the Kitchener area.

So, I’m asking folks in the room today, if you could please stop by our table. We’ve got 500 t-shirts. We’re selling them for 20 bucks. I have double XL, XL, large and medium, not a lot of small folks in the room is my guess, but if you need a small one, I can place an order for it. So, if you could, again, come out and visit us at the first table as you come into the hallway, it would be really great. Jeff’s been a fighter for this union and for workers for many years. He’s our comrade. He’s our friend, and I think it’s super important that we do everything we can to ensure that that kind of energy and passion lives on. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Cheryl, I just want to say thank you very much, and we did think that Jeff was going to be here and, unfortunately, he wasn’t able to be here. And, I’ll -- Bob, I’ll take your point of privilege, sorry about that. No, go ahead.
BOB ORR: Bob Orr, National Secretary-Treasurer. I just want to join with Cheryl in -- I mean, Jeff’s been a big part of the activism within Local 2002, a big part of the GTAA. I think he was there from day one when they came over with us, but he is a fighter. He’s been great on behalf of his members. He’s a super intelligent guy. He’s always methodical in what he does, and he is in a battle. He’s fighting for every last day. So, on behalf of Unifor, we’re going to donate $5,000.00 to your cause. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: So, with that said, I should have probably went first, but now that he went first, the recommendation, I think, on the floor is to make sure that we could do something. We were hoping Jeff was going to be here, and understanding the challenges he’s going through, and we obviously want to support At Bat for Hatt. And, I think we should have a motion on the floor to match the $5,000.00 as provided by Unifor National. I’d like to have a motion on the floor for that. Moved. Supported.

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

Thank you very much. He’s got some huge challenges and we need to be there for him, of course. Thank you. Before we do bring up our next component on the agenda, what I would like to do is just take a quick moment myself for a point of privilege with regards to the first Sobeys organized in Ontario, I think, in Canada, in its entirety, and there’s a few people that are here today that are representing that workplace.

It’s in Kincardine. There’s been a lot of work that’s been done with Local 414, with Christine Connor’s local, and the staff rep, Keith Osborne, but we want to just give special mention, obviously, to Kellee Janzen out of the Organizing Department. They’ve just done a phenomenal job, but we want to recognize those employees that have really went out of their way to make sure that we could organize the first Sobeys in Canada, and that’s Pam Cowe, if you could please stand up, Shawna Hamilton and Katherine Gibson. It’s about building solidarity. Congratulations. Welcome to the best family in Canada, if not the world. Thank you very much. In saying that, we’ll get back to the order of the business, and we’ll ask Candace and Jim to come up to the mic for resolutions.

RESOLUTION NO. 1: EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE/CANADA PENSION PLAN STANDING COMMITTEE AND EFAP AND ADDICTIONS COMMITTEE

JIM REID: Thanks, Dino. Good morning, sisters and brothers. We have three resolutions, and I think they’re on your table before you. I’m going to turn the microphone over to Candace, and she’s going to read the first resolution.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Resolution number 1, EFAP/Addictions Committee.

WHEREAS Unifor recognizes union members and members of their families can be troubled by a wide range of issues including but not limited to depressions and other mental health issues, grief over personal loss, family breakdown, debt, effects of violence or bullying, addiction and substance abuse dependency, behaviour-based addictions and other issues of a similar nature; and

WHEREAS the best way for Unifor activists and advocates to gain the tools necessary to assist our members and their families with EFAP/Addiction issues such as recovery, and breaking the negative stigma associated with addiction and mental health issues is to network with activists and advocates throughout the union.

WHEREAS Ontario Council already provides space for unofficial EFAP/Addiction and EI/CPP Committees and a platform for them to discuss their challenges and needs, while supporting Unifor members through its biennial conference and committee meetings leadership can provide for our members in recovering from and breaking the negative stigmas attached to these issues; and

WHEREAS Article 6, paragraph 33 of the Ontario Council bylaws states that additional standing committees may be created by decision of the executive committee.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this council officially establish, promote and encourage an EFAP/Addiction standing committee to fulfill the duties outlined in Article 6 of the Ontario Council bylaws.

Respectfully submitted by Locals 88 and 707. And, the committee recommends concurrence.

JIM REID: Is there any debate on the motion?

DINO CHIODO: So, we’ll take any speakers at the microphones. I think I see a speaker at mic 3.
BRUCE MALCOLM: Hi, I’m Bruce Malcolm, Local 444. I rise in support of the concurrence, and the reason being is mental health and addictions touches everybody as you’ve heard Naureen talk about 1 in 3, and I’m sure everybody in this room can relate that it touches you in some way, shape or form.

Being a part of this progressive union, I think it’s very important for this committee to be moving forward and allowing the opportunity to gain information, to educate our members. Right now, we have several programs, including a one-day program that is available to all local unions, in order to learn about the EFAP programs and how to help people.

Countless people don’t have that opportunity to reach out. I’m a full-time EFAP rep, which means that I get to help people on a full-time basis. But, what about the chairmen, the women’s advocates, all those that have no experience, unfortunately, with it or no education or training? We have that available with Unifor, but we need to reach out and start attending these programs to help our members.

We’ve done a great job with anonymity because nobody knows what we do and who we help, but I can tell you right in this room we have 60,000 members if it’s even at 1 in 5. So, we cover a broad base, and I touch a lot of people and I help a lot of people, and I think it’s great that our progressive union is moving forward with this, and I can’t say it enough, thank you for the concurrence and I support it. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, Bruce. I’ll move on to speaker number 4.

LUC RIVET: Hi, everyone. My name is Luc Rivet and I’m with Local 1359. I also stand in support of this motion. I’m an EFAP rep as well, and I work in the addictions and mental health field, and I can tell you that I see on a daily basis the devastation that mental health and addiction causes not only to the people that are afflicted, but also to the family members.

And, I would like to take this one point further than my brother Bruce stood up to do, and I would invite everybody in this room that has either suffered addictions or mental health issues or been affected by somebody close to them suffering from mental health or addictions issues to please stand just so that we could take a good look at what the problem really, really encompasses. Wow. You know, it is a devastating problem and it’s definitely worth supporting. Thank you very much for the time.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much for that, speaker. Speaker at mic 5.

MIKE BYRNE: Mike Byrne, staff, also EFAP liaison, and also a recovering alcoholic who was helped by my union. So, I stand in support of this resolution, and I’ve always been proud of the work that Unifor has been doing on this topic since our birth. And, even before that in our predecessor union, I’ve always found myself defending the work that the union did.

I remember when I was organizing, fielding attacks on our union that the union is here to protect the drunks and the addicts, and having to explain to people that the union’s position is not just to protect them, but to help them through a successful recovery. And, there’s a lot of people in this room that don’t know what the EFAP/Addictions Committees do in our workplaces, and that’s a consequence of the excellent work that those reps do.

And, what I mean by that is when we win an EI appeal or Workers’ Compensation appeal, or we win in overtime grievance, we tell everybody. We’re proud of what we do and we tell everybody. When we bargain a new agreement with raises, we put it in the newspapers. We tell everybody. But, when someone calls their EAP rep and says they have a substance abuse problem, we tell them, “We’re going to get you help and we’re not going to tell anybody.” When someone calls their union and says that they might be suicidal, we tell them, “We’re going to get you help and we’re not going to tell anybody. It’s confidential.”

When someone calls and their issue is about what’s most important to them, their children, and says, “My teenage daughter has been sexting. I don’t know how to do it,” or “I found a suicide note from my teenage son and I don’t know what to do,” we tell them, “We’re going to get you help, but we’re not going to tell anybody. We’re going to protect you through confidentiality.” That’s why this committee is so important that we help network the reps that deal with that so we can do a better job.

So, to everybody here, if you don’t have someone trained in your workplace to work on EAP/Addiction issues, get somebody. If you have someone in your workplace when you go back, give them a hug. But, most importantly, to everybody here, if you hear someone attack our union and say, “Is the union there for the drunks and the addicts?” You tell them, “You’re damn right we are,” because when one of our members hit their bottom, we’ll be there to help them get back on their feet. And, we’re not just going to get them in the workplace, we’re going to help them get back in the community. We’re not just going to save their job, we’ll save their lives and we’ll save their dignity. Thank you very much for concurrence.
DINO CHIODO: Great job, Mike. Speaker at mic 6.

GARY PARENT: Thanks very much, Dino. Gary Parent, Local 444, and Retired Workers Executive. I stand, obviously, in favour of the recommendations and agree with the previous speakers that have spoken already. And, Dino, you can tell me if I’m out of order, I’d like to also add a friendly amendment that this should include the Worker’s Compensation Committee.

Workers in this province are being attacked like never before, and I think it’s important that we have a Worker’s Compensation Committee as well. And, one dream that I had at the formation of our new union, was that the chair of all of the regions would meet at the Canadian Council to discuss what is happening in their particular region as it relates to Worker’s Compensation. I think it’s an important committee.

I spoke at the time that we should have included it when we had the merger talks -- town hall meetings going around, and they said at that time that if it is needed that the regions can look at it. And, I think at this particular council meeting that we should be including here the Worker’s Compensation as a standing committee of this council because, as I say, injured workers in this province are under attack like never before, and I’m sure that in other provinces across this country, they’re no different and we can learn from each other. So, I would ask a friendly amendment of Local 88 and 707 and, of course, you as chair, Dino. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: No, thank you very much, Gary. Much appreciated. And, you’re right on. We’ve had a number of conversations with regards to including Worker’s Compensation. So, what we want to do before I take anymore speakers, and I do see a few speakers on the mics, but the thought process, I think, is maybe test the house, and then refer it back to our Resolutions Committee so they can at least connect with the locals that submitted these resolutions.

And, in saying that, come back with a recommendation that may include Worker’s Compensation and we will re-put this on the floor. So, if everybody’s good with that, that’s what I would like to do. Comfortable?

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down. Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown)

Carried.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much and, again, we’ll recognize the speakers that are currently at the mic, and if anybody else needs to get up with reference to reviewing that recommendation or resolution again, we will make sure we’ll put time in the schedule to do that as we move along. I’ll ask the Resolutions Committee to come up and go over the next resolution. Thank you.

RESOLUTION NO. 2: ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

JIM REID: The next resolution is resolution number 2, the Ontario Regional Council Resolutions Committee.

WHEREAS the Unifor Ontario Regional Council is a democratic force for union activism, solidarity and strength; and

WHEREAS the ORC has forums of accountability and organizing centres which will involve and engage thousands of local union activists in the life of the union; and

WHEREAS the rank and file elected delegates of the ORC meet yearly to discuss, debate and resolve resolutions and recommendations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that a box be added to the ORC registration form to identify whether a delegate agrees to have their name added to a draw; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that at completion of registration prior to the first day of council, a draw of three registered council delegates be completed and that those delegates will sit on the Resolutions Committee; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Resolutions Committee will include two Ontario Regional Council Executive Board members; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Resolutions Committee will meet prior to council to make recommendations on resolutions made to the Ontario Regional Council and that extra costs associated with attending council early will be reimbursed by the ORC.

This resolution is respectfully submitted by Local 229.

DINO CHIODO: Jim, thank you very much. Speaker on mic 2. Kari.
KARI JEFFORD: Kari Jefford, President of Unifor Local 229. I’m assuming that we’re finding it at a concurrence; right?

JIM REID: Oh, yes. Sorry, it was moved in concurrence. Thank you.

KARI JEFFORD: All right. Thank you. I stand in full support of this resolution. It’s something that we, at the Executive Board of the ORC, were having some discussion about. There was no process for resolutions to go before our rank and file members of Ontario, and so that’s why we put this resolution forward and that we’re going to stand in full support of this resolution so that the body, the actual rank and file members are also part of debating our resolutions and moving them forward for all of Ontario. So, thank you.

DINO CHIODO: No, thank you. It’s a great process. It’s inclusive. It’s transparent. I think it’s an excellent way to continue to do business. Seeing no other speakers at the mics.

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

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. Resolutions Committee.

RESOLUTION NO. 3: ARMOUR CAR FEDERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COURSE

JIM REID: Resolution number 3, and I’m going to move the concurrence -- the Resolutions Committee moves concurrence on this motion, just so I don’t forget it. The Armoured Car Federal Health and Safety Course.

WHEREAS worker and public safety needs to be priority, not corporate profits.

WHEREAS the armoured car sector is unregulated and engaged in a race to the bottom at the cost of safety; and

WHEREAS the removal of the crew member from the armoured vehicle poses a greater threat to the crews exiting the customer’s location. The driver plays an intricate role in the safety of the crew. He is the eyes and ears and communication to the crew while they are inside. If the driver sees anything outside, they can call the police, communicate with the crew or tell them it’s clear, making sure it’s safe for them and the public.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Unifor members unanimously support the Armed and Safe campaign and lobby the federal members of Parliament for their support of Bill C-285 to help create regulations for the industry and increase safety for everyone; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the national hold a comprehensive federal health and safety course for all health and safety chairs and committees so that we can educate our members.

And, this is respectfully submitted and in concurrence of the Resolutions Committee from Locals 4266, 27, 112, 114, 1106, 504, 229, 1359, 103, 195 and 598.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you to the Resolutions Committee. I’ll take speakers starting with speaker on mic 1.

ANDRÉ DESJARDINS: Hi, my name is André Desjardins, proud member of Local 4266, armoured car worker for 30 years. I stand in favour of this resolution because, sooner or later, when we start these meetings and we take a moment of silence, we’re going to be naming armoured car workers because what the companies are doing, they’re taking our security and putting profit in front of it which is totally unfair, not just for the workers, not just for their families, but for the public at large.

What we’re asking is for the government to set up a task force to look into the armoured car industry because, like the paper says, we have no regulation. The regulation says absolutely nothing for us. As long as the companies meet the minimum standards of our firearms, we are good. A bullet proof vest is an option in my industry, which should be mandatory. It’s only common sense. We met with the Minister of Safety last week, and even he said that this shouldn’t even be legislation. This should just be common sense.

Thirty years ago, when I started working for the industry, the motto of the company was that if you can’t do it safely, don’t do it at all. Fifteen years later, they say, “Well, you may have to go back to the call and do it later.” Nowadays, they say, “No, no, you have to do the call.” Why? Because the profit shareholders want their money.

At the end of the day, I’m 52 years old and they say this all the time, and it sounds probably corny for everybody, I’m a grandfather and damn proud of it also. I want to see my granddaughter go to school. I want to see her graduate from school. I want to work her down the aisle if I can. I have that right to retire like everybody else, safely. Thank you.
DINO CHIODO: Right on, brother. Thank you very much. Moving over to speaker on mic 3. Scott.

SCOTT MCILMOYLE: Good morning. Scott McIlmoyle, President of Local 112. At 112, we have two locations for Brinks, one out of Toronto, one out of Barrie. I, too, rise in support of this resolution, and it’s a shame there’s no regulations. Next year, we have bargaining in August that we’ll start in spring. This will be front and centre, and to make a comparison, the Detroit Three and the investment, this is what it is for us with Brinks; the investment in our future, an investment in our members. So, I ask everybody, when they get a chance, we’ve had some petitions around. If you haven’t seen them, you can also go on, and it’s C-285 with regards to the petition, and we’re asking people to get out there and support any way they can. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Speaker at mic 4.

CRAIG HALLIKAINEN: Craig Hallikainen, Local 112. I rise in support of this. I want you to take a good look right now. I am actually what this is talking about. This is my department. This is my job. This is my crew. This is what I do. I work at night. I work on this truck that we’re talking about, and I’m actually the person who takes that money into the bank, and that driver is the person who’s looking out for my safety.

So, today, I’m standing here because I have a driver who’s looking out for my safety. Tomorrow, I may not be. So, I want you to consider that when we talk about this resolution that it’s actually people you know. You’ve seen me around. I’ve been here a lot. I do a lot of things, but tomorrow I may not be here because the company has decided that the bottom line is more important than my life. Thank you.

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

MIKE DAY: Hi, my name is Mike Day with Local 27. I also work with Brinks, and like Craig, I also work at night. Just for an incident, last summer 2015, I was in a little town called Shedden, you guys may have heard it where the eight Bandidos were murdered. The bank there is a small little house with just a bank machine in it.

My driver, who is my eyes and ears, says to me, “Don’t come out. Lock yourselves in location. There’s a guy standing in the lobby with a baseball bat,” right? Now, yes, we are armed and, yes, we have guns. He has a baseball bat. We would win that battle. However, the fact remains is that if he was not there to say there’s someone in the lobby, we could have very well put ourselves in a position where we would have had to have an unfortunate incident one way or another.

If you look at all the robberies that take place in the newspapers, these are all the all-off crew models, and the crews are always attacked between the location and the truck. That is our danger spot. With a driver there, we can have someone who is the eyes and ears who can call the police, can warn us, can tell us to stay there or give us access to the truck in a rapid manner.

So, I rise in support of this and we ask that when you guys are lobbying your MPs, bring up Bill C-285. We need all the help that we can get so that we can get this started and make it safer for all of us. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: I’ll take the last speaker at mic 1. Mr. Cayer.

DAVID CAYER: Hi. David Cayer, Local 4266. Obviously, I stand in favour of this resolution. I, too, work in the armoured car industry, 15 years now. I’m also the unit chair for Brinks Ottawa. We’re the first branch in Ontario to have this attack. They started with two brand new trucks at the beginning of October. We’re now going through the process with the Ministry of Labour. We’re federally governed. We did a work refusal.

So, not only do we need to support Bill C-285, but when you guys write your MPs, mention that we need to change the definition of danger back to the way it was. The previous government didn’t play fair. For us to do a work refusal, it has changed dramatically at a cost of -- we almost have to wait until there’s a gun in a face or a knife in our chest before we can actually do a work refusal.

So, it’s very important that everyone write their MP, sign the petition and help us in our lobbying efforts. I can’t count on my two hands the amount of time the driver outside in the truck has saved my bacon by telling me there’s a threat outside by moving the truck when I had a threat on the inside to a different door. It’s just -- there’s no dollar figure you can put on having that extra person, that extra member.

And, also, we talk about training in our health and safety. There’s a lot of courses right now geared towards provincial training for health and safety, but we’re asking for a federal course, a full course, a five-day training effort for our Health and Safety Committee to teach our crews what it’s like, how to do a work refusal, what our rights truly are. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Thanks to all the speakers at the mic. The resolution is on the floor.

All those in favour?
Ontario workers are increasingly trapped in precarious part-time, temporary, contract and subcontracted jobs, as employers in every sector drive down wages and working conditions. The Ontario government is in the process of reviewing the outdated Employment Standards and Labour Relations Acts, with that stated aim of addressing the increase in precarious jobs through the Changing Workplaces Review. Changing Workplaces Review process is a once in a generation opportunity to make the changes that Ontarians need. With the Changing Workplaces Review still ongoing, it is vitally important that the labour movement, in coordination with community partners, keep up the pressure on the government about the importance of the Review and creating meaningful changes that will improve the lives of Ontario workers, now and in the future. Make it Fair is a campaign of the Ontario Federation of Labour to mobilize labour unions to fight for labour law reform, in solidarity with the Fight for $15.00 and Fairness campaign.

I therefore recommend that local unions:

1. Circulate and discuss our submissions on the Changing Workplaces Review with the membership and community.
2. Political Action Committees work on the campaign and connect with the OFL network across the province.
3. Organize a workplace leafleting day, tabling in the lunchroom or other ways of talking to members about why it’s in all of our interest to win employment law changes. All materials can be obtained through Unifor.
4. Continue efforts in mobilizing and building awareness on the Make it Fair campaign and the Changing Workplaces Review by reporting on the progress at General Membership Meetings.
5. Contact local MPPs to tell them about why Ontario needs employment laws that create the framework for decent work.
6. Attend and encourage members to attend a regional assembly that will be coordinated by the OFL.

Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: I don’t think I see any speakers at the mics. Actually, yes, Katha’s getting up. Good. Speaker at mic 2. Katha Fortier.

KATHA FORTIER: Thanks. Katha Fortier, staff. I rise in full support of this recommendation and, Naureen, thank you for including this again in the directive of the Ontario Regional Council. I just want to stress again the importance of what we might be able to accomplish with this legislation that will go through as changes to the Employment Standards Act and to the Ontario Labour Relations Act in the Province of Ontario.

We have a once in a lifetime opportunity. We have an opportunity to make change that will not only support union members and workers, but all workers in the Province of Ontario. I think that every one of us could have a story about a young worker that we know, that Chris talked about, that’s still living at home, that isn’t able to get a decent job, that isn’t able to get that support that they need to be able to do the things that young people -- when I was in my 20s, walk in to a full-time job, get pensions and get benefits, and actually have security to be able to buy a house and have children, and do all of the things. We have a generation that is thinking they may not be able to raise a family. They may not be able to have children. They may never be able to buy a home, all of the things that we took for granted, and these things are so critical to moving forward.
We can be the voice of workers in the Province of Ontario, and I urge all of the sisters and brothers here today to support the recommendation, to put the government’s feet to the fire. They’ve screwed us on a couple of things, but I can tell you, this is a promise they’ve made. This is the commitment they made. Minister Flynn was here last year. We have his words. Read the minutes. Read what Minister Flynn said to this delegation here one year ago, and let’s make sure that this government does what they promised to do, and change legislation that makes precarious work a thing of the past and gives good jobs to the young people in Ontario. Thank you, brothers and sisters.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Katha. Can I get Craig Hallikainen to come up to the stage just in preparation of his committee report? And, I would like to now go to speaker on mic 4.

GWEN CAMPBELL: Gwen Campbell, Local 1285. I stand in full support of this resolution as well. As Katha said, this is a fabulous opportunity we have and we have to make our voices heard. So, on that, in Brampton -- anybody in the Brampton and Mississauga area? I urge you to attend a town hall on this very matter. It’s on Saturday, December 10th from 1:00 to 4:00. You know, so bring yourselves, bring family, bring friends, and it’s not -- you know, it’s important that we do this for our young people, but it’s not just young people who are in precarious jobs. There’s all kinds of people in precarious work. There’s adults, women, everybody -- nowadays, the flavour is contract work, so it affects everybody.

So, at this town hall, it will be a fabulous event. We’re going -- we’ve invited Olivia Chow, and she is with a group of people. We’re going to learn how to lobby. So, for those of you who have never lobbied before, here’s a perfect opportunity. Come on out. There will be food, refreshments. Maybe I’ll put these on the Women’s table so that anybody in the Brampton, Mississauga area who would like to attend can get that there. And, please, it would be fabulous if you could help us and come out to this event. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Gwen. I’ll move on to speaker at mic 3.

SUSAN MCKINNON: Thanks, Dino. I’m Sue McKinnon of Local 444, the ORC Women’s Committee. I rise in support of this recommendation. Women are nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers. About two-thirds are of tipping workers. Women of colour is 23 percent minimum wage workers compared to 16 percent of all workers. Low pay, low hours, lack of job security and lack of access to basic benefits.

The increase in the minimum wage would help parents provide for their children. It would help close the gender wage gap. Raising the minimum wage would reduce poverty and strengthen the economy. Everyone should have a paid living wage with equality and adequate benefits. We need to support this campaign. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. Seeing no more speakers at the mic.

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down. Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown)

Carried. CARRIED.

Thank you very much. So, what I’m going to do is get into the committee reports. I know I was looking for Craig Hallikainen to come up to the stage. I’m not sure if he’s in the room or not. Okay, great. And, if we do have some time, I’m going to try and go through a couple of different committee reports. If Gwen Campbell for the Women’s report, if she can come up, and I also have Ruth Pryce doing the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour report.

LGBTQ COMMITTEE REPORT

CRAIG HALLIKAINEN: Good morning -- or good afternoon at this point. I’m not really sure. I have been running around a little crazy. Before I get into my report, I was kind of thinking how intimidating it is to speak in front of this many people. And then I thought, you’re all family, basically, so it’s not that intimidating. What’s intimidating is these jumbo TVs that I have to look at myself on. And, I remember back to the first time I spoke on an LGBT issue, I don’t know if the mic caught it, but the first things out of my mouth was, “Oh, my God, I need a tan,” and I’m happy to report after seven years, I still do.

Okay. So, let’s get into -- I’m trying to catch my breath because I ran from over there as soon as I heard this. I want to thank those that were on the committee for the last three years who have left. Steve Olsen has moved on. Sue Slean and Kellie Scanlan has moved to staff, and they were our committee for the last couple of years. I also want to thank Ken -- sorry, I’m still trying to catch my breath from running. I don’t run. I run to get a pizza.
So, Ken Stuart was our staff rep and has been replaced by Kellie Scanlan, so I would like to welcome Kellie Scanlan as our staff rep to the committee. And, we have our new committee being elected on Saturday at lunch at the end of our caucus which will be -- I'll get into that in a few seconds.

At this point in time, for the LGBTQ community, it's really an interesting time when you look at legislation that's going on here. Here in Ontario, we have Bill 28 that just passed, which is a Parental Equality Act, which means that parents will no longer have to adopt their own children. We, actually, as a committee, I wrote on behalf of our committee a letter of support for this legislation and I sent it out to the leaders of all three parties asking for it to be passed unanimously.

And, federally, we have a lot of interesting legislation happening as well. Bill C-16, which is an Act including gender identity and gender expression to the Criminal Code and to the Human Rights legislation. And, we also have -- the Prime Minister is set to apologize for LGBTQ people who were kicked out of government jobs and the military just for being gay, and that's a big step forward for the community. We talk about building bridges and healing, and that's a really big step forward, but what's really interesting about this apology is there is a lawsuit going on in Ontario and in Quebec for those people who lost their jobs simply for being gay for the money that they owe. They lost their career. They lost their livelihood.

So, our committee is going to be following that. We're going try to push more and get more involved in politics because I think politics, as you know, we're a social union, so politics affects our lives, and our lives don't start and end the moment we punch in and punch out at work. So, our committee would really like to focus the next three years on being more involved in LGBTQ politics. The Prime Minister has appointed a new special advisor to LGBTQ issues. His name is Randy Boissonnault, I believe. So, our committee will be contacting him, I can assure you.

A few updates that I would like to give is we have pride shirts out at our table. We're selling them off for $5.00 currently because we're redoing our pride shirts. We're going to be getting new swag coming in, and we're going to update our logo, so that's why these are on sale right now for $5.00. Feel free to come and grab one.

We have our pride conference coming up May 12th to 14th which is going to be super exciting. I'm a little biased, but I have to say, we put on the best conferences. We also have a pride activist class, and that is really interesting. It's a great course. It's going to be put on yearly now, and it's going to be in November, I believe, of next year. So, if you have members who happen to be part of the community and they might be interested, feel free to look that up. We're also doing a quick update to that course as well.

We have our pride caucus that is going to be taking place tomorrow at lunch. And, the beginning of that caucus will be opened to allies. We have invited MPP, Cherie De Novo, who is the critic for LGBTQ issues for the NDP. She's going to talk about queer politics in Ontario, what's taking place today and what she sees as coming up in the future, and how we, as a caucus, can plug in and get involved in that more. And, that beginning conversation will be open to allies, and then we're going to ask the allies to leave the room, and then we're going to have our election for our standing committee.

So, currently, I believe I'm the only one here from the committee for the last year, but going forward Saturday, we have a fresh committee getting elected and, hopefully, we'll have a lot more work to do and a lot more exciting things take place. So, really, that's all I have for my report today, but I'm around all the time if you have questions, or Mohamad is around as well. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: For somebody that's nervous, he did a pretty amazing job, didn't he? Way to go, as the Chair of LGBTQ, Craig Hallikainen. Good job. And, again, like we said earlier, we weren't taking specific questions on each of the reports just in the auspice of time, but the director for that committee is going to be Mohamad Alsadi.

And, if there's any questions or concerns, please reach out to Mohamad and he'll surely try to answer as much as he can with reference to what they've been doing and what's going on over the course of the next year and all the campaigns that they're working on. In saying that, I'd like to ask Ruth Pryce to please come up and do the report for the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour.

ABORIGINAL AND WORKERS OF COLOUR COMMITTEE REPORT

RUTH PRYCE: Good morning, everyone. On behalf of the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour, I will be giving this report. Hopefully, by this evening, we will have a chairperson for this committee. Unifor Aboriginal and Workers of Colour Conference, that was held on June 3rd to the 5th, 2016.

At this year's Aboriginal and Workers of Colour Conference, we set out to redefine the true faces of our union. Acknowledging our commitment to justice and equality, the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour Conference was aimed to
discuss and strategize specific plans of action that will aid us in continuing to build an inclusive labour movement. Over 140 members and participants took part in the conference, which incorporated guest speakers, panel discussions, caucus meetings, creative workshops and cultural activities, all with one key focus, moving forward our union and our union and our country in an inclusive way.

We were pleased to welcome a number of influential social justice seeking individuals, including Jack Saddleback, Angela Robertson and a representative from Black Lives Matter. Jerry closed the conference by calling on all Unifor members to take action in making the Canadian labour more inclusive, recognizing that building a strong union requires being an inclusive one, which is why Unifor is committed to equal representation of our equity seeking groups in all structures of the union at all levels.

Equity Audit. As outlined at the Constitutional Convention, the national union appointed two equity coordinators, Kesang Kashi, working from the Montreal office, and Christine Maclin, at the national office. The task of the equity coordinator is to help the union collect information on its membership and on the participation and representation of equity seeking groups in all of Unifor’s structures.

Inclusion and equity were cornerstones of the discussion surrounding the creation of a new union because we understood that to build a union for everyone, we needed to make room for all voices. We are engaged in this information gathering process so that we can understand how we are doing, where we need to do better and what is working. We understand that Unifor’s future growth will require our union to be responsive, inclusive and welcoming to all workers. This effort is one step in that journey. The equity coordinators are being tasked with gathering information from the union and all of its various structures.

Human Rights Conference, September 23rd to 25th, 2016. Unifor’s first Human Rights Conference brought members from across the country to the Family Education Centre in Port Elgin to engage in discussion on key topics including gender equality, LGBTQ, disability and Aboriginal and workers of colour issues. The theme of the conference was finding openings for human rights work in our workplaces and our society.

Conversation at the conference centred on social changes, union change and resistance as delegates explored how to translate the goal of a fairer and more just world into action. Keynote speaker, Remzi Cej, Chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission, told his story as a refugee and LGBTQ activist, providing delegates with an exercise in optimism.

Cej encouraged them to think of opportunities to let their optimism shine. Delegates were also challenged by 19-year-old Shania Pruden who asked that they stop each week and think about what they did to raise the issues that Indigenous people are facing. The role of unions in social activism was further emphasized by Akua Benjamin, professor in the Social Work Department at Ryerson University and founding member of the Black Action Defence Committee.

Additionally, the conference was an opportunity to add to the data being collected in the Unifor Equity Audit. Unifor researcher, Kaylie Tiessen’s presentation “Unifor by the Numbers”, revealed that 1 in 3 members are women; 1 in 5 are Aboriginal and Workers of Colour; 1 in 13 are workers with disabilities and 1 in 25 are LGBTQ. Unifor’s two equity coordinators provided an update to the conference with respect to their work meeting with locals across the country.

We had three sessions of the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour training in Port Elgin. We had three sessions of the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour two-week course this year with full participation, 70 participants from across the country. We expect to have four sessions next year. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Ruth, thank you very much. Ruth sits as a National Executive Board member doing a great job representing Aboriginal and workers of colour, so we want to say thank you very much to her. Like I suggested earlier, in Craig’s report, the director that’s tied to the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour is Mohamad Alsadi. So, if there are any questions specific to the report, please direct them to Mohamad, and he’ll work through those issues and questions.

What I would like to do now is I’d like to ask Gwen Campbell to come up on behalf of the Women’s Committee. She is the chair of the Women’s Committee, and I would like her to give that report.

WOMEN’S COMMITTEE REPORT

GWEN CAMPBELL: Hi, everybody. Gwen Campbell. The Women’s Committee always travels as a team. So, actually, just to correct Dino, I’m not the -- what the Women’s Committee also does besides travelling as a team, we share the responsibilities of the chair, and vice-chair, and recording secretary. So, anyway, just -- you know what? It’s a great opportunity for anybody who’s on the committee to have the opportunity -- you know, the fun job of standing here in front of I don’t know how many people are out in front of me, and talking at the microphone. But, it really builds our skill, so that’s why we choose to do that, and I think the Women’s Committees across Canada do that as well, taking
So, we’re promoting leaders, so that’s what we do, and confusing the men, as Dino just said, the brothers. Yes, the brothers. Yes.

So, I’ll get on with my report. So, we’ve had a great three years. We’ve had the three sisters together for the past three years on the Ontario Region Women’s Committee. It’s been awesome to work with them. So, one of our big things that we do every year is the Women’s Conference. It’s usually held in August of every year. This year, it was very well attended, as it is every year. I think, if I remember correctly, it’s the largest -- we had the largest participation this year. Every year we hold it, it gets bigger and bigger.

With that, comes some challenges that the sisters can’t stay on site, so -- but, that’s always the only complaint we hear about the Women’s Conference. Well, other than the fact that, really, it should be a week-long. I’m just putting in some digs right now, but I don’t think Dino or Naureen are listening. But, anyway, so week-long Women’s Conference, we’re planning that for next year; okay?

So, again, well over 300 sisters and children were there last year. Seventy-five percent of the women in attendance were first-time delegates, so that’s awesome. It’s great to get some new delegates. Sometimes, that’s the very first time getting involved in the union, so it’s really important as all of the Women’s Committee chairs across Canada get out and talk to those sisters, encourage them to get involved because that’s what it’s about, getting more activists; right?

So, we had -- our theme this past year was Strong Women, Strong Union. Some of the workshops we had were getting more women elected, very important, whether it’s in our unions, in our municipal elections, federal elections or provincial elections. Whatever it is, we want to see more sisters involved in leadership roles, so that was a very well attended workshop.

We also did workshops on lobbying, bargaining equity on past, present and future, like where have we come from? Where are we going? Closing the gender wage gap, are some of the other workshops that we did. We were also able to add to our existing women’s networks -- sorry, our database. You know, it is important and it’s an ongoing process to have an up to date database for whenever we’re sending out e-blasts or any kind of information to rallies, et cetera, and any committees will understand how important that is.

So, the Women’s Network supplies updated information about advanced rallies, et cetera, as I just said, not only in our areas, but across Canada. One of the examples was we sent out information about Take Back the Night. In most areas, those events happen in September. Sisters in Spirit vigils, October 4th is when that goes on. Shine the Light is an initiative. We’ve actually got scarves for sale out at our table. I think there are still a few left. So, that’s an initiative started out of London, I believe, and so shining purple lights to address the issues of gender-based violence.

The National Day of Commemoration and Action to End Violence Against Women. So, the International Day is November 25th. Our National Day is December 6th, as we all know, the tragic anniversary of the Montreal massacre. So, please look on the Women’s website to see what’s going on in your area and, please, we need lots of brothers to attend those as well. As we all know, we can’t stop violence against women without our brothers being involved in that. And then we do stuff around March 8th, International Women’s Day and, also, in certain areas, or in some areas, and we’re starting to get more involved with International Day of The Girl.

So, we do a lot of fundraising as Women’s Committees. Sometimes that’s how women first get involved. I mean, if you’ve got kids in sports and stuff, you’re kind of used to doing fundraising, but we really have to look at that fundraising through a political lens because we will fundraise forever if we don’t change the political will of those in power. So, we always try to put -- talk about how we can change legislation. So, the Changing Workplaces Review is a way we can really make change.

Having said that, I am part of Peel Region Labour Council, and we do a great fundraiser for International Women’s Day. We raised $25,000.00 for shelters, but it’s also a celebration of women, so it’s not just a fundraiser.

We as women in our community, we volunteer time and resources to women’s shelters. We also lobby our MPs and MPPs to support initiatives to deal with domestic violence as a workplace issue. Also, we attempt, and kudos to everybody who’s on bargaining committees in the room, we attempt to negotiate collective agreements for paid domestic leave, as well as our Women’s Advocate Program. Our Women’s Advocate Program, as I’m sure most of you in this room know, is world renowned. It’s an absolutely fabulous program. I believe we’re up to 350 women’s advocates across Canada, and hopefully we continue to get that. So, if you’ve got some bargaining coming up, I’m sure you’ve been told by the national as well, please negotiate the Women’s Advocate. It’s so important for the women in our workplaces.

So, we continue to volunteer our time and resources to shelters. Oh, sorry, I said that already. Pearl Almeida, behind me here to my left, was very fortunate enough as a discussion leader to model that Women’s Advocate Program.
internationally through the ITF to delegates in 2015. And so, they’re looking to adopt that in their areas. Yes, great work, Pearl.

So, in addition, we lobbied at Parliament Hill in Ottawa of April 2016 and met with the Ministry of Labour and Status of Women, Minister Patty Hajdu, and raised the issues that women especially face as workplace harassment, gender-based violence, and other issues such as elder care, childcare, precarious jobs, lack of financial equality and freedom. We also discussed resolutions, especially how unions play a key and integral role on how to create opportunity so that women, and especially Aboriginal and women of colour can take advantage of.

We also -- talking again about reaching out to try and get our network set up. We did as a group, and we will continue to do that, to try to get e-mails and cell numbers for everybody, and to raise awareness of the Women’s Committees across Ontario, and start up new ones if necessary. I know Sue did a great job. She helped some sisters in Sarnia organize their first women’s chapter, so it’s great work that we do. We also participate in Equal Pay Day events in the community and urge other local unions and Women’s Committees to do that kind of work.

We’ve attended the Changing Workplaces Review meetings held in Windsor, in Brampton, in Scarborough. So, the three of us attended those, spoke of the issues facing women and other precarious workers. So, it’s a real -- it’s a fabulous review. We just spoke to that resolution and we all agreed with that, so please get involved. We lobbied at Queen’s Park, so last year, December 7th and 8th, with Ministers to ensure that they heard about this Changing Workplaces Review and what our stand as a union is. So, we participate in gender wage gap discussions. So, yes, it’s very important for women in particular.

I was honoured to be asked to work on the Stopping the Trans-Pacific Partnership, to work with Rolly and the national union. So, lobbying MPs in the Ontario area. It was a fabulous experience. The TPP, as we know, hopefully, it’s done because it will negatively affect all Canadians. Making it Fair campaign, we attended those rallies. I recognize a lot of people attend those.

In closing, I would just like to thank, again, my committee, Pearl Almeida and Sue McKinnon. Fabulous sisters to work with, and I know we’ve worked with a lot of the sisters and brothers in this room, and it’s been a real pleasure, and we will continue to represent the women and our union to the very best of our ability. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Gwen, thank you very much for the comprehensive report. Obviously, you can see a lot of the work that goes on in the Women’s committee and the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour Committee and the LGBTQ Committee. And, again, that’s just to be able to be transparent and show how much work really goes into these committees, what they do, how they’re working with different locals right across the province and, again, they’re doing a fabulous job at that. So, thank you very much.

With reference to the Women’s Committee, Lisa Kelly is the director, so if there’s any questions specific to the Women’s Committee, please reach out to Lisa Kelly and she’ll be able to answer any specific questions that you might have with reference to what they’ve been doing and what projects they’ll be working on in the future.

That being said, I just wanted to express how great I think the first quarter, first four hours of our Ontario Regional Council has been. I hope everybody’s appreciating it, everybody likes what they’ve seen so far and heard. At the same time, what I would like to ask is if you can tweet out what’s going on here, have some people follow and get the message out with regards to the amount of work that we’re doing under, #UniforORC, and let’s spike it up a little bit so people are excited about what we’re doing on a regular basis here and trying to make things better for all working-class people.

That being said, I hope everybody enjoys their lunch, and what we’ll do is we’ll come together again at 1:15 where we’ll start the rest of our council for today. With reference to our Women’s Committee, there is a caucus that’s being held today. That caucus is going to be in the Sheraton Hall E. So, the Women’s caucus, where lunch will be provided, is in Sheraton Hall E.

--- Whereupon the meeting was in recess - from 11:49 a.m. to 1:26 p.m.

DINO CHIODO: Just before we get started with the afternoon session of Ontario Regional Council, I do want to make a couple of announcements. I think I see a few individuals at the mics for points of privileges. Give us an opportunity to get everybody back in to the hall so we could start for this afternoon.

At the same time, I wanted to just announce, again, Sunday, for Ontario Regional Council, we are hosting an optional workshop. Again, it is totally optional. There is limited space. You do have to register to participate. We just want to make sure that we do have enough seats for everybody if they do register. If you show up, there might not be enough seats, and that’s why we’re just asking you to register to make sure we can have the proper head count.
The workshop will provide a deep dive into mental illnesses and identifying coping skills for individuals that are suffering from it, but at the same time, give the proper information to workplace representatives so they can basically use those tools to deal with members who suffer from it. So, again, please let us know so you can register and participate. It’s a great program. It’s a few hours long, but I think it’s well worth your time.

At the same time, the Young Workers caucus breakfast will be tomorrow at 8:00 a.m. It’ll be Saturday morning on the Club Board, 43rd floor. And, I want to announce this a little bit early just so people can prepare Saturday, December 3rd, tomorrow at 1:00 p.m., there is going to be a rally for Fight for $15.00 in Fairness. That rally is going to be at Yonge and Dundas Square in support of our young workers that are fighting for the $15.00 and Fair campaign, and anybody that wants to participate in that, please feel free to do so. It’s about a 6- or 7-minute walk from where we are today.

And, lastly, what I want to mention is delegates received a t-shirt ticket, I guess, when you got your kits. So, in your kits there was a little voucher for a t-shirt of which you could go and grab, and it’s for workers with disabilities. And, in saying that, what we’re doing is trying to encourage everybody tomorrow to please wear your shirt that you receive today. Again, the Workers with disAbilities Committee is working towards a more inclusive and accessible Canada. And, again, we want to make sure that we’re part and parcel of supporting disabilities for International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

At the same time, we ask that you include the following hashtags in your Twitter posts, please feel free to do so at your convenience. You can do that through, #AccessibleCanada, or at the same time, you can do, #IDPD2016, and IDPD basically stands for International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Also, I mentioned it earlier, I know this is, for me, already an exciting council and I encourage everybody, if you’re going to do a Twitter post, please also, if you can, make sure you tweet out through the Unifor hashtag which is, #UniforORC. So, thank you for that and those announcements, and I’ll go to the mic for points of privileges. Point of privilege, mic 2.

ROBIN DUDLEY: Thanks, Dino. I’m Robin Dudley, President of Local 1917 in Guelph, and with me is the financial secretary, Doug Beaton. We’re here once again, and we’ve been doing this for five or six years now, raising money and getting toys for the CP24 Toy Drive just up the street.

So, just a reminder for everybody while you’re here this weekend, Doug will be handling all the money, and there’s a table just outside the door for toys. If you’re out tonight, going to have dinner, pick up some toys, leave them on the table here and we’ll make the delivery tomorrow. We’re just trying to make kids in the communities’ Christmas a little bit better. Thanks, again.

DINO CHIODO: Now, Robin, before you take off, again, this is a great program that you put together, and you’re right, you’ve been doing it for a number of years. So, I think what we would like to do is put a motion on the floor, or at least have somebody put a motion that we provide $2,500.00 with reference to the Toy Drive on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council. Can I get a mover?

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

Thank you very much and keep up the great work.

ROBIN DUDLEY: Thank you so much.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. Thanks, Robin. Speaker at mic 4. Point of privilege?

MARK ROY: Point of privilege.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you.

MARK ROY: Thank you, Dino. Mark Roy, Vice-President of Local 199. I’m rising on this point. I just want to -- it was mentioned earlier today about the Seneca strike at our local union, and I’m here to thank everybody that was participating in that strike.

These 14 members, they didn’t really know what the hell was happening to them. Had it not been for the strong leadership of Doug Orr, our staff rep; our President, Greg Brady; our financial secretary, Dave DeMarco and a lot of the other executive board. Tim McKinnon, our GM Plant Chairperson; OPSEU; CUPE; the labour councils, it was an eye opener for these members, but it was also a rekindling for a lot of us older activists.
A lot of us have been around for a while. These members, they were brand new, shiny new, and the staff and all of the local union and the community, they came behind these 14 workers and they achieved something that a lot of us were unsure if they were going to be able to achieve that. So, a hands up to all of the folks that helped us out at our strike, and I just wanted to pass along those kinds words. Thank you very much.

**DINO CHIODO:** No, no. Thank you very much. Any time we’re on strike, we need all the support of our full delegation, and it’s much appreciated. Thank you for getting up to the mic and speaking on it. Point of privilege, mic 2.

**TAWNY EDWARDS:** Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. My name is Tawny Edwards. I’m out of Local 27, and I’m also a sponsored employee with the United Way for London & Middlesex, and I’m here to pass the hat and ask for your support. The United Way of London & Middlesex was able to touch the lives of 85,000 people last year through generous donations.

Unfortunately, the need continues to rise and London has already predicted a shortcoming this year on their goals. So, to give you a little perspective as well, London has the highest poverty rate in Ontario at 17 percent. Bud Gardens holds 9,900 people. People living in poverty in London could fill the Garden seven times over. So, I ask that you please give what you can and thank you so much.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, sister. All of the United Way are having challenges right across the province. You’re absolutely correct. And, if we can and we get deep down support that initiative, that would be a pleasure to be able to support those individuals that need that support.

**TAWNY EDWARDS:** I’m sitting by mic 6 when the hat is done. I’m over by mic 6.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you very much. Is that a speaker at mic 4?

**DAVE MCCORMICK:** It is.

**DINO CHIODO:** Sorry. Point of privilege, mic 4.

**DAVE MCCORMICK:** I’m just wondering where we register for Sunday’s workshop.

**DINO CHIODO:** So, where you registered at the registration table, and if there’s nobody there, there’s a VIP room right on the concourse floor. When you get off the elevator, you would just go to your right. There’s a room right there. It’s called the VIP room. You can go to either to register there.

**DAVE MCCORMICK:** Thanks.

**DINO CHIODO:** No, no problem. Thank you. I don’t see any more individuals at the mics, so we’ll get on with the order of the day. Before we do that, what I would like to do is I would like to invite Tullio DiPonti, our financial secretary, up to introduce an individual that’s gone through some challenges, but at the same time, talking about the items that have been going on with the strike at Local 2458. Tullio DiPonti.

**TULLIO DIPONTI:** Thank you, Dino. Today, we have spoken on solidarity within Unifor and within the wider labour movement. Recently, 370 sisters and brothers of my local, Local 2458, representing office clerical workers, and technicians, and custodians and maintenance staff at the Windsor-Essex Catholic School Board, held a 5-week-long strike. During this period, they received tremendous support from parents, teachers and the wider community. But, most importantly, it was the students who stood shoulder-to-shoulder in solidarity. Once such student is Katrina Bahnam who made a YouTube video urging the board to respect our members and asking fellow students to join the picket line. Can we cue up the video for now?

--- Whereupon a video was played

**TULLIO DIPONTI:** Katrina is currently a grade 12 student at St. Joseph Catholic High School in Windsor. She’s an amazing 17-year-old woman who is smart, compassionate and responsible and a dedicated leader in her school and community. In addition, to begin, on the executive of her student council, Katrina is the organizer of the Best Buddy Program which supports students with special needs. She’s also an active member of the Social Justice Club.

She leads by embracing differences in others, promotes multiculturalism and anti-bullying, and advocates for the voiceless. She has volunteered for the United Way and for the Respite Service. She also helps with food deliveries to those in need and is an excellent member of the Youth Council for Young Philanthropists, and we’re honoured to have her here with us. Please welcome, Katrina Bahnam.

**KATRINA BAHNAM:** I didn’t really have much to prepare before I came here, but all I really have to say is that this isn’t about me and it’s not -- I don’t deserve all the claps. This is about the people that I wrote the poems for and everyone out here today. Without you guys, I wouldn’t have the education that I have. I wouldn’t have been brought up
in the community that I’ve been brought up. And, honestly, I’m lost for words with all my gratitude towards everyone here, so thank you.

**TULLIO DIPONTI**: So, Katrina, on behalf of Ontario Regional Council and the whole Unifor membership, we would like to thank you on what you did. We really appreciate -- you really picked up our members that were on strike, their spirits and their solidarity within the union, and the youth movement. So, on behalf of all of us, here’s a small token and we’re going to make you an honorary member of Local 2458.

Okay. So, we also got Mo here. She represents the office and clerical workers, and she would like to say a couple of words on behalf of her members and also the maintenance and custodial workers. Go ahead.

**MAUREEN PLAQUET**: First of all, I would really like to thank, from the bottom of my heart, Katrina, for your support you gave us during the 5-week strike. Your courage was inspiring to all of us, and it was greatly appreciated. It’s young activists like you that will create a change in our society, so thank you.

I also want to thank special people while we were on our 5-week labour dispute. To my national union, who I want to call my father, Jerry Dias. To Bob Orr, Deb Tveit, Corey Vermey, and who I want to call my grandfather, Ken Lewenza. I also want to thank my local union, 2458. The President, Bruce Dickie; the financial secretary, Tullio DiPonti, and the rest of the executive, Ken Durocher, Mike Kisch, Shelley Smith. Last but not least, to my national rep, Darlene Prouse. Without your hard work and your connections, we would still be out on strike. So, from my heart, thank you very much.

**DINO CHIODO**: Those emotional times; eh? It’s pretty amazing. Some young workers never seem to stop impressing. They get involved. They participate. They do things on their own, and it always turns out wonderful. They do amazing jobs regularly, so it’s just absolutely fabulous to continue to see that. So, before we get on to the next order of business, what I would like to do is I would like to ask the next video to please play.

--- Whereupon a video was played

**DINO CHIODO**: Amazing. There’s been a lot of work and, again, it gets pretty emotional for us because we were away from home, a lot of us, for probably about 90 days, I think, we were counting. 89 days almost, without really having the opportunity to go home other than the one day, two day here and there, so it was a little bit of a challenge. But, it really pleases me to recognize our National President, Jerry Dias, to come up and speak next.

He’s a tenacious individual, just amazing with amazing charisma. He did a phenomenal job at bargaining. You’ve got three different groups of individuals all asking and looking for different dynamics, and he was able to manage that and keep it all together. And, in saying that, it’s not an easy task whatsoever, and to be courageous enough to be able to select a target when, to be honest with you, people in the room and outside of the room were saying, “Are you kidding me? General Motors as a target?”

But, again, it was a bold move and there was a little bit of nervousness and angst, but he was so committed, so dedicated and, today, I wouldn’t have had it any other way, obviously, with what we were able to gain and achieve. So, in saying that, I would like to ask our friend, our colleague, our National President to come up and say a few words.

**UNIFOR NATIONAL PRESIDENT, JERRY DIAS**

**NATIONAL PRESIDENT JERRY DIAS**: Thank you. Well, another year and a few more grey hairs. I was saying to Bob Orr, by the end of this 3-year cycle, I’ll probably have as many grey hairs as he does. You know, brothers and sisters, this really is the time of the year that I always take some personal time to reflect. Is our union progressing? Are we building? Are we reaching our objectives? Are we meeting our political and social objectives? And, you know, I smile when I look to my left and I see a Syrian family here joining us today. Welcome, on behalf of Unifor. Why don’t you stand -- please stand. And, as I look and I see the small children, it reminds me to keep my language in check, which can be difficult at times, as you’re all well aware.

You know, the things that -- as I go through 2016, you think about some of the things that keep you awake at night because when our members are being challenged, and we’re all being collectively challenged, when our members need us the most, they expect that we’re going to be there, and I watched -- and I’m watching the restructuring of the newspaper industry, and I’m concerned and bothered with the challenges that our members that work for Post Media are going through. And, as Post Media is laying off and downsizing their operations, and selling and consolidating, our members, of course, are taking the hit.

So, as our members are running out of time prior to Christmas where they have to make lifelong decisions, such as, “Do I take severance?” “What do I do? Do I hold on?” As they’re making these types of tough decisions, I go
So, you’ve got to know, Paul Godfrey is 77-years-old. He just signed a 2-year agreement. And, over and above that, you need a $900,000.00 retention? Where is he going to go? He’s going to be 80-years-old at the end of this. Is he going to take another job somewhere else for another 10? I don’t know, but for him to have a retention bonus is insulting. So, we called him. You’ve got to know us and you know the way we operate. We don’t let anything slide. When people poke at our members, they’re poking at all of us.

So, we got on the phone immediately and we said, “Paul Godfrey, we want to see you down at the Sheraton Centre,” and he did. He came here this morning, and my assistant, Dave Moffat, and I met him for breakfast. And, right off the bat, we asked him what the heck is going on in his head. How is it that our members have to make a decision and think about this, because Post Media is in trouble, ought not to pretend it’s not.

From the same quarter last year, the last quarter of 2015 to the last quarter of 2016, if you compare those three months, print advertising has dropped 22 percent. If you take a look at Google, Facebook, all the digital media, that’s where all the investments are going, so this is an industry in trouble. So, our members are making decisions today that if they sever, they’re going to stay on wage maintenance. But, then, if they get a job, 50 percent of what’s remitting them is taken away.

So, while people are making these tough decisions in a tough industry, $2.3 million is obscene, and those are the types of things that keep us awake at night. So, we were not very diplomatic this morning in our discussions with Paul, and we said, “If 900,000 bucks is good enough for you well, then, 900,000 bucks is good enough for our members. If $2.3 million is good enough for the top three well, then, it’s good enough for our members and we better find a solution.” And so, hopefully, we’re going to be able to find one because Dave is going to be meeting with his numbers people, we’re going to put together -- hopefully, hopefully, hopefully we’re going to have some better news for our members in the very near future.

But, you know, we also just -- the lesson is, never let things sit. On Wednesday, and it was talked about by Naureen, and it was talked about by Dino, the massive demonstration that we had at Queen’s Park, and it was about Bill 70, and it was about the trades, it was about Schedule 17. It was about taking away the enforcement from the College of Trades in the approval process and giving it to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. So, it really is about deskilling. It really is about our 8,000-hour apprenticeship programs. It really is about giving non-skilled workers the opportunity to perform very important work.

So, we -- right off the bat, what do we do? We get a hold of the Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn, “We want to talk to you.” So, Kevin Flynn came yesterday. We met here at lunch. Dave Cassidy, the head of our Skilled Trades Council; John Breslin, Phil Fryer, Terry Farrell was with us. We had a meeting with him. We had a meeting with his lawyer in his office that is writing the legislation, and we had one heck of a discussion about how they were going to have not only a fight with the building trades, the IBEW, the other building trades that are out there, but you’re going to have one hell of a fight with our union because if you think we’re going to allow our 60,000 members in the skilled trades to start to have government interference on how we run our business, then they’re going to have one heck of a fight on their hands, and he understood that. And, as we’re talking here today, our Legal Department is working with their Legal Department. We’ve got language going back and forth that’s hopefully going to resolve the issues under Schedule 17.

And then on November 7th, and I loved listening to Katrina, because our members at the Windsor-Essex School Board are on strike. They’re about three weeks into a strike and we’re watching this unfold, and I’m listening because I’ve got my assistant, Deb Tveit, involved. We’re meeting, we’re talking to the local. Ken Lewenza, though theoretically retired, is all over it. And so, we’re talking back and forth, talking back and forth, and what drives me crazy is when you have these types of disputes, you’ve got the school board saying, “Oh, no, no, no, no, no, we can’t do anything about it. It’s the provincial government.” Then, they get the provincial government saying, “No, no, no, no, it has nothing to do with us. It’s the school boards.” So, everybody’s doing this and nobody’s taking ownership.

So, we called Mitzie Hunter, the Minister of Education, and said, “We need a meeting and we need it now.” And so, we did. A small group of us went and we met with the Minister of Education. We met with her team and said, “We are not accepting the situation, where you’re blaming the school board, the school board’s blaming you, and nobody’s taking any ownership. So, we are expecting you, immediately, to convene a meeting with the school board, with your government. We’re going to be there. We’re going to have our team together. We want to get everybody in a room and we’re going to eliminate the BS and we’re going to find a solution.” And, of course, the bargaining committee did what they needed to do, and at the end of the day, we got a deal done that brought our members back to work after a long 5-week strike.
But, I also want to talk about some creativity, and I want to talk about some courage. And, we spent a fair bit -- there’s been a lot of talk already today about Local 199 in Seneca Manufacturing, but here’s the piece that hasn’t been talked about yet today. Fourteen workers, 14 members, you mess with one of us, you mess with us all; right? Those are the rules.

This is a company that’s bankrupt. It went bankrupt. Bank called in the loan. Tier two supplier to a non-union auto parts company that supplies Ford. Doug Ford -- Jesus. You know, every once in a while; you know? Doug Orr, Greg Brady from Local 199, the leadership team, Tim, they ended up, through the dispute, forcing the non-union supplier to pay our members over two weeks of back wages that were due to them, and it is continuing to pay their wages today as we build out, sometime over the Christmas vacation and, obviously, there’s some discussions going on about Seneca Manufacturing being bought by someone else. But, that’s what happens when a union comes together and we fight because there is always a solution out there. You just have to be courageous enough to try to find it. So, congratulations to Local 199. Hell of a job.

So, 2016 has been a heck of a year. It’s been a lively year as we continue to meet with everybody. 2016, we met with them all. We met with the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister’s Office, pretty well every Premier. We’ve argued with the Prime Minister. We’ve argued pretty well with all the Premiers. But, as I go through the series of meetings we had this year, whether or not it was at standing committee meetings, whether or not we were arguing with the government over TPP, CETA, arguing about economics, arguing about pre-budget presentations because we participate in the social fabric in the political arm of this country.

But, I’m thinking, about all of the meetings, and people would say, why do we spend so much time with politics? Think of 525, think of 377, think of C-4, and think about the fact that right now, before the Senate heading to second reading, is the repealing of 525, 377 and Bill C-4; the repealing of it is in the house today. But, of all the meetings I’ve had in 2016, I’ve had a couple strange ones. I’ve had more than a couple, but let me raise two just for the heck of it, and for humour purposes because sometimes we do things just because we’re curious.

So, I got a call from Patrick Brown’s office. The leader of the Conservative Party wanted to meet. And, my first objective is, why in the hell would I want to meet with Patrick Brown; right? He’s a scary dude, let me tell you, when you look at his politics and you analyze his history. But, of course, we agree, because we were curious as to what the message is going to be, so we met him.

And, right off the bat he says, “Listen, I’m not Tim Hudak. We know what your union did to Tim Hudak. We know what your union did during the last provincial election, so I’m here to say we don’t want any part of this.” And, what he said was interesting. He said, “Listen, when I become the Premier,” he said, “I’m not going to do anything for you, but I’m not going to do anything against you. I just want to leave you alone and you leave me alone.”

Well, guess what? We’re not going to leave him alone. What do you think? We’re nuts? We’re going to do everything we can to make sure that he doesn’t become the Premier of the Province of Ontario because if you listen to him, he makes Attila the Hun sound like a socialist, and that’s a problem.

So, he also said something that was pretty interesting. They said, they anticipate that Unifor spent over $10 million in the last provincial election making sure that Tim Hudak didn’t get elected. Well, we spent a heck of a lot of money, not $10 million but, of course, I said to him when he raised that, I said, “$10 million during the last election? You’re pretty close. It was a little more than that actually,” because it’s helpful when they think we’re nuts and it’s helpful when they know we’ll do anything, anything to protect the best interest of our members and to defend the interest of our communities.

The second crazy meeting, and this one was — I was definitely doing this one out of straight humour. Tony Clement called prior to his announcement that he’s going to run for the federal leadership of the Conservative Party. Well, you need to know, Tony Clement and myself go back a long way, and none of it has ever been good. And, I’ll never forget, and Peter Kennedy and I talk about this all the time, if we were organized about 12 years ago, 15 years ago, when Tony Clement first got elected, we would never have heard his name over the last 15 years because I’ll never forget his first election, he won by, I think it was about 21 votes. Twenty-one votes. Just think if we were organized. We could have pulled 22 votes, easy, snap of a finger. But, that shows what happens when you let things unfold.

So, I met with him, and the argument was interesting because he says, “Listen, Jerry, I know we haven’t had a very good past,” and that’s an understatement. He says, “But, I want to let you know that when I lead the party, I’m going to run a different type of a party.” Well, I started to laugh because if you know Tony Clement -- how can I say this? Look, there’s kids here; right? Look, Tony Clement had a charisma bypass operation years ago that was a complete success. I was reaching for that one, let me tell you.
So, one of the things he said that was interesting is he said, “Listen, we know the role your union played in the last federal election, and we all know it. And, we know the role that your union played in third party advertising.” He says, “You need to know we had a raging debate internally within our caucus about dropping the writ early, and Harper wanted to drop the writ early to stop Unifor.” And, we know what happened because by dropping the writ early and creating the longest election in the history of Canada, it led to the opportunity for Harper to be defeated.

But, it was interesting hearing those words coming out of Tony Clement’s mouth because what it does is it shows us, once again, that when we stick together and when we are determined, we can do and we can accomplish what it is we are created to do in the first place which was to change the politics of the country. Congratulations, brothers and sisters. Job well done.

And then I think about the emotional ride we’ve gone through this year. And, I thought about Ottawa, and I thought about this incredible convention we had in Ottawa. What do you think? Was it a good convention we had in Ottawa? And, I think about the parts of the conventions that really stimulated us and motivated us. I think about the look on the faces of the families that we just brought over from Jordan. Syrian families. The looks on the faces of the young kids; the look on their face when our children brought them toys and dolls and stuffed animals, and the look on their face of hope for a better future because those are the things we do as an organization to fulfil our social mandate.

And then I thought about the march. I thought about the march to Parliament on the Truth and Reconciliation commitment, and our commitment as an organization to justice. And, I thought about the comments from Chief Isadore Day, and I listened to Chief Justice Sinclair and, of course, the incredible, incredible Cindy Blackstock. And, the words from the kids that spoke. And then, of course, the most progressive politician in the country addressed us, Rachel Notley. And then, of course, the Prime Minister also joined us.

But, you know what stuck with me the most out of that convention? Was when Myles McLaughlin from Local 34-O got up to the mic and he talked about Brother Chris Giles, our brother from Bell that was fired and was dying of cancer, and the family was struggling, and he would likely not be around by the time we got to arbitration. And, I’m so proud of our union and how quickly we moved, and how quickly we were able to force Bell Canada to reverse their decision and reinstate Chris immediately, and reinstate him on benefits and pay full redress. And, many of you know, of course, that Brother Chris Giles succumbed to his illness on November 5th. Rest in peace, Chris.

And then I think, of course -- I wasn’t here earlier, I was preparing my remarks, and I know Cheryl got up and talked about Brother Jeff Hatt, who has been so active for so many years, and is an inspirational brother and a great father of four kids. I think they’re between 6 and 16, I think, those boys, so proud of them. And, what you need to know, I was told this morning, of course, is that Jeff always travelled with a picture of his wife and his four boys when he was out of town. He always had the picture on his night table to remember what was important to him.

He’s now in hospice, and will be taken from us soon, and that is one heck of a loss to our organization because Brother Hatt was an incredible leader. And, I think about him, and I think about Chris, and I think about so many of our brothers and sisters that have left us way too early.

And then as Tuesday rolls around on December 6th, I think about the 14 young women that were senselessly murdered. No reason besides the fact that they were just women. And, you know, I and our union takes the whole issue of gender violence seriously. And, you know, we can’t just talk about eliminating violence against women unless we talk about women’s issues in general because we need to talk about supporting economic -- it really is about economic security for women because economic justice is a woman’s issue.

Why in Canada? Why are 4 in 10 women working in precarious jobs? Seventy percent of all people that work in part-time jobs are women. Women earn 72 percent of what men earn. So, when we start talking about violence, you need to look at the root cause, and so much of the concerns and problems are because of a lack of economic justice.

So, you know, last week, of course, we have -- I sit on, I think you all know this, the board of directors at Halton Women’s Place, and there’s myself and nine women on the board. And, every time we go for a board meeting, I walk through the shelter, and today’s no different because as we have our board meeting leading up to Christmas, the two shelters are filled with women and children that should be at home enjoying Christmas, and the children will not be in their homes, but will be in a shelter, which will be overcrowded over the Christmas. And, I’ll tell you, there’s nothing more moving than walking through a shelter and seeing cribs. So, those are the things that we need to continue to talk about until we find solutions, and I’m going to continue to talk about it, and our union is going to continue to fight until there is true justice.

Now, when I get frustrated and I continue to ask questions why, I take a look at the state of the world, and I take a look of what was happening and what just happened south of the border. And, I listened to some of the idiotic
But, the American people did not go far right. You know, people can argue that America has gone right, and there is no question the extremists are coming to power. Bushes. They’ve had it with two Clintons. They’ve had it with the system that doesn’t work for working class people. So, You know why? Because people have had it. They’ve had it with the establishment. They’ve had it with two Bushes. They’ve had it with two Clintons. They’ve had it with the system that doesn’t work for working class people. So, you know, people can argue that America has gone right, and there is no question the extremists are coming to power. But, the American people did not go far right.

He said, “Arianna Huffington is unattractive both inside and out. I understand why her former husband left her. You know, it really doesn’t matter what the media write, as long as you’ve got a young and beautiful piece of,” -- kids are here. “If I were running The View, I would fire Rosie O’Donnell. I mean, I would look at her right in that fat ugly face of hers and say, ‘Rosie, you’re fired.’” “All of the women on The Apprentice flirted with me, consciously or unconsciously, that’s to be expected.” “I’ve said if Ivanka weren’t my daughter, perhaps I would be dating her.” “I think the only difference between me and the other candidates is that I’m more honest and my women are more beautiful.”

Look, it’s unbelievable. It’s unbelievable. It just blows my mind. And then we watch what’s happening in politics, so I’ve watched what’s happening to women in politics in this country and the challenges that women face. I listened to Sandra Jansen, a woman running for the Conservative leadership in the Province of Alberta. Steps down from the race as did Donna. I can’t remember her last name, the other -- the only two women that were running for the Progressive Conservative leadership provincially in Alberta.

So, when Sandra crossed the aisle, crossed the house to join with Rachel and the NDP, she got up and spoke about the harassment that has been heaped at her since her decision. She talked about comments on Twitter and Facebook, and here’s what she said, she rose in the house, “You are both a disgrace to Alberta. Lying ___ now, you have two Blonde bimbos in a party that is clueless.” “Another useless ___ goes to the NDP.” “Dead meat.” “Sandra should stay in the kitchen where she belongs.” “Fly with the crows and get shot.” “Dumb broad.” “A good place for her is to be with the rest of the queers.”

So, you know, then I start to think about the abuse Kathleen Wynne went through when she was in Alberta, and if you talk to Kathleen and the challenges that she has, I spent a lot of time talking to Ruth Ellen Brosseau from the NDP, and she can give you an earful. Megan Leslie, when she was a Member of Parliament. Christy Clark. Whether or not these women are a part of our political stripes is irrelevant. It’s really about women in politics. And, later on today, we’re going to listen to Nancy who runs a group called Equal Voice, and she presented with Peggy and Ruth Ellen in Montreal about a year and a half ago. And, it really is about getting more women involved in politics if we’re going to have a better country because we live in a country that is over 50 percent women, yet in Ottawa, we only have 28 percent women politicians.

I would argue that if we had at least 50 percent plus one women in federal politics sitting in the house today, do you honestly think we would have had had this type of a debate on finally getting an inquiry for missing and murdered Aboriginal women? Do you think that we would be having this type of discussion on finding solutions for gender-based violence? Do you not think we would finally have a national childcare strategy? Because the national childcare strategy isn’t just for women, but it’s for kids, and I want you to take a look at what happened in Quebec because Quebec was the worst province in the country for having women in the workforce. We institute a $15.00 a day childcare. Guess what? It is now -- has the highest rate of women in the workforce in Quebec than any other province in the country, and that’s directly as a result of a childcare program.

So, brothers and sisters, Nancy’s going to talk about the celebration of International Women’s Day, and they’re going to talk about 338 young women from representing the different ridings across Canada that are going to converge in Ottawa and are going to fill the Parliament, and the Parliament will be convened by Kim Campbell. But, when we know and when we work with Equal Voice, we get involved because they called us, organizations call us to say, “Listen, we need some help. We have to find ways to get these women to Ottawa. We don’t have a very big budget.” So, what do we do? We get on the phone with VIA, said, “We need a bunch of passes.” We get on the phone with Air Canada and we say, “Congratulations, you’re flying women from across the country to Ottawa on International Women’s day.” So, we do what it is we do best and that really is about debating and discussing the political agenda because somebody needs to lead the charge.

And, I want to get back to the U.S. because did Hillary Clinton lose because she is a woman? That’s a part of the reason. There’s no question. Sexism was a part of it, but I can’t understand when you have a person who was a former Secretary of State, life in politics, scholar, articulate, principled, running against a sexist racist how she could lose. But, the question that we have to ask, why did women vote for Trump? Why did Black-Americans vote for Trump? Why did immigrants vote for Trump? Why did unionized workers vote for Trump?

You know why? Because people have had it. They’ve had it with the establishment. They’ve had it with two Bushes. They’ve had it with two Clintons. They’ve had it with the system that doesn’t work for working class people. So, you know, people can argue that America has gone right, and there is no question the extremists are coming to power. But, the American people did not go far right.
Hillary Clinton, today, I believe, she has over 2 million more votes than Donald Trump. She’ll come close or, likely surpass the amount of votes that Obama had in 2012. She had a larger victory of popular vote than John F. Kennedy or Richard Nixon for that matter. Trump has less votes than Mitt Romney had in 2012. But, do you know what we learned from this? And, I remember during the election Trump talking about the rigged election. He’s going to lose as a result of a rigged election.

Well, it is a rigged election because when you can get 2 million less votes and become the President of the United States, then there is a problem with the system, and that’s the same problem we’re having here in Canada because we understand what it’s like to live in a rigged system where we can have Harper for 10 years with a majority government with 38 percent of the seats. Same thing with Trudeau, by the way, less than 40 percent and we have majority governments.

That’s why, brothers and sisters, we are in Ottawa talking about proportional representation, and you need to know, we’ve had some very straightforward discussions with the Prime Minister’s Office. You need to know, on your behalf, I appeared in Ottawa at a standing committee with Liberals, Conservatives, NDP, where I articulated our position on proportional representation. And, what I said to the Liberals is, “The problem with politics today is that politicians never do what they say.” Trudeau ran on a platform that included that this would be the last election that would be first past the post. That would be it. So, here they are now going, “We’re not sure. We’re not sure about the mandate.” That’s nonsense. So, I articulated on our behalf that people get frustrated with politics when politicians start to take their vote lightly.

And, the Conservatives, if you can imagine, were arguing at the standing committee, “No, no, we need a referendum.” “This has to be taken to the people in a referendum.” Couldn’t you imagine the Conservatives talking about a referendum? Ten years of Harper, how many referendums? Five? No. Four? No. Three? No. Two? No. Zero. Yes, none. 377, 525, ominous missed bills this big. Referendums? No, and they’re going to talk about having a referendum?

So, anyway, we are going to continue to push because one thing that’s for sure, people want their vote to count, and we should have a government in this country that reflects the wishes and objectives of all Canadians and doesn’t give majorities to those parties that have less than 40 percent of the vote.

Now, I take a look at what Trump’s doing now. Four of his five appointments, bigots, racists, misogynists, in some of the key roles. His chief strategist is Bannon; Attorney General, Sessions; CIA director, Pompeo; national security advisor, Flynn. Think about what happens when there’s openings on the Supreme Court. That’s how he’s going to do all of it. That’s how he’s going to railroad workers’ rights. That’s how he’s going to institute federal right to work legislation right across the system.

His transition team, if you can imagine, is discussing a national registration system for immigrants from Muslim countries. He’s confirmed his plans, if you can imagine, to deport 2 to 3 million people. He’s publicly supporting right to work legislation. What did he say? Here’s what he said and I quote, “I like it better,” he’s talking about right to work, “because it is lower. You are not paying the big fees to the unions. The unions get big fees. I like it because it gives great flexibility to the people. It gives great flexibility to the companies.”

So, the question becomes, if he’s such an anti-union President, why is it that when the AFL-CIO did a poll of all of the shop stewards from all the different unions across the United States, 40 percent of the shop stewards said they voted for Trump? Fifty-one percent of unionized workers supported Hillary Clinton. Sixty percent, frankly, supported Obama in the 2012 election. Trump won 40 percent of union support in Michigan; 43 percent in Wisconsin; 54 percent of unionized voters in Ohio supported Trump. Overall, the lowest union support for a Democratic candidate in over 20 years.

Why? There’s no question that the Republicans played the race card to get the working class to abandon the Democrats, but the Democrats simultaneously abandoned the working class as well. Why? Because there was not much difference. Trade deals signed that took away middle class jobs not only in the United States, and Canada.

So, take a look at what’s happened since the election. The crazies are coming out of the closet. The impact that it’s having on us here in Canada. A significant wave of hate crimes across the United States and here in Canada as well. Ottawa, Toronto, Abbotsford, people are painting Swastikas on synagogues. Hateful incidences of rage against immigrants on public transit and in public places. Neo-Nazi posters and leaflets are being circulated.

This is our country. They believe now they have a voice. What type of an impact is this going to have on women? On choice? What is this going to have on our members of the LGBTQ communities? Are they going to use new Supreme Court nominees to start to railroad the rights that have been fought for so many years?
So, one thing about us and one thing about our union, we are going to be strong and we are going to be clear, and we are going to give strong messages to women, to the LGBTQ community, to our Aboriginal and workers of colour, to the brothers and sisters within the minority groups, especially Muslim-Canadians; we will not, as a union, be bystanders. We will stand with you each and every day to defend your freedoms and safety in this country, and that’s what we need to do as an organization.

So, you know, when I take a look at the abandonment that has really created the frustration, Trump hit a chord with working people when he talked about the trade deals. When he came right out and said, “I oppose the TPP. It’s a disaster. If I become the President, the TPP is dead.” And, we’ve been saying this as a labour movement, and have been saying it as a labour movement in the United States. And so, when working class people start to hear somebody like Trump talking about disastrous trade deals and how it has impacted the middle class, people start to listen and they pay more attention to that than they do about the fact that he’s a sexist and a racist.

But, we know what the flaws are with the TPP; the ISDS system that allows corporations the right to sue our governments; the fact that we know that it’s going to negatively going to impact dairy farmers, what the TPP is going to do to our Auto industry when we’ve fought so hard over the last few months to solidify the auto industry; what it’s going to do to the pharmaceutical companies by dragging up drug costs. And, what is Canada doing during this time? Not saying anything. They’re doing consultations, but at not one time did Trudeau or Chrystia Freeland say, “Hey, hold on here. TPP sucks.” Why is it that the tariffs come off Japanese vehicles being imported in Canada in five years, yet they’ll negotiate it and it’ll come off in 25 and 30 years in the United States? So, they took the coward’s way out. And, of course, we’re hoping that Trump, in fact, does gut it.

And, he was also straightforward on NAFTA, and he’s right, NAFTA sucks. We know that. Take a look at our manufacturing sector. Hundreds and hundreds, and hundreds of thousands of lost jobs. We used to have about a $15 billion surplus in trade and manufacturing. Today, we have a $122 billion deficit. And, we have our auto industry. I think of Ste-Thérèse, St. Thomas, Oakville Truck. We used to have six engine plants in Windsor, now we’ve got three. GM Transmission – I can start to walk through it. We’ve got a major deficit with Mexico in auto and manufacturing.

And then remember under NAFTA, remember Mulroney’s lie? Remember the lie? “NAFTA is going to be about raising the standard of living for Mexican workers.” In an auto plant, a Mexican worker makes less than $5.00 an hour, all in. Standard of living today is worse for a Mexican worker than it was pre-NAFTA. NAFTA has been a dumping ground for corporations for cheap wages and has been the mechanism that our employers have used for decades to frustrate our wage demands. So, when Trump starts to say that he’s going to rip it up, people listen because there has been a major, major shift in expectations and opportunities.

So, we need to remember when we get into trade talks, we have to stop pretending we’re a bunch of charm school graduates at the table because we’ve got a lot to offer as a nation. We’ve got a lot of bargaining chips. We’re rich in natural resources and raw materials, and we ought to use our political power to bargain trade deals that benefit Canadians. And, we’ve said to Chrystia Freeland and have said to Ed Fast before her, “If you can’t do the job yourself, then get somebody in that knows how to bargain on behalf of Canadians.” And, on that note, I’ve offered all of you to go out to Ottawa and bargain on behalf of Canadians because each and every one of us can do a hell of a lot better than they can.

So, you know, we just lived NAFTA. How much time have I got? I’m at it again, aren’t I? Sorry about this. We just lived it. We went into Detroit Three bargaining and we talked about being about the future of the industry, and it was. Because with Ken, as his assistant -- and Ken’s gone back to Windsor now, when I was Ken’s assistant, going through the 2008/2009 recession, we knew we were in tough. But, you knew, in 2008/2009, during the restructuring of the auto industry when General Motors and Chrysler were in bankruptcy that in order for GM to get the $10.8 billion, they were going to have to put into place a Canadian footprint.

So, we knew that for the next eight years that the jobs weren’t going anywhere, that they were going to have to commit. And, we knew going into 2016 bargaining that the footprint had expired. And, boy, did we know we were in trouble, and we knew that GM was closing Oshawa in 2018. Think about this for one brief moment. The Oshawa Generals, the Junior A hockey team, play in the GM Centre. GM relinquished the rights to the naming of the arena, and it is now called the Tribute Community Centre, which is now named after a builder in Oshawa because General Motors, as they were exiting Oshawa, wanted to make sure that there wasn’t a lifelong lasting reminder to the citizens of Oshawa how they betrayed them.

And then we knew, of course, that we needed a product in Windsor because in 2012, we bargained language for our Windsor members that said, if Ford had some opportunities, if there was going to be new engine programs that we were going to have the opportunity to bid on it. And, we took Ford at their word that we were going to have a legitimate
shot, and then along came the Dragon Program which they awarded to Mexico and we were merely an afterthought. And, we knew that if we didn’t win a new program in 2016, we were going to have a major problem in Windsor.

And then, of course, as the film said, we knew that our members in Brampton for Fiat Chrysler owned the oldest paint shop in the Fiat Chrysler family, and if you don’t have a paint shop, you don’t have product. So, we went into 2016 bargaining knowing we were in big crap, but we knew, we knew that we had the support of our members, 97 percent strike vote, 98 percent strike vote, 99 percent strike vote. That takes leadership and that takes courage from our members to say that we are going to fight for each other until we win justice at the bargaining table, and that’s exactly what we did.

So, I watched the solidarity between our brothers and sisters in the General Motors chain, and I watched, as you saw in the film, the demonstrations and the rallies. And, I watched and I listened to the solidarity from our brothers and sisters in St. Catharines, in Woodstock, saying that they were prepared to strike to get a product for Oshawa.

And, to be honest with you, nobody upsets us more than General Motors. See, I’m getting better at my terminology, eh? I’m working on it. I’m trying. Because General Motors said to us, if you can imagine, that they weren’t going to talk to us about opportunities of product until we already had a ratified collective agreement in place. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again, one of my advantages of being short is I don’t bang my head because coming out of 2012 bargaining, we talked to them about the Camaro, and then shortly afterwards they moved it. Three years before that, we just signed the collective agreement to announce the closure of our truck plant. We had no confidence that GM was going to keep Oshawa open, especially when we saw the end of the product cycle at the end of 2018.

So, when it was only at the end when GM understood that we were going to strike them, and that our brothers and sisters, and Tim McKinnon, and Greg Brady, and the leadership, and the bargaining committee were prepared to shut down General Motors, which would have shut down CAMI, and I want to thank Local 88 for sending a letter to GM that said if there was a strike in the GM chain, they would not be taking any engines from any other facilities besides St. Catharines, and that is how we win solidarity.

At the end of the day, and we know, GM invested $525 million in their facilities, $400 million in Oshawa, that changes it from a closure to the only plant in North America that will have the ability to build both cars and trucks. Congratulations, Greg. Congratulations, Colin. Congratulations, the master bargaining committees from the GM chain. More importantly, congratulations to our brothers and sisters in the GM chain. You’ve earned it.

We then went to Fiat Chrysler. Of course, we know we won a major investment for our paint shop, but we only won it because Fiat Chrysler understood from Dino and the master bargaining committee that our Windsor assembly plant would have went on strike to ensure that our brothers and sisters in Brampton got a product. And, the same thing held through in Ford bargaining because Ford knew there would not be a settlement unless we got a major engine program for Windsor.

So, 2016 was about solidarity. It was about us showing corporate America that as an organization, we will do whatever is necessary to win economic justice for our members. So, it was interesting because one thing we also learned a lot about this set of negotiations is the role of social media and, boy, can social media be vicious. And, we learned a lot because it’s fascinating. I love listening to a lot of the textbook socialists out there that have a lot to say about what we did or what we didn’t do, question what we did. I would have loved to had been bargaining back in their day when we had a 65-cent dollar. There was no auto industry in Mexico. Companies didn’t have global platforms. We had an Auto Pact that forced them to build here. Boy, it would have been so wonderful to be bargaining back in those days, so it’s easy to be critical when you have a short memory.

So, did we get everything we wanted? Of course, not. But, boy, we put together one hell of an agreement because we had a lot of objectives, and it wasn’t only about investment, but we knew without investment, if you didn’t have the jobs, it didn’t matter what we did in the form of economics. But, we had some real challenges, and we knew, of course, that we had members in the hiring-in grid that needed more money quickly and we were able to accomplish that. We were able to get a tweak for our retirees in the Ford chain, which is incredible.

But, more importantly, we really started to reverse the trend. Think about this, brothers and sisters. Instead of all of our work going to Mexico, we are now going to be getting engine production from Mexico to leave Mexico and is now going to be going in to our engine plants in St. Catharines. So, this is our opportunity that we have been waiting for, for decades.

So, we have done our job while solidifying the footprint, so now it’s time for government. It’s time for governments to understand their role in protecting and building the economy of the nation because it’s time we had an auto strategy in this country that recognizes the important working class jobs that are created, and I’m not just talking
about the auto industry, but we really need an overall manufacturing strategy in order to put young people to work. So, now, as we end 2016, it’s our time for us to commit and recommit to what we need to do to continue to change the politics of the country.

You know, Trudeau has had a good run, but now it’s show time, brothers and sisters. Two-hundred-and-thirty-four election promises, 34 done, 64 started, 136 nowhere. And, I’m getting concerned over some of the new thinking that I’m hearing. Bill Morneau, the Finance Minister, is saying that, “Young people, they should just get used to job churn.” What’s job churn? It’s precarious employment. Where the heck did that come from? What field is he coming out of? Right field, obviously, so we’re going to need to deal with it.

And then what are they talking about? Now, I love the terminology. They’re calling it asset recycling. It means they’re now going to start talking about opening up federal public assets for private investment. Airports, port authorities, St. Lawrence Seaway, VIA Rail, infrastructure projects. Just let me tell you, if they think that they’re going to start to privatize our airports that we’re already having enough difficulty with, thank you very much, privatize VIA, privatize corporations of which our members are working, then they are going to have one heck of a fight on their hands because we will do whatever we need to do to protect our members.

So, brothers and sisters, I want to end by welcoming the 120 Sobeys new members in Kincardine; our 46 new members at the OLG Slots in Dresden; our two units, 84 new members with Bell ExpressVu, that is one heck of a foot in the door; our 350 new members, bus drivers with First Student in Markham; our 35 new members with BioAmber; our 60 homecare dispatchers at ParaMed and, of course, our incredible East Danforth Community Chapter, East Asian women from Bangladesh and Pakistan that have formed their new community chapter.

But, more importantly, I want to end 2016 by thanking each and every one of you. You know, we’re building one hell of an organization here and it takes all of us. We have to keep pushing. We have to keep pushing politicians. We need to keep pushing ourselves. And, it’s by challenging each other that we continue to build the type of labour movement that is so desperately needed here in Canada.

So, as we take some time to reflect over the holidays and get some much needed sleep, I want you to think about how we can make 2017 more successful than 2016. And, we will do that once we collectively recommit to each other and recommit to social and economic justice for each and every one of us. Thank you very much, brothers and sisters. Have a great holiday. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: He’s the same in bargaining. Tenacious, doesn’t sleep, works hard, does an amazing job, our National President, Jerry Dias. You’re an amazing individual. Thank you very much. Thank you for taking on the challenge in leading this great union.

So, let’s get into the order of the day making sure that we get -- we are a little bit behind schedule. Jerry might have went a little longer than he was given, but we’re okay with that. We did move a couple of things up earlier today, so we’ve made up some time. At the same time, if I could, I would like to put the video on right now for the Unifor volunteers on the Syrian refugees please.

--- Whereupon a video was played

DINO CHIODO: Now, I would like to call Scott McIlmoyle up to introduce our next guest speaker.

SCOTT MCIIMOYLE: Thanks, Dino. Brothers and sisters, it’s an honour today to not only welcome our guest speaker and his family here, but to shed some light on Unifor’s commitment to the Social Justice Fund over the last year, as you’ve just witnessed. Social Justice is a cornerstone in our union. Helping others is just part of who we are, along with our sponsoring projects internationally and here in Canada, Unifor is also a proud international partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The past year, the Social Justice Fund has provided direct aid to 100 Syrian refugee families living in Amman in Jordan. Unifor sponsored refugee families that arrived earlier this year and are now living in Ontario with day-to-day support from the volunteers. As you have seen in this video, there were many members who stepped up, and as Katha had said, originally, they wanted 25, and 90 stepped up from all around and still people wanting to step in and help out. It’s truly amazing. What’s more amazing is the success story of the Hadhad family. Can we go to the YouTube video?

--- Whereupon a video was played

SCOTT MCIIMOYLE: So, to give a better understanding of the story, the -- to our refugees, or shall we say new Canadians, they were living -- they’ve moved to Antigonish. A little bit of snow yesterday on their travels, and between the two cars, I believe one of them slid off the road into the ditch. They had to get it out, get to the airport. Missed their
first flight, made their second flight. They were on CTV this morning, so they’re true celebrities, and already dealing with the winter conditions here. So, to Tareq Hadhad and his family, we welcome you.

Now, with the support of Antigonish, they have rebuilt this company. And, if you looked at the video there, that started right in the backyard at home. A couple of quick facts, Dalhousie University and the University of Toronto, both administration programs have used this success program as an entrepreneurship. Upon making their first profits in Canada back in May, the Hadhad family gave their profits to Fort Mac community following the tragic fires out west, as they knew what it took to flee and what happened, so they gave to Canadians.

And, I’m sure by now you’ve had a chance to go through your kit when you registered and you found your little box of chocolates in the bottom. I love your father, by the way. They’re fabulous. So, it’s a pleasure to introduce Tareq Hadhad and his family. They’ve given me a list here. So, the father is Assam Hadhad; mother, Assam Hadine -- sorry, that was the father. Let me try this again. Assam Hadine; mother is Shahenaz; Ahmad, sister; second sister, Batoul; the third daughter, Taghrid -- it was so much easier sitting over there reading them in my head. Brother, Hamad (ph); niece, Senia (ph); and nephew, Omar. Tareq, come and speak to the crowd, the delegates, please.

PEACE BY CHOCOLATE, TAREQ HADHAD

TAREQ HADHAD: Thank you so much for the introduction. When beginning, talking about the gray hair, like you can see now, I am 24-years-old, so never worry, Mr. Jerry, there is hair pigments always. So, what a great opportunity for me today to be speaking to you about our success story. What a great opportunity to share the success of Unifor who helped the Syrian refugees to arrive here safely.

Well, I will start with you by coming from Damascus, my father, when he started the chocolate factory, he said, “I love the idea about starting this profession,” that he loves to see people smiling and they are happy. And, you would see, everybody, it’s a chocolate, he is happy and the chocolate always is a symbol of sharing celebrations and happiness, and that’s actually what happened when he started in his home kitchen in Damascus when my grandmother told him, “Start in the home kitchen,” and then after a week she said, “Move to the basement,” it’s all now full of chocolate. Like, the home kitchen was full of chocolate. He moved to the basement, then he moved to a smaller place, then he grew up the business step-by-step to reach, after 2005, the phase that he started to export to Iraq, Jordan, Turkey and all over the Middle Eastern countries. He had a great deal with Germany and started to exporting chocolate there.

Our entire family had a bright future in Damascus, and I was doing medicine to be a physician. All of my siblings were also having bright futures and preparing their education to be engineers and contributors in the Syrian community who really needed us. After that, 2012, I was in university, my father in the factory preparing an order for Germany. He called me and said, “It’s getting too dangerous here.” I told him, “Please leave the factory.” He said, “I can’t.” I said, “Please leave the factory, it’s getting too dangerous.” He accepted and he moved out of the factory. After 10 minutes, he saw the plane come and bombed the whole factory. Nobody knows what’s going on there or why that happened, but all we knew was that we left our country. It was a hard decision to decide that I would leave my medical studies.

My father left everything. He was in shock for a few days and said, “I lost everything. I have been just working very hard,” since, for my family we became refugees. In Lebanon, being refugee means that you lost everything, especially you lost your sense of belonging, and this is really the hardest part of the story. Then, we applied to the Canadian embassy, and I applied for a scholarship to continue my medical studies in Canada and, unfortunately, I didn’t get it because I was 23-years-old, and they said, “Sorry, the age limit is 22.”

After two months, they called again. They said, “Tareq, your application is excellent, and you are invited with your family to come to Canada.” I went home. I was so happy and delighted. I opened the door, I told my family, “Yes, we are accepted to go to Canada.” They said, “But, Canada is too cold.” I said to them, “We have to leave because living in Lebanon means that you cannot breathe the oxygen. You don’t have heating system in a tent that just separates you from the outside when it’s -10 in Beqaa Valley, and everybody from the refugees arrived here knows what I’m talking about.

So, we decided to come to Canada, left Lebanon, arrived here with a good intention to start our lives and rebuild our business again from zero. It was hard to decide that and start from zero, but then we realized that we are coming to the coldest, maybe, country in North America, maybe, but the people who have the warmest hearts on the earth, and we arrived here safely in January by generously donating the Antigonish community who brought us here.
Then, we said, “We have to contribute in our community.” We arrived here to contribute in the Antigonish community and to give back to the people who donated generously to bring us here while we were seeking safety, and just so you know, it saved our souls from the refuge in Lebanon and the Middle East.

We arrived in Canada, the country that opened the doors and shipped us by flights, safe flights. While the other countries blocked the doors in fear of Syrians, Canada shipped us in royal flights, very warm, received a great greeting at the airports when I was the first man who landed from my airplane, and I saw the Canadian officer. They were cheering me on, and they would say, “Welcome to Canada, sir.” Like, two rows of 20 officers at the airport. I felt myself at that time that I am the Prime Minister. Don’t tell him this; yes?

Then, we left to Antigonish, the town of 7,000. By the way, living in Damascus, the city of 7 million, it’s quite different. But, then we said that we should start our life again. It was hard for me to study medicine again here, but I am going to keep going for that. My family said we are going to start our business from a few pieces of chocolate that we started in our home.

Then, we went to the farmer’s market, as you saw in the video, and people waited in lines to get our chocolates. We were so happy. A very encouraging start, expanded, and then we said to Antigonish, “Please, we need a shed. We need just a factory.” Fifty volunteers from Antigonish, they applied. Carpenters, electricians, business councillors who did permits for the towns got the certificates from the governments to the HST number. Everybody helped what they can, and we were so proud of that lovely community.

When we came to the name of the business, and it was the time for calling it straightforward, Peace by Chocolate, because since then we realized that the world now needs two main things, it needs peace and it needs chocolate. So, it was really straightforward.

In May, as we mentioned in the video, my father said, “I saw in the news yesterday that there are wildfires in Fort McMurray,” then the whole family decided to donate the profits of our made products to the Canadian Red Cross and the relief efforts, because we really know how it feels like to flee your home to nowhere, to lose everything in one moment that was great and so much incredible feeling. We felt that we have to give back for this great nation that helped us get here safe.

It was after that, a dream came true. After just two months, after we get mentioned by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the United Nations Summit when he had a success story to share with the other leaders of the world, when he said, “Here is a success story. Learn from them. They started from zero and they rebuilt their business. They rebuilt their life in a short period from nothing. They just had goodwill and they arrived here with skills.” As newcomers, we didn’t arrive here from scratch. We arrived here with our skills. We brought our experiences with us. We just needed a start. We just needed the push, and we got that in our lovely community in Antigonish.

After that, the business cannot keep up from August until September. We were mentioned at the United Nations. After that, we received a call from the Prime Minister and he said that he wants to meet with us. Just before, around a month, we went to meet him, we shared a greeting with him, he was so grateful for everything, and we were also more grateful for the country which opened their doors, and we always say that kindness begets kindness. If you offer kindness, you will receive kindness. If you had newcomers to rebuild their lives, they will be able to achieve. If you offer the newcomers the same opportunities that you offer to your own people, to the Canadians, they will be able to achieve, and that’s exactly what Canada has done.

After our meeting with the Prime Minister, I received a call from CBC, and they said, “The Prime Minister this morning, he received a call from Mr. Trump,” who was the President elected. I don’t like to talk about politics, but I have to just mention that. Then, they said, “What do you think?” And, I said, “I really respect the choice of the dear fellow Americans, dear friends Americans.” There are people who voted and we really respect the democracy, but we just need to say something. The world now needs the positivity, again, to be on the surface. We can only face negativity by positivity, by sharing the success stories, the positive stories and tell the others that here are success stories. Show it in the media and tell our fellow Americans that the newcomers can contribute in the community, that there is positive success stories that can contribute in the American community, like we did in the Canadian community, because we also face negativity. By just this positive experiences that we get here in this country, not by anxiety and hate, that doesn’t make any sense for facing that negativity.

I just want to share with you two more small stories about Unifor. I just heard last week from St. F.X. University that Unifor representatives in Antigonish, they donated $6,000.00 to same group who brought us here, so they were a really huge, major part for bringing us here and keeping my family safe. So, I will just give you a bow. Thank you so much.
And, just finally three main points, I should say, whoever saved a soul should be regarded as though as he saved the whole mankind. The second thing, our home is freedom, and our dream is always peace, and peace by chocolate. Thank you so much.

SCOTT MCILMOYLE: What a fabulous success story. Today, Tareq, your new journey starts here now. Your words of wisdom. We’re glad you’re here. We’re glad you’re all safe. And, on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council delegates, we would like to give you a gift. It’s not chocolates, by the way, but we want to give you a little gift for your time in coming here and sharing your story.

DINO CHIODO: That being said, I would like to call Candace Lavalley up for a special initiative.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: From Aleppo and Damascus to your home. The scents of Syria product line empowers Ghar, a small business run by Syrian artisan women who call themselves wartime entrepreneurs and work to support their families. Every product is handmade and embroidered by 50 internally displaced women currently residing in Damascus.

These women wanted to live with their own dignity. They came up with the idea to make packaging for soap because some of the women in the group were from the Town of Jobar, famous since medieval times for a kind of delicate crochet. The soap from Aleppo is known worldwide for its healing properties, but the war has destroyed many of the soap makers’ operations.

At first, the women created their products, and then tried to sell them. They carried the cost of the inventory. Aleppo is a 3.5-hour drive from Damascus, but they found people willing to make the trip to help them sell their products. One of their couriers was shot and killed by a sniper along the road. Still, they persisted to find help to drive their fanciful scents of Syrian line by taxi cab to Beirut and sell it to markets.

It earned enough to pay each of the women $150.00 a month. The obstacles that were before them were many. For instance, work hours were determined by sporadic electricity. If the lights came back on at 2:00 a.m., the women would wake each other and take advantage of the light to work. Their persistence drew the attention of journalist, Hala Droubi, who connected the women to the Chicago-based Karam Foundation, which supports Syrian refugees with innovative education, entrepreneurial development and community driven aid.

The women learned how to balance inventory against orders, so that now the women focus on filling orders rather than making the products, and then recruiting help to deliver to markets and trying to sell them.

In the past year, Karam has purchased about 4,500 items which it sells through its websites at prices in the $20.00 to $30.00 range. The Ontario Regional Council has purchased 10 of these gift baskets to support these women. We will be raffling them off, and all proceeds will be donated to a women’s shelter right here in Ontario. We ask that you be very generous in supporting this initiative by bringing a precious scent of Syria into your home; okay? So, get your wallets out, please. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: So, get your wallets out and start putting some money forward. Way to go. Thanks, Candace. Much appreciated. If I could, I would like to just continue moving. I know we’re a little bit behind schedule. So, Lisa Kelly, Director of the Women’s Department, is going to come up and do the gender wage gap report.

CLOSING THE GENDER WAGE GAP REPORT

LISA KELLY: Hello, everyone. What an inspiring set of speakers there, and what an inspiring tale. Kindness begets kindness. I think that we need to continue to remind ourselves of that. We certainly take on a lot of fights and we can do those with kindness and be firm.

Unifor’s actions make a difference around the world, in our communities and in our workplaces, and it’s a tough act to follow to now talk about some of the stuff that we’ve been doing around the gender wage gap. But, I really firmly believe that the more that we can continue to fight for good working standards here, for the jobs that we fought for when we were in auto negotiations, those are the types of jobs and working standards that we’re welcoming these newcomers into.

So, I’m going to talk to you a little bit about closing the gender wage gap and what we’ve been doing in Ontario, and I’m going to click that and point that somewhere. There we go. So, I’m just going to actually talk to you about, “What?” What is the gender wage gap? “So, what?” What does it matter? And, “Now, what?” What can we do about this?

So, the gender wage gap is the measurement of the difference between what, on average, men make and what, on average, women make, and it can be measured a number of ways, but two of the main measurements are, if you take everyone who makes -- who works full-time, full year and compare those wages, there’s a 73.5 percent wage gap.
in Ontario between men and women. But, we know that the majority of part-time workers are women, and they don’t have access to full-time work a lot of time. So, if you add, actually, that in, the wage gap is even greater at 69 cents, if you compare all earners.

Where are we globally? We’re actually pretty sinfully down at number 30 in the global rankings according to the World Economic Forum, and it’s dropping. We’re behind countries like Rwanda, Slovenia, the Philippines, countries that have fewer resources than we have, so that’s really something that we need to be looking at. And, over the last hundred years, we’ve gone lower and lower.

So, what contributes to the gender wage gap? What creates it? This is my Jim Stanford slide. For all the people in the back, I know you can’t read that. You couldn’t read his graphs either. This is a little bit of a diagram that we’ve put together, and we’re going to be putting some materials to explain that.

The gender wage gap is more than just pay equity. People think of pay equity when they think of the gender wage gap. It’s about all of the things that start from the minute you’re put into a pink blanket or a blue blanket, right up to when you’re on your rocking chair and to see whether or not you have a pension or not. There’s streaming that goes into schools. Women taking home-ec, men taking shop. We go into the high schools or to the upper -- university or post-secondary education, and we start getting gender concentrated. There’s a lot of stuff that goes around, either conscious or unconscious bias, that puts us into different fields.

And then we get into the workplace, and women are still concentrated in about five different areas. They’re concentrated in health care. They’re concentrated in retail. They’re concentrated in education and administrative work, and we know that when you compare the wages of, for example, a childcare worker who has got her ECE degree against another male dominated sector with comparable education, there can be up to a $20.00 an hour difference. That’s going to be a lifetime of setting back for women in that gap there. There’s other stuff like sexual and racial harassment that happens, that drives women out of the workplace and other workers. And, of course, there’s things like unaffordable childcare. We’re going to be talking about some of these things specifically when we talk about the “Now, what?” section.

So, let me just skip over to the, “So, what?” There’s a great impact not only on women individually. Obviously, if you’re making less, that means that you’ve got less to spend on your daily needs. Certainly, the rise of lone parent families headed by women mean that families are increasingly affected by women’s low wages. We absolutely have to look at the fact that there’s a race gap. There’s a disability gap. There’s a sexual identity or gender expression gap. When you take women who identify with these other groups, you have even a lower rate of pay and a larger gap. They have looked at the fact that women would have to work an extra 14 years to make what the average man makes at the end of their lives, and that means that there’s an over representation of women living in poverty in their senior years.

So, when we look at some of the impacts on the economy, I think they’re even more stark. And, we know, again, in all of the fights that we have around good jobs, we know that good jobs, good pay contribute to the economy.

When women started entering the market in greater numbers over the last three decades, it’s been a boom to the economy in Canada. The Royal Bank says that increases in female labour force participation over the last three decades have added $130 billion to annual Canadian economic activity.

In the coming years, the McKinsey Global Institute calculates that full gender equality in the labour market could boost global GDP by $28 trillion, with a T, by 2025. And, that’s an amount equivalent to the size of the Chinese and U.S. economies combined. We believe that the world, including the private sector, would benefit by focusing on the large economic opportunity of improving parity between men and women, their impact on communities. Women often work in multiple jobs, work in communities with poor transit and can’t participate in democracy, and that’s the last thing on my slide there, is the impact on community.

When women have a double day, when they’re working two and three part-time jobs, when we don’t have the infrastructure because we actually are not collecting taxes from corporations and have poor infrastructure, that’s affecting women’s lives as well, and that means that women can’t participate in democracy, can’t have self-determination in their economic and social lives.

Okay. So, now what? So, I tell you this bad news, what can you do about that? Well, I’m proud to say that Unifor’s been quite active on this issue, and we’ve got a number of asks for you to continue to do work in your communities, at your workplaces and in the legislative arena.

So, I’m going to give you the top 10 suggestions that are put in a legislative and a policy area workplace and community. First off, the Ontario government has committed to closing the gender wage gap. They put out a consultation. Many of the people in this area, brothers and sisters in this room, attended those consultations. Unifor
against women and people with disabilities because in the expansion, it doesn’t allow you to carve out the years that
have no pensions, and we really need to take that on as a public policy and a human rights issue. For all workers,
that’s on that committee and, again, we’re going to be pushing for real solutions that actually address the issues that our
members need.

So, childcare specifically. There’s consultations that just got announced. They’re going to be in Toronto on
December 7th, the rest of the communities that you see up on the screen. We’ve got a tip sheet both on our Women’s
table and on the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare table that’s out there with their Portraits of Childcare table, a tip
sheet about what we’re asking for.

We’re really happy that the Ontario government has announced 100,000 new spots because it’s not good
enough to just say you’re putting money into workers’ pockets. They can’t find a spot. It’s one of the most expensive
situations going on. It’s more than a lot of our workers’ mortgages, so we need workers to come out to talk about the
impact both of not having childcare and where you have affordable childcare either through potentially a stipend
from the employer or a childcare centre to talk about what a difference that makes in workers’ lives. So, take a look on
the table, please come out to those consultations.

Obviously, you’re going to hear a lot about the Changing Workplaces Review. A couple of points that I want to
talk about there that make a difference for closing the gender wage gap. We’ve done work around scheduling in our
bargaining. We’re asking for better parameters around scheduling in the Employment Standards Act.

Rights for part-time workers and benefits for part-time workers. The overwhelming majority of part-time
workers are women, and most of those are involuntary part-time. They often carry one or two -- two or three part-time
jobs showing that it’s not just pin money, as people say.

Obviously, the right to unionize. The easier it is to unionize, the better workers’ standards are, and the smallest
wage gap is where you’ll find where women are unionized. Reducing non-standard work. For all workers, this is a bad
idea, but for women in particular, where they have obligations in the home, obligations of care, having precarious work,
having uneven schedules makes a huge impact on their lives.

And, obviously, paid domestic violence leave. We have a recommendation. I know many people are going to
come to the mics to talk about this, but where women are facing violence, the primary determinant of safety is economic
security. If you’re losing your job, you’re less likely to be able to leave that relationship and start off on your own. And,
of course, the Make it Fair campaign. All of the speakers that spoke talked about what that campaign is about and how it
really does affect our members and people who we would like to be our members.

So, $15.00 and Fairness, we’re inviting you to an action tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. The Young Workers Committee is
going to be leading us over to Dundas Square. We’re going to do some carolling with the words of the carols being about
fairness, about wage equity and about dignity at work. If we’ve got -- the $15.00 and Fairness campaign is about decent
hours, decent income, it’s trying to get paid sick leaves. Their evidence, our research, shows that disproportionately
affects women, and I want to give a shout out to the Local 414 local that really took on these issues in grocery bargaining.

They recognized so many of their workers were so close to minimum wage, and every time minimum wage was
bargained up, it collapsed their wage progression. So, they took on some really innovative bargaining and did a minimum
wage plus, which is like a COLA, and I invite you to come over, talk to the local, see what they’ve done because they’ve
improved a lot of lives of workers, women and women of colour in particular.

So, a couple of other things that I’m calling on you to take action on, pensions, obviously. Women work in sectors
that don’t have pensions more often than men. So, please, let’s look at how we can put a bargaining agenda together for
female-dominated sectors. I know it’s difficult going to the bargaining table in individual bargaining situations and trying
to get pensions when we don’t have them, but there are wholesale sectors where women make up the majority that
have no pensions, and we really need to take that on as a public policy and a human rights issue.

We heard from Naureen about the expansion of the CPP, and that’s in Bill 26, federally, and it discriminates
against women and people with disabilities because in the expansion, it doesn’t allow you to carve out the years that
you were out of the workplace due to health regions or due to childrearing. So, the CPP right now does that. It means that women are not put backwards because they’ve given that contribution to society, and the expansion, I think it’s an oversight, doesn’t have that there.

The Federal Minister said to us, “Look, to fix it, we need the provinces on board.” And so, there is a Finance Ministers’ meeting coming up in December. I’ve put up Charles Sousa’s e-mail. Anybody who wants to give him an e-mail right now, please do and just ask him to restore the dropout and the CPP expansion. If they’re hearing from us, they’ll do it.

So, pay equity, obviously, is a real key tool to closing the gender wage gap. As I said, there’s many things along the lives of a working woman’s life that leads to a widening of the gender wage gap. Pay equity will address it once you’re in the workplace and, I would say, pay equity doesn’t work unless you’ve got a union. That’s where we actually have enforcement.

So, in Ontario, we have a proactive requirement. It works to counter gender bias because it looks at, objectively, what is the skill, the effort, the responsibility and the working conditions required for your job, and how are we paying that then? I say to people, imagine if you just left it up to the employer to say what our job is worth compared to theirs. “They work hard.” “They need a lot of schooling.” “They really are stressed in their jobs.” “Of course, they should make two, three, four, five times what you make.” Paul Godfrey totally deserves that $1 million.

No. When we sit down at collective bargaining, we say our jobs are worth something. Our jobs require skill. They require effort. They have responsibility and there’s working conditions to be taken into account. I’m asking everybody here to do that in a gendered way to say, “Yes, maybe there is someone in the office. What are they making compared to someone who is in shipping and receiving? Who are the people who make up those jobs?” As a whole sector, again, childcare workers, let’s look at that compared to another group.

If you’ve got folks in your workplace that are in male-dominated or female-dominated classifications and, hells yes, there are, why don’t you look at, how did you determine what those jobs were worth compared to one another? This is super key, and I’m looking at John Aman as I’m saying this, this is super key in organizing. When we organize new units, we get almost as many pay grades as there are people, and I can tell you the people at the top of the pay grade look a lot like the people who are paying them, and they might just be related. It’s not about what the effort is. It’s not about what the work is.

And so, when we get new units, our bargaining reps, and I want to give a big shout out to Julie Herron, who has done some amazing work around this, take a look at how is this broken down to counter favouritism but, also, how is this broken down around gender? Is the pay rates because of sexism either implicit bias, it’s just not even in the mind of the employer, or explicit bias?

Employment equity is another one that’s really key for people to know about and to apply. We heard from our -- all brothers from the armoured car industry. They’re federally regulated. They’re under employment equity. Anybody who is a federal contractor, under employment equity. That means you actually have to take a census of the workplace to say, who’s in our workplace? Where are they in our workplace? And, how did that compare to the community?

It’s not our fault that the employer controls the door that brings workers in. The employer chooses our members. We’ve got community chapters trying to counter that but, otherwise, it depends on who the employer is hiring as who is in our workplace. So, we actually have to get a handle on that to say employers should be hiring to reflect the community, reflect the people who are skilled and able to do the job.

The other thing that the Employment Equity Act forces you to do is to do an Employment Systems Review to say, if you’ve got a concentration of people or an absence of people, why is that? What are some of the things that might be hidden around people being there? And, I can tell you one of the number one things I hear when we go after employers is, “They just didn’t apply.” And, we ask, “How do people apply here?” “Oh, we give applications to our existing members.” Why wouldn’t you think that that would continue the new people to look like the old people?

So, you’ve got to do outreach in the friendship centres. You’ve got to do outreach in different media. You’ve got to do outreach and say, this is a place that wants you, wants you if you’ve got a disability, wants you if you’re a woman, wants you if you’re a worker of colour, wants you if you’re an Aboriginal person.

So, employment equity is a tool that’s federally mandated, and we have a right to be on those committees, and please put yourself forward. Come talk to me if you want some more information on that, but that’s a real tool that I think is underutilized. And, provincially, we have people, like our auto companies, who are covered because they are federal contractors.
So, what are the last couple? Harassment and violence. Obviously, that winds up driving employees out of the workplace. What can you do? You can bargain respectful workplace training. You can have clear anti-harassment language in your collective agreement and get joint investigation language. That makes a huge difference in whether or not people think that they can complain.

Bargain violence policies including domestic violence mentioned, and that’s required under Bill 168 and 132. And, paid domestic violence leave, which I said, we’re going to be dealing with on our recommendation tomorrow, and a Women’s Advocate makes all of those things real. So, we’ve got a bargaining guide for Women’s Advocate on our table, answers a lot of the questions that we get in the department.

The last two are maternity parental leave top up. Can you believe that 40 percent of working women don’t qualify for parental leave? I was shocked when I heard that. Trudeau’s talking about extending parental leave. Working women hardly qualify to begin with. Don’t extend it and not give us anymore benefits. So, many don’t take their full leave because they can’t afford it. You’re running right up against really expensive childcare. We need to actually look at bargaining a top up for our employees, men and women, to take a parental leave, and we need to oppose the federal parental leave proposal that leaves workers farther behind.

So, I’m going to leave you with some hopeful stuff. Kindness begets kindness. Actions begets action. Here’s some amazing locals, and shout out again to the northern locals there, who wear red on Equal Pay Day to show that women are in the red. It happens around the third week of April because that’s how much longer a woman has to work in her year to make the same as the average man did on December 31st. So, we call attention to it. We take a look in our own workplaces to see what we can do. Here’s some more folks at the National Office marking it as well, and you can come up with some creative ideas about what you can do to close that gender wage gap. So, thanks for your attention, and please talk to me. I’m out around. Talk to any of the Women’s Committee if you need any support here because, together, we can actually take action on this. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Lisa, thank you. Lisa does an amazing job. She gave us a lot of takeaways, really, to consider and think about. And, again, I know we’ve gotten a few text message and e-mails because, obviously, this is a pretty important issue and it does get a little frustrating sitting at the front, watching people kind of go in and out, but there are people that do leave and don’t come back in. And, again, an issue as important as this, all fighting on the same level, we should respect the challenges that individuals face, especially when we’re talking about attacking precarious work, what it means to us, improving on pensions for individuals in the wage gap, expanding CPP, what that means, to be able to give them an opportunity to be treated the same as a man in the same type of work that’s provided for them, tackling things like pay equity.

And, again, just something as simple as a Women’s Advocate. And, the reality is this isn’t just a woman’s issue. This is everybody’s issue, and I’m raising it because there was a couple of individuals that have been making a lot of noise not respecting, at least listening to the concerns that Lisa was talking about, and it’s a little frustrating, and there’s pockets of individuals, and I get that, but if you have to have a conversation, please leave the room so others can hear what’s being said. And, at the same time, if you do leave, give the respect to come back into the room to at least hear the presentation because there’s a lot of work that goes into putting them together.

In saying that, Lisa, great presentation. Very much appreciated, with a lot of good information. And, again, if anybody wants any more information on takeaways to be able to improve upon the wage gap and making improvements on a regular basis, please make sure you see Lisa, and at the same time, anybody at the front because we’ll be able to provide that information to you.

So, moving on to the next order of business, I will ask Tullio DiPonti to come up. If you want to grab your financial statements, they should be on the tables in front of you, and we’ll go through the financial report. Thank you.

FINANCIAL REPORT

TULLIO DIPONTI: Okay. The document everybody’s been waiting for. Before I start the financial report, I just want to point out, behind me is Richard Vann. He’s the Director of Finance, and I invited him up here because, at the end of the day, Richard and his department are the ones that crunch all the numbers and prepare the financial reports for us, and I have to say, they do an amazing job and I just want to thank you, Richard, publicly, on behalf of myself and the entire ORC delegates. And, two, in case I screw up, Richard’s going to help me out. Hey, I prepare myself.

So, if you look at the document itself, there’s a front page and behind there, there’s the actual -- where we spent the money and how we got to the final balance for the year 2015 and the six-month period for the year 2016. So, we’ll look at the first part of the document.
Again, our current assets, we -- for -- and I’ll do the 2015 because I think it’s important that we go from right to left to show where we were and where we’re at today. So, our cash in 2015 as of the end of December was $1,549,160.00. Accounts receivable were $265,331.00. That was the estimated dues that we were still -- we were going to get from the national union, but yet they were not deposited in our account, but they were there for that.

Short-term investments, those are investments that we have for 12 months or less of $373,554.00. And, due from the national union was $705,248.00. That means that the national union owed us $705,248.00. I can tell you it’s been paid up for now, but as of December 2015, it wasn’t. Long-term investments was $1,978,744.00. We had liabilities of $7,728.00. That was the audit report, which left us a fund balance -- of an unrestricted fund balance of $4,864,310.00.

So, now, if we go to the left side, we go to the June 2016. Again, this is a 6-month audited report. Cash was $1,704,047.00. Accounts receivable, again, the estimated dues that were supposed to come in was $265,331.00. Short-term investments of $1,112,679.00, that’s where that $705,248.00 moved into those short-term investments.

And, again, the national union owes us $308,036.00. I don’t know where Bobby went. Long-term investments of $2,065,983.00, and the accounts payable the liability was $5,864.00. That was the audit cost, which leaves us a fund balance of $5,450,212.00. So, we’re moving in the right direction. Dino tells me, “Start spending some money, start spending some money.”

So, if we go to the back of the financial report, you will see that, again, it shows you the December 31st, 2015 where it was audited for the four months. The dues was $339,441.00. Investment income of $38,090.00, that’s the money that we made on our investment, the short-term and the long-term investments. And, the expenses are down there for $251,145.00.

At the end of December 2015, some of the expenses are a little bit -- donations were a lot lower, but the expenses, like meeting and functions, and professional fees, and promotional materials were a lot higher because we also had the 2015 Ontario Regional Council. Okay. So, the expenses were $251,145.00. We had $126,386.00 that was excess over the deficiency, which left us a fund balance of $4,864,309.00.

So, if we go to the six months’ audited report from January 2016 to June 2016, you could see the dues was $559,238.00. So, if you -- six months is $559,238.00, so another six months, we get about $1.1 million. Investment income of the short-term and long-term was $201,250.00, so kudos to you, Richard, for getting us all that money. I hope you can keep that up.

So, when you look at the expenses down below, the $143,064.00 -- and, I’ll just go through three of the major campaigns we did was the Keep the Hydro Public, that was $50,000.00. Make it Fair campaign was another $50,000.00, and then we donated about $20,000.00 to Easter Seals, and then other donations that we did through that six months.

The lost wages are mostly when we do Ontario Regional Council Executive Boards. Meeting and functions, the same thing, and the professional fees, again, was the $5,933.00 was the audited report. The promotional materials of $8,592.00, that was a billboard that we paid for the campaign to Keep the Hydro Public. So, the expenses, at the end of the day, what we got was excess of $585,902.00, and that’s why we ended up with a fund balance of $5,450,212.00. And, I move my financial report.

**DINO CHIODO:** Okay. Any questions to Tullio? Seeing no questions. I don’t think I see anybody at the mics.

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down. Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown)

Carried.

Richard, we didn’t need you this time. Thanks for being here though. Good backup. So, keeping on with the agenda, I’ll move on to our next order of business, and I’d like to ask Kari Jefford come up and recognize the next speaker.

**KARI JEFFORD:** All right. Wake up. Wake up. Everybody stand up. Wake up. No? All right. So, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the first electoral ballot cast by Canadian women in Manitoba. Two years later, in 1918, the federal legislation was passed, granting women the vote but, unbelievably, full voting freedom for Canadian women was not achieved until 1960. I’m going to say that again. Women in Canada didn’t have full access to voting until 1960. The demand for full voting rights is not ancient history. Women fought and, eventually, achieved voting equality about a century later. The representation of women is far from being even equal.
In the last federal election, 88 women won seats and were elected as MPs, one of our sisters, actually, Tracey Ramsey was one of those, putting representation in the House of Commons at 26 percent. Now, this is only a 1 percent increase since the 2011 federal election results, a rise above the traditional percentage of 20.

Here in Ontario, representation is a bit better, but far from equal. In 2014, provincial elections, Ontario has elected 38 women MPPs out of 107 ridings for 35 percent of the women in legislature. This, too, is a modest increase from the last election in 2011 when 30 women were elected, making up 28 percent of the MPPs.

This increase is due in part to the work of strong, determined advocates and feminists, unions and, of course, it is due in part to an organization called Equal Voice, a national multi-partisan organization dedicated to electing more women to all levels of political office in Canada. To further the demand for representation, Equal Voice has launched a new campaign, the Daughters of the Vote. This is about building for the future of democratic change, and we’re just going to watch a short video, and then I’ll continue on.

--- Whereupon a video was played

KARI JEFFORD: So, today, we have with us Nancy Peckford from Equal Voice to talk about this campaign. In 1999, Nancy served as a Parliamentary intern in Ottawa which strengthened her resolve to bang down the doors of Parliament. She went on to serve as an expert for the House of Commons’ standing committee on the Status of Women and worked with a variety of groups on issues critical to women’s economic security before joining Equal Voice.

And, just another piece of what Unifor and what our Ontario Regional Council has participated in, and I think Nancy’s going to speak to a little bit of it, is the bringing young women between 18 to 23 to Parliament for the International Women’s Day celebration for Canada’s 150th anniversary in March of this year. And, there were a few of us folks from the Women’s Council Committee, as well as myself, that were able to participate in selecting from the hundreds and hundreds of applications from across Canada to have the folks that -- the women that are going to be coming to sit and actually sit in each seat of the House of Commons. And so, please join me in welcoming Nancy Peckford, the national spokesperson for Equal Voice.

DAUGHTERS OF THE VOTE, NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON, NANCY PECKFORD

NANCY PECKFORD: Thank you so much, and actually I’m sharing the stage with one of our Daughters of the Vote delegates today. So, my purpose is to give you a very short introduction to Daughters of the Vote. It’s a real pleasure to be here, and thank you to Unifor women and the very steadfast commitment Unifor, through your President and senior leadership, is demonstrating towards women’s equality and political equality, which is something that is elusive, remains elusive, unfortunately, in Canada today.

I would also like to thank Unifor for their commitment to childcare. My daughter, Clara, is in the audience, so she dipped in and out of childcare, but really tremendous that you’re offering that as a way to support care giving, which so many of us are doing today.

In addition, of course, I’m here to speak about Daughters of the Vote. You saw a video that featured 13 female Parliamentarians, MPs. This was part of our outreach strategy to invite young women ages 18 to 23 to apply for an exceptional opportunity that Unifor is supporting. What was interesting after we released that video was a lot of reporters called us up and said, “Who are those MPs?” So, even though there’s 88 MPs in the House, a lot of them didn’t recognize some of the very senior and talented women featured in that video. So, it goes to show that, obviously, women in almost every legislature, save for a few, are serving in male-dominated workplaces, where sometimes their voices aren’t as amplified as we would like.

And, there is a bit of a challenge right now. A lot of Canadians think because we have a gender parity federal cabinet, that means we have parity in our House of Commons. And, as my colleague suggested, we’re at 26 percent in the House of Commons. On average, 25 percent throughout the country, and that includes at the municipal level where we often think politics is more accessible, but the numbers, unfortunately, don’t bear that out.

That’s why we believe it’s so important to invest in future generations of women. We need to see far more women contending for political office. And, when we released this video in May as part of our Daughters of the Vote initiative, in just 10 weeks, we had 1,500 applications from diverse and dynamic young women who are passionate about their communities and committed to social change, and these are women who self-identified. And, when I introduce Antu today, you will see the calibre of women that applied to become part of an historic national initiative. Notably, 220 were Indigenous women. Another 300 identified as women of colour.
The mandate of the program was to go beyond women who were already connected to the political process and look for women who are really active in their committees, but for whatever reason, hadn’t necessarily had that opportunity to think about the formal political arena, the electoral arena.

So, after we got 1,500 applications, we struck selection committees across the province with our partners, and with community leaders, with Indigenous women, and with provincial MLAs from all parties to help us land on 338. These 338 young women, one for every federal riding in Canada, will have an opportunity to connect to their provincial legislature first, and then they are coming to Ottawa the week of International Women’s Day, March 8th, 2017, to mark 100 years of women’s suffrage, but more importantly, to recognize the still woefully incomplete journey of women’s political participation.

During these three days, they are going to -- we are going to connect, and they will connect to political actors. They will enrich their advocacy and leadership skills and, most importantly, we are developing strategies to close the persistent and systemic gender gap in politics for the next 100 years. All 338, as mentioned, will take their seats in the House of Commons on International Women’s Day.

Remarkably, the House of Commons doesn’t sit its MPs in the House on Wednesday because it’s a party caucus day, so we worked with all party leaders, we’ve secured that space, all 338 will sit in Canada’s Parliament. They will be addressed and they will address Canada’s first and only female Prime Minister, Kim Campbell, as well as every party leader. And, in a remarkable role reversal, Equal Voice is inviting Members of Parliament to fill the spectator galleries in the House, and to watch and to learn from these 338 emerging young women leaders.

So, before you have the opportunity to hear from one of our exceptional Daughters of the Vote delegates, we want to thank Unifor and other members of the labour movement for your support. Unifor has committed crucial funds to cover the costs of housing for these women while they are in Ottawa. One of your employers, VIA Rail, has committed to providing $100,000.00 in VIA Rail passes. Air Canada is also providing passes.

And, the engagement of the public and private sector, obviously, is important to us because, a), Equal Voice is very lean and mean, some might say more nasty, and as a women’s advocacy organization with a very ambitious idea, we also committed to a barrier-free event, and that means that we didn’t want to turn a single Daughters of the Vote delegate away because they didn’t have the socioeconomic circumstances or the personal professional networks to get to Ottawa. We will make sure they are there. So, I want to thank you.

So, the labour movement is a crucial partner and Unifor has been particularly supportive, and we want to thank you for your engagement in this very special program. And, it is now my tremendous honour to introduce Antu Hossain, who will be representing the federal riding of Beaches, East York.

So, Antu was one of our 1,500 applicants and she was recently chosen to represent the riding of Beaches, East York, here in Toronto. I’m going to tell you a little bit about Antu, and then she’s going to tell you about herself. She’s a Master’s student in Public Health at the University of Toronto, and recently organized a school-wide conference around income security and health.

Antu’s life experience, both very difficult, but also rewarding, gives her a remarkable perspective on so many issues that we all care about, public health care, public education, and the equal treatment of all of Canada’s residents, citizens or not.

As an activist for public health care and a health sector organizer for the Women’s Action Centre, Antu is emblematic of the power of this program and it highlights the tremendous talent and solutions that young women leaders are eager to offer. Without further ado, I invite Antu to come to the stage and to tell you a little bit about herself and her passions for Canada. Thank you.

ANTU HOSSAIN: Hi, everyone. I want to say thank you to Equal Voice, Nancy and Jillian, for giving me this opportunity, and Unifor, for this platform to speak. I’m a bit short. So, first, I would like to begin by acknowledging the land on which we gather as the traditional territory of the Hodinoshone and, most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. Today, the meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community and on this territory.

So, today, I want to speak on the different ways that I have navigated my privilege and, also, my lack of privilege by first explaining a bit about my family and where I come from, but as well speaking a bit about how I got involved in the labour rights movement and how I can relate to all. So, for me, I believe that I have won the lottery, not the monetary one that many of us play for, but the lottery of birth and circumstance. I am a Bangladeshi-Canadian, Muslim, first generation, immigrant child, eldest daughter of three girls, and one of the few women in my family to have obtained a university education, and soon a graduate level one as
well. You guys are so supportive. So, in these many ways, I am very privileged to have access to these levels of education and this opportunity right here.

So, in the ways that I have been blessed as well, I have also experienced my fair share of daily lived challenges, as well as witnessing the hardships of others. My own narrative has compelled me to pursue a career and life with the central mission for making system level changes that are equitable and non-discriminatory.

So, when I say “immigrant”, I actually mean a daughter of two immigrant parents who migrated to the United States, worked tirelessly in several low skilled occupation jobs and who then decided they wanted to stay in the United States. Why not? They stayed in the U.S. even though their visa expired because they wanted a better life for their children, like many parents would. Yes, that does imply that my parents and I were living as undocumented residents, and this did restrict them in countless ways, whether that is socially or economically. So, having better access to certain jobs or even having the right to vote; that wasn’t a thing. They lived with fear, but this fear was also riddled with hard work and determination for a better future for their children.

So, living in New York City for around 10 years, that’s what I thought was my home, and I still recall that as my childhood, but things changed very rapidly in 10 years. I witnessed 9/11 happen, and like many of you, I think it changed the trajectory of the world in which we are today. But, for me, this was my first realization of who I was. I was 9, but I was also -- very quickly understood that, yes, I was a racialized person and, yes, my family is Muslim and, yes, we are actually here as immigrants. So, this is actually when I began to first recognize where I came from and my family’s own identity.

So, my parents made the incredibly difficult decision to come to Canada as refugee asylum applications because they no longer felt safe living in the U.S. Also, they did not want to return to Bangladesh because that would mean that their daughters would forfeit the ability to be educated and live peacefully in a well-developed nation. So, it’s safe to say that being a refugee from the U.S. is not your stereotypical idea of a refugee, but the realities and the challenges of having this immigration status weighed heavily on us equally the same.

I watched as my parents went through a gruelling process of resettling their lives once again in their second home that wasn’t their native. And, of course, having good jobs and economic mobility was one of the things I picked up on rather quickly as being very important for settling into a new country; specifically, the issues of deprofessionalization, which my dad went through, not having his licences and his degrees recognized, and working low skilled jobs. This was my beginning glimpse into how much economic rights matter.

So, my introduction to the labour and workers’ rights movement actually started with the Workers Action Centre. So, I want to give them a shout out because they are amazing. The Workers Action Centre is located in Toronto. It’s a worker-based organization committed to improving the lives and working conditions of people in low wage and unstable employment. So, here, I was introduced to the power of organizing and building community. Most importantly, here I learned about the struggles of those who are directly affected by poor working conditions and, also, more importantly, to put their voices at the centre of the conversations that we have about economic rights, and fairness, and dignity.

These passionate organizers and myself were all part of the larger movement for the Fight for $15.00 and Fairness, which is to raise the minimum wage and, also, to engage the communities with the current change in labour laws, which is the Changing Workplaces Review, which is a once in a generation policy window that had opened up for us to voice how we wanted our Employment Standards Act to change and protect workers. So, this was the time to amp up the conversation among communities and individuals for a lack of workers’ protection, a lack of paid sick days, and to raise the floor for workers’ rights.

So, the type of passionate workers and organizers who I met are those who inspired me. They were temporary agency workers who are caregivers, support workers who put themselves in the front line every day. They work at minimum wage. They have no benefits. They have no sick days. Many a time, they don’t know if they’re getting enough hours for that week. They are airport workers who are contracted out at the lowest cost, facing consistent contract flipping. More so, they’re women of colour in the Regent Park community, which is one of Toronto’s most ethnically diverse communities who organized amongst their own cultural communities about this movement.

So, these diverse and compelling stories, it made me realize that the struggle, ultimately, was the same. Workers are fed up, and the only step that we have to take is to not give up, to not be helpless, but to organize. So, as an organizer for the health sector in my capacity as a public health student, my challenge was to bridge two communities together, that being of the organizing sector in the workers’ rights arena, as well as the health sector.

Social determinants of health, which is this term we like to use in health sectors specifically, is about the lived and working conditions, and the ways in which you navigate that just in your every day, day-to-day. So, these are things
like income, education, level of literacy, race, gender, and all of these things actually impact your ability to access health or the type of health status you have.

And so, in one of these many ways, paid sick days is something that we take for granted as unionized workers. But, paid sick days, which is something that the labour movement has fought for has, unfortunately, become a luxury that many workers do not have. As you well know, being forced to work while sick is not healthy. No one should have to choose between getting better and getting paid. Our health should not be sacrificed at an hourly wage.

Precarious workers are most likely to be students, women, newcomers, racialized and Indigenous people and members of the LGBTQ community. These overlapping identities or intersections create additional challenges and risk further marginalizing workers. Having paid sick days is one of the major calls to action that the health sector has identified as a problem that could alleviate the health stressors placed on precarious workers.

Health providers, practitioners, researchers, students like myself, we’ve all joined this movement for workers’ rights and it has not stopped growing. We’ve signed petitions with upwards of 800 signatures, engaged in lobby days. We’ve had action days in front of subway stations, speaking to the public. This is just an example of how community partners, allies and different sectors engage to create a stronger and more unified voice.

So, I learned through the many lessons of organizing and working with these amazing individuals many, many different takeaways, but it never truly hit home until I had a personal experience. So, just recently, my dad was terminated from his permanent, full-time position without cause, and he was only provided a letter which didn’t say much of anything, and was simply told that the job was over. And, it was really ironic because I had just spent all this time advocating around workers’ rights, but when it hits close to home, then what do you do? I wasn’t truly ready.

The Employment Standards Act, which is what we have to protect workers’ rights, had failed my family. And, when the stories are distant, you can empathize and you can fight in solidarity, but when it happens to you feel quite helpless when the system fails you, so that anger, it becomes helplessness. So, I later found out in counsel with the lawyer that my family member had -- or, my dad, had actually faced indirect islamophobic comments in the workplace. But, what was more probable of a reason for his termination was that he had gone to his supervisor asking for the shifts in which the evening shifts he had to be distributed amongst the three workers who were employed in the same capacity. So, two racialized workers, including himself, were taking the evening shift regularly when there was another non-racialized worker who never received this shift.

So, he simply voiced his concern to his supervisor. The supervisor acknowledged his concern and said he would look into this, but within two weeks, instead of a change in schedule, he received a termination letter. And so, in addition, he also received an agreement which asked him to sign off any legal rights to pursue legal action.

So, why am I bringing you this story? Because I wanted to showcase the reality of a very system level problem. There are clear issues of discrimination in terms of racism and xenophobia, and we have a great deal, and when I mean “we”, I mean you, Unifor, have a great deal of work ahead of us in making workplaces safer for workers to voice their concerns without fear of termination. And, in this precarious work climate that we exist in, workers cannot be continuously silenced.

So, after being a bit shaken up by the reality of the failed protection of the Employment Standards Act, I intend to use this personal experience, and the many lessons learned of community organizing, and building strategies to speak out and act, to mobilize even further and to do so in a way that compels a group like yourself to feel even more strongly about the power of your role in this community and in this movement.

And, the ways in which I encourage you to do this is to consider your position and your capacity to the allies. If you’re privileged in a way that another isn’t, you have the capacity to be an ally and to act. You can use your privilege to support and create spaces for those who are not otherwise able to access those spaces or who do not feel safe or included in those spaces. Whether that is in the workplace or in your neighbourhood or in your larger community, I urge you all to engage in allyship by first learning the stories of workers of different intersecting identities. The first step is simply being aware of these stories and creating a space where they can be heard. Hearing these stories is what allows you to build the bridges between communities.

In this process, I also hope that you will unlearn and relearn some of these assumptions and views that we all possess. We all can benefit from improving our ability to build community in these ways through allyship and bridging. You are the union, and every day we are thankful for the members who stand up, speak out, organize, bargain and fight back. You are the strength in our movement, and you have a role in every step forward that we take.

But, we cannot be insular or work in silos. The rise in precarious work, in addition to the decline in valuing workers’ rights exist alongside xenophobia and discrimination. This is our reality and what we’re struggling with, and this
cannot be fixed by one sector alone or a group of brave workers alone. The fight for economic justice and movement is bigger than our individual selves and can only grow stronger when you take a genuine step towards allyship and building these community bridges.

We all have a responsibility today more than ever to use our voice to speak out against oppression. We are struggling with two serious concerns. First of hate speech and discrimination being a platform for politics, and we are combating this in combination with our fight to recognize the importance of workers’ rights in an ever increasing precarious climate. Our silence today in both these areas will speak volumes of our action and/or our inaction than ever moving forward. So, this is where I ask of you that there is a true chance as a united collective to achieve the vision of a sustainable, equitable and just workplace for all workers. Thank you.

KARI JEFFORD: Wow. That was excellent. Thank you so much. So, we just want to say, Ontario Regional Council and all of our delegates here, we want to say thank you for the challenge and we have a lot of work to do. You’re absolutely right. And, we have a gift somewhere down here for Nancy and Antu, so thank you very much.

ANTU HOSSAIN: Thank you so much, everybody.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. Keeping it exciting, keeping it moving. Thank you. I would like to call on Candace Lavalley to call up our next speaker on the agenda.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: I’m here to introduce Roberta Jamieson. The Social Justice Fund of our union is proud to support the work of Indspire, an Indigenous-led registered charity that disburses financial awards, delivers programs and shares resources with the goal of closing the gap in Indigenous education. Indspire serves First Nation, Inuit and Métis students in both remote communities and urban centres across Canada.

In a joint partnership, the Social Justice Fund and CN Rail donated $250,000.00 to Indspire, a sum that was matched by the federal government to a total half a million dollars. On behalf of the Ontario executive, I am so pleased that we are joined here today by Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO of Indspire. Roberta is also executive producer of the Indspire awards, a national broadcast ceremony that honours Indigenous achievement.

Roberta has enjoyed a distinguished career, a first. As a Mohawk woman, she was the first Aboriginal woman to earn a law degree in Canada. The first woman ombuds of Ontario and the first woman elected Chief of the Six Nations of the Grand River territory. She also served as commissioner of the Indian Commission of Ontario. Roberta is the recipient of 25 honorary degrees and has been named an officer of the Order of Canada. She is a phenomenal woman, an activist and a social justice fighter. Please put your hands together to join me in offering a warm solidarity welcome to Roberta Jamieson.

SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND AND CN RAIL INDSPIRE PROJECT, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ROBERTA JAMIESON

ROBERTA JAMIESON: Well, brothers and sisters, friends, all, I can’t think of a better way to spend Friday afternoon. I’ve been on the road and away from my family since Sunday. Many of you will relate to that, and looking forward to spending some time as a “dudda”, as we call it, with my grandchildren later tonight.

I am a Mohawk from Six Nations of the Grand River territory, not so far from here. And so, I begin by acknowledging the traditional territory of the Hodinoshone, which includes the Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Tuscarora and Seneca, and the Mississauga of the New Credit. I also acknowledge this is home to many Métis people in Ontario, and I think we’re about 75,000 strong in Indigenous people in Toronto these days.

I have been introduced, and it’s been my honour and privilege to be the President and CEO of Indspire for 12 years. We’re really proud to be an Indigenous-led charity that invests in the education of our young people, Métis, Inuit and First Nation students across the country, so that they can realize their potential and enrich their families, their communities, the country and, frankly, the world.

The need is great amongst our students. Still, on average, only 37 percent of First Nation students will graduate from high school compared to 87 percent of Canadian students elsewhere. There are a number of reasons behind this fact, and the key one is, of course, poverty.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recently found, what our people know to be true, that 76 percent of the First Nations children in Manitoba alone and more than half across Canada live below the poverty line. Well, we’re about changing that picture, and part of changing that picture has to do with investing in education.

You know, now, Senator Murray Sinclair, when he was the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I think said it best. He said, “It’s education that got us into this mess. It’s going to be education that will get us out.” Of course, he was talking about the residential school experience.
I am so pleased to be partnering with Unifor and CN in the work we’re going to be doing together to support our students. Our results at Indspire speak for themselves. In our recent graduate survey, we found that 93 percent of the students we support graduate. An amazing number. And, over 82 percent are employed and 84 percent are giving back to their communities in rural, remote or urban settings. There is no shortage of talent amongst Canada’s Indigenous youth.

We’re really thrilled. Last year -- to give you a sense of the numbers of students were able to support, last year $12.2 million we raised and distributed that supported almost 3,800 bursaries, and that included about 450 educators, 350 nurses, 128 MDs, 409 business graduates, and I could go on. Those are great statistics and we don’t read about that in the press. We don’t see the positive stories, and they’re there to be had. That’s the one side. The flip side is the other side of the picture which is we’re only meeting 11 percent of the needs of the students who come to us. So, there are a lot more students, tens of thousands of them, who also would like to pursue their education.

And, you know, there’s a comfortable myth out there still in the Canadian public that our young people receive financial support for education, cradle to grave, unlimited. That is not true. There are some funds for some students to pursue some level of education at a post-secondary level, but it simply is not there for all of our students. And, since they’re Canada’s fastest growing demographic group, I think we should be investing so that our young people can join the workforce right alongside all of you.

Not only do we work at the bursaries and scholarships for trades, technology, apprenticeships, and university and college, we also work at the community level supporting educators who are working in our schools. So, the K-12 space, a great focus for us these days as well. Supporting our teachers to inspire more youth to stay in school so we can get that number of 4 out of 10 to be a much higher number.

We also understand the power of role models, and that’s why we acknowledge every year, and it’s nationally broadcast on Global and APTN, the Indspire Awards, where we hold up 14 of our outstanding Canadian Indigenous achievers. They’re workers. They’re engineers. They’re judges. They’re doctors. They’re lawyers. They’re singers. They’re dancers. They’re young people with a future, and it’s all about inspiring our own people to reach for the sky and the stars, and demonstrating to Canadians challenging some myths and busting some stereotypes, frankly.

So, we’re very proud of the work that we do, both from -- right from kindergarten right through to honouring our people on the national stage. We’re proud, too, that for two years running, we have been recognized by the Financial Post as one of Canada’s top 25 charities in the country.

Well, earlier this year, I was so pleased to know that CN and Unifor, through your Social Justice Fund, are jointly committing $250,000.00 to support our students. And, yes, you’re doing so at a time, and I know this is hard earned money, and you’re doing so at a time where the Government of Canada is matching dollar for dollar, so that puts a lot more funds in the pockets of students. In fact, students will be awarded $2,500.00 per student, and we have just begun the first round in this school year to select students. They will be given to students applying for upgrades to post-secondary programs, students studying trades, students with learning or other disabilities, part-time students and those who are parents or caregivers to other family members. So, all much needed areas.

I want to introduce you to one of the students that Indspire has had the privilege to support in his education. And, hearing from Jonathan Vukson, as you will, you will see the incredible potential that Canada’s Indigenous youth have. Jonathan studied international business at five schools in four countries on three continents.

He is 1 of 3 children in his family who have applied for and received Indspire bursary support. He is a Klitschko Dene. Any Dene here? Any Dene here? No. Nobody’s come all the way from the Northwest Territories for this conference, I guess. He is a member of the Klitschko First Nation located in a far northern community called Behchoko of the Northwest Territories. That’s 95 kilometres northwest of Yellowknife on Great Slave Lake. So, you know this is true north.

He has strong roots coming from a long line of leaders, hunters, trappers and educators. Jonathan is a fascinating story, and I’m going to ask him to share a few words with you now. Jonathan.

JONATHAN VUKSON: Good afternoon, everyone. Happy Friday. It is Friday. I just wanted to take a few moments and thank Roberta for the opportunity to come and join you guys this afternoon. And, thank you to Unifor and CN for your strong commitment to diversity. I’m very proud to be part of Indspire’s recent graduate survey that Roberta mentioned. This has allowed me to achieve my undergraduate degree, and thankfully I am employed full-time, so that’s always a good thing.

A little bit of my background. I’m from -- so, I spent my early years in Sioux Lookout, Northwestern Ontario. Great place. CN’s there. It was a very good beginning. My dad was a bush pilot growing up there. So, I had two older
siblings and a younger brother. I was very fortunate during my education to go back and work for the Ministry of Natural Resources’ forest fire fighting, so I definitely enjoy getting out in the bush and getting out there when you can.

I also spent numerous summers in the Northwest Territories with the Dene Klitschko people. I’m especially proud of my family, my siblings. As Roberta mentioned, each one of us are recipients of Indspire, so we’ve come a long way. My mother, Celine Mackenzie Vuksan is blazing trails. She works towards completing her PhD in Indigenous Studies at Trent University. And, Indspire’s commitment to myself and my siblings started a few years ago when I was facing challenges as a student to receive funding for some of these school opportunities I was looking at. And, they welcomed me with open arms and that kind of guided me on a path that wasn’t clear until today.

Today, it makes perfect sense for my career aspirations. My education helped me get my dream job. I am currently at CIBC where I am an associate of a rotational management program. I have worked and met some amazing leaders within the organization, and continue to learn and grow on my path, and I’m very fortunate to work with an amazing team.

I always like to remember my roots as my First Nation is from a small remote community, however, today, I am working and living in a urban environment. Part of my education has allowed me to travel to other countries and to see how other people live, I guess, and operate in their own settings, and it’s always a humbling experience to go and listen, and kind of represent Canada from an Indigenous perspective, and kind of sit at some of those tables and have those discussions.

As a First Nations person empowered with a global education, I’m extremely happy to be here to share a few words. Unifor and CN’s commitment and contribution to Indspire will be distributed to over 190 First Nations, Métis and Inuit students across Canada who are working to overcome obstacles to bettering their communities. So, I stand before you as a success story because of what Indspire did to support me and encourages me moving forward as I continue.

And, part of Indspire’s commitment, it doesn’t just stop after you graduate, so that’s something that I’m very grateful for. And, what I’m looking forward to is the next generation of Indigenous youth. So, myself, I’m very happy to be working here in Toronto, downtown. There’s not a lot of Indigenous people, I guess you can say, on Bay Street, especially from the bush, but it’s something we’re working to change. So, thank you for your time, and in my language, we like to say, masi cho. So, thank you. Masi.

ROBERTA JAMIESON: Well, this is the future of Canada right there. That’s the potential that we have in this country amongst Indigenous youth. And, Indspire, we’re just thrilled to be the connector between you all, the donors, and wonderful students with this potential. So, it’s indeed a privilege to be associated with Unifor and CN, and I think we’ve got some -- I came for the cheque. I’ve never been accused of being shy.

DINO CHIODO: So, if I can, just on behalf of the cheque presentation and before we get ahead of ourselves, I just want to make sure I recognize the individuals that are going to be in the cheque presentation. We have from CN, Drew Redden, who is the policy advisor lead for Ontario for CN. We also have Doug Fisher, who’s the senior director of labour relations for CN. And, from Local 100, we have Ashok Venkataranlam. We have Wesley Gajda from Council 4000; Mark Robinson, also from Council 4000 and, obviously, Jerry Dias, our National President.

ROBERTA JAMIESON: So, I got the cheque, but I don’t know if it’s cashable, but I got it.

DINO CHIODO: Maybe not quite that big. He works for CIBC. He might be able to do that.

ROBERTA JAMIESON: And, I have a token of appreciation that I would like to present as well. For Unifor, Jerry. This is in appreciation of your personal support of Indspire’s Building Brighter Futures for Indigenous Students, and this has the logo of Indspire. You can’t see it in the glare, but it’s a bird, and this is something that resonates with First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and it’s flying into the light. And, on its back, it’s carrying a drum, which keeps us connected to our mother, the Earth. So, this is a very special acknowledgment. Thank you very much. Now, I’ve got one for CN as well. This is to you, Doug, in appreciation also of your generous support of Indspire’s Building Brighter Futures for Indigenous Students. Thank you so much. Nowego, in my language. Thank you, Doug.

DINO CHIODO: I’ve also just learned that Drew Redden, the policy advisor lead for Ontario for CN will say a few words as well. So, Drew.

DREW REDDEN: Thank you so much. And, on behalf of the 22,000 proud CN railroaders across Canada and the United States, it is my privilege to be here with you today. I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.
You know, at CN, we like to describe ourselves as the backbone of the economy. Each year, CN transports $250 billion worth of goods over 20,000 miles of track, serving thousands of customers in hundreds of communities. But, what truly sets us apart is our people and the relationships we form with organizations such as Indspire.

Unifor represents approximately 4,000 CN employees across Canada. And, last year, CN and Unifor agreed to jointly support registered charities with an emphasis on women and Aboriginal causes. CN is proud to partner with Unifor and the federal government to help advance Indspire’s mission of investing in Indigenous people across our country so that they will have an opportunity to achieve their highest potential while alleviating some of the financial burden they experience.

I commend Indspire for all its work towards the goal of closing the gap in Indigenous education, and here at CN, we welcome the opportunity to play a small role in advancing that work. Thank you once again to Unifor, Indspire and everyone involved in this project. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much for those kind words, especially on behalf of our members.

JERRY DIAS: Just before Doug and the CN team leave, I would like to put you on notice that you got out of a last set of negotiations only putting in $125,000.00 a year. Next time, it’s going to be $250,000.00 a year. Thanks very much.

DINO CHIODO: So, if Jodi is in the audience, Jodi Nesbitt, she’s going to be doing the report on political action, if she can come up to the front. At the same time, I would like to ask if Nancy Peckford from Daughters of the Vote is still in the audience. If she’s still here – because we were somewhat having a discussion and, again, we think it’s an amazingly important initiative, the Daughters of the Vote. And, in saying that, we wanted to put a motion on the floor with reference to being able to provide a donation to Daughters of the Vote, and we would like to do it with her presence if she still is here. So, while we’re waiting, what we’ll do is I’ll ask Jodi Nesbitt to come up and do her committee report.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

JODI NESBITT: Good afternoon, sisters and brothers. On behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, Political Action Committee, I’m pleased to report on some of the most recent campaigns that we’ve been involved in. I just want to say thank you to Willy Lambert, who will not be running on the committee, and Jackie McIntosh for working collectively throughout our term.

As Dino and Naureen have mentioned in their opening remarks, in your kits, you will find a letter from our National President, Jerry, asking every one of us to visit the website, “www.unifor.org/stopC27”. This bill that was submitted by federal Finance Minister, Bill Morneau, is attacking good defined benefit plans for our federal workers. Make no mistake, if this bill is passed, its already made its first reading, this will create an incredible amount of pressure for us at the bargaining tables to defend our defined benefit plans.

Our responsibility as elected leadership and delegates to this council is to inform our members back home and in our workplaces about what’s at risk. We need to educate them on these issues, and we have been elected to do so. So, I ask every one of you to do what we’ve been sent here to do and bring this information back. This is an opportunity to mobilize our members. We do know that pensions are very important to our members, and we’re asking you to support this. There’s a letter campaign, so go online to “www.unifor.org”, very easy, there’s a draft letter. So, it’s easy for our members to participate in and it’s already drafted.

In early November, the Regional Political Action Committee members and TPP coordinators from across Canada went to Ottawa, as you’ve heard from Gwen, and we were sent on behalf of Unifor. We sent our message to over 50 MPs that the TPP is not a good deal for Canadians. We urged them to vote “No” on the TPP and start focusing their efforts on building a fair-trade future that protects Canadians. Unifor had radio ads, and I think -- is it cued up?

--- Whereupon a radio ad was played

JODI NESBITT: So, with that -- that’s pretty incredible. Between that and the huge newspaper ad on the day that we arrived to start lobbying the MPs, it was no doubt that Ottawa knew that Unifor meant business. It was so apparent that we know more than them on this issue. So, I just also want to note that there is no other union or civil society organization that has done more to push back on the TPP than Unifor.

Although it appears that the U.S. is going to kill this trade deal, our campaign must not end here. We will continue to work in our workplaces and continue to go to MPs, to continue to impress the importance on fair trade and
show them what that looks like. We’ve been involved in numerous campaigns and involved, specifically, the Make it Fair campaign. Our committee attended a demonstration on October 1st at Queen’s Park.

Unifor’s presence on these important political campaigns do help change lives for so many. So, regardless if they’re unionized or not, and I’m proud to be part of this organization, the Ontario Regional Council and the Political Action Committee. So, thank you all for all your work. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks, Jodi. Great job. In saying that, just like we’ve done before, we’re not going to take any questions for our committee reports, but Rolly Kiehne is the director for Political Action. And, if there are any questions that needed to be directed with regards to Political Action, please make sure you reach Rolly, and he’ll be happy to sit down with you and talk about some of the campaigns that we will be working through over the next year.

I believe Nancy Peckford is back. Thank you very much. And, in saying that, what we want to do, because we recognize the hard work and initiative that Nancy works through, and we obviously appreciate Antu Hossain who came and spoke to us so passionately. And, in saying that, what we want to do is just put a motion on the floor, having a conversation between the executive board up here, that we provide a donation of $10,000.00 to your organization, Daughters of the Vote. Can I have a mover?

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

Thank you very much. Okay. So, what I’m going to do now, just to keep on going with the momentum that we have, is I would like to ask Candace, if she could come up to the podium, and Jim Reid, on behalf of the Resolutions Committee to go back to the resolution that we had worked on this morning. I think it’s important that we bring that back to the floor, sooner than later. So, I would like to get that done today and we’ll read through that resolution and go back to the mics to try and get that completed.

RESOLUTION NO. 1 AMENDED: EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE/CANADA PENSION PLAN STANDING COMMITTEE, EFAP AND ADDICTIONS COMMITTEE AND WORKERS’ COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

CANDACE LAVALLEY: So, this is Resolution number 1, the one that was -- it’s amended. Employment Insurance/Canada Pension Plan Standing Committee, EFAP and Addictions Committee and Worker’s Compensation Committee.

WHEREAS Unifor recognizes union members and members of their families can be troubled by a wide range of issues including but not limited to depressions and other mental health issues, grief over personal loss, family breakdown, debt, effects of violence or bullying, Addiction and Substance abuse dependency, behaviour-based addictions and other issues of a similar nature; and

WHEREAS governments and corporations continuously attack both Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan programs; and

WHEREAS all Unifor members will at some time in their lifetime have the ability to collect benefits under the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security; and

WHEREAS Unifor members that are unfortunately laid off either temporarily or permanently or become sick with no benefits or become parents will access Employment Insurance Programs; and

WHEREAS Unifor members and leadership need to be educated on the changes to the Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan legislation and the effects on members; and

WHEREAS Ontario Council already provides space for unofficial EFAP/Addiction and EI/CPP Committees and a platform for them to discuss their challenges and needs, while supporting Unifor members through its conferences and committee meetings leadership can provide for our members;

WHEREAS every worker is a workplace accident away from being in a vulnerable situation or dealing with the worker’s compensation system that puts the interest of the employer ahead of injured workers and their families.
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ontario Regional Council immediately appoint standing committees that include representation for EFAP, EI/CPP and WC respectively.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the EFAP and the EI/CPP and WC committees be afforded all the same rights and privileges as currently defined in the Ontario Regional Council bylaws.

Respectively submitted by Locals 88 and 707, and the Resolution Committee has concurred with this resolution.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. Looking to take speakers. Speaker at mic 6.

GARY PARENT: Thank you very much, Dino. Gary Parent, Local 444 and Retired Workers Executive. I just want to thank through you to the committee for the prompt action on this important issue in adding Worker’s Comp to the resolution. Obviously, I speak in favour of the resolution, and I would hope that this resolution will go forward to the other regions to make sure that we get them also onboard for their particular regions as well. Thank you very much, again. Injured workers and everyone involved in this resolution, thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Gary. Speaker at mic 4.

DAVE MCCORMICK: Dave McCormick, Local 414. I just want to say thank you. Thank you for putting the interest of our most vulnerable employees, our most vulnerable members at the centre of this great union. Thank you so much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Speaker at mic 6.

JEFF RAMACKERS: Jeff Ramackers, Local 88. I stand in support of this resolution. I would like to start off by thanking Peter Kennedy for his unwavering support of our former, initially, substance abuse, and Employee and Family Assistance Program/Addictions Committee. The entire leadership has stood behind us. This resolution is by no way a slight against anybody.

When I got to the mic beforehand, just before I did, I was messaging with one of our employees at work, a sister was going through suicidal ideation. By the time we broke for lunch, I got another phone call that one of our brothers in my workplace died this morning. This brother attempted suicide seven times. This is a very, very real issue, and I commend our union for the tremendous work they have done in improving the lives of workers, and I truly feel this is another step we must take. I appreciate our leadership for allowing us to move this forward, and continue the work and improve the work that we do to help keep our members alive and healthy. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Good job, brother. Speaker at mic 4.

NADIA ANTON-COLLINS: Nadia Anton-Collins, Financial Secretary, Local 707. I rise in support of the recommendation. As a matter of fact, my local union submitted a recommendation to the Constitutional Convention to be implemented in our constitution that would provide Worker’s Compensation assistance to all of our members across the country.

So, I thank Brother Parent to bring this to the attention of the Resolutions Committee and make it one big happy family. Our members do need all the help, and thank you to the Resolutions Committee for accepting it.

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

DAN BORTHWICK: Dan Borthwick, Local 88, President, and I, too, rise in support of this resolution. I believe it’s very important to the members here to take this information back to their locals and let them know that Unifor, and always has been, and is now reaffirming their commitment to the three areas mentioned in this resolution.

These are three very important areas that we deal with on a day-to-day basis that our members face on a day-to-day basis with addictions, mental illness and the benefits that usually coincide with these situations, such as EI, sick benefits, Canada Pension Plan, disability benefits and all the other issues go -- and, subsequently, Worker’s Compensation benefits. The negative effects that the decisions that WSIB makes that affects our members in the workplace.

So, I would like to commend the Resolutions Committee for concurrence of this resolution and ask everyone here to support this very important resolution going forward. Thank you.

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

JOHN TOTH: John Toth, Local 195. I, too, stand in support of the resolution. These committees represent a valuable resource to our membership in terms of advocating, in terms of educating and in terms of assisting our members. The EI/CPP Committee, just for one example, some of the people that were on the past committee, people like Dan Borthwick, the previous speaker, people like Cammie Peirce, out of the National Office, represent a wealth of knowledge and can answer questions, can help people through difficult situations. If you’re faced with a difficult
situation in your local that you don’t know the answer to, these are people you can pick up the phone and call, and get that information, unlike the 1-800 number that EI supplies.

So, I urge the delegates to support the resolution and to support those committees when they’re involved in political action, political action campaigns such as the campaign to increase CPP and secure Old Age Security. That was a major success by our union, and those campaigns are grassroots campaigns that the committees are active in. So, when they call on you for support, please support them, please support the resolution, and make sure you tap into that valuable resource whenever you need it as well. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Is there a speaker on mic 6? Speaker on mic 6.

TAWNY EDWARDS: Brothers and sisters, it’s Tawny Edwards again, and just to let you know, the United Way has a 24-hour hotline, 2-1-1, for any of your members struggling with any issues from hydro bills, mental health issues. It’s a resource that is valuable in the workplace. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Seeing no speakers at the mic.

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

Thank you very much. Good job. What we’ve just done is we’ve made ourselves that much stronger by being able to have our members, more members participate through different committees. And, in saying that, it’ll give more resources and opportunities for people to connect and get information, and I think we’ve done a great service to our union. So, thank you very much, brothers and sisters.

That being said, I would like to ask the indulgence of the membership to go on just a few more minutes. I would like to get another report in. It’s the last report of the day. It’s with regards to organizing, an important group in our organization. We’re growing day-by-day, and in saying that, it takes a group of people to really put an effort forward and get that accomplished and done. In saying that, I would like to recognize John Aman in the Organizing Department and all the hard work and dedication his group does on a regular basis. John Aman.

ORGANIZING DEPARTMENT REPORT

JOHN AMAN: Thank you, Dino, for those kind words, and I recognize it’s late in the day. There’s been a lot of good business that’s been done, so rest assured, you will be receiving the redacted version of my report. But, I’m around all week if you want to chat or even chat after the fact. Obviously, we’ll be there for you.

From the outset, the New Union Project emphasized the importance of organizing, both the moment of truth original document and Proposal Committee final report ensuring that Unifor will be an organizing union. The organizing policy adopted at the founding convention was a framework to realize the vision of Unifor as an organizing union. A key part of our plans was also the report back to all of you in accountability, which I want to just touch upon today. In your kits, you’ll see all the department reports, and you’ll find the organizing report there, so please take the time to review it at your leisure, and if you have any questions, direct them to me.

But, basically, what we do in that document, there were three main documents that we were working from. One was the organizing policy that was adopted at the founding convention, Union Forward. Two, the outside the box, the innovative, Broadening Union Citizenship, which dealt with a community chapter, and Jerry referenced a little bit about that earlier. And then subsequent to forming Unifor, there’s a committee that was formed of the senior leadership of the union, the Council Executives, the National Executive Board who ultimately adopted the 2015 Strategic Plan for the union moving forward.

And, those of you at our convention obviously saw much a more detailed report of the work of the organization, of the union. And, again, like I’ve always said in the past, none of the credit belongs to myself or the staff. We have good staff. They work very hard on your behalf. The reason we’re able to have success in organizing is because of the work that you do day in and day out, not only in fighting on advocacy, on social issues, such as some of the ones you saw today, but the work that you do day in, day out representing your members in the workplaces and giving the union the credibility it needs out there, and why so many non-unionized workers want to join Unifor, first and foremost.

So, in the three years of organizing, as I alluded to originally, was the organizing policy that was -- and, I’ll touch upon that piece of it a little bit later on, Union Forward. Key to our success was going to be provisions that were
integrated and enshrined in our constitution that enables -- you know, that fosters the culture of organizing. And, most of you are aware, 10 percent of our national dues are allocated to organizing. We have the community chapter program, oath of offices, regular report back, all to make sure that the organizing stays front and centre. It’s not good enough anymore to talk about organizing, to adopt some great policies only to show them when we get back. I mean, Jerry had mentioned in the past, it’s time the union started playing some offence even in our organizing efforts, and we need to be moving forward and ensuring that we hold our feet to the fire.

So, since the formation of Unifor and, again, you guys deserve all this credit, over 16,000 workers have joined Unifor. We have a very high success rate on certification votes, 80 percent plus and, in fact, two of those units that Jerry had mentioned today, ParaMed and BioAmber, we lost the vote there about a year ago, and the only reason we probably waited a year is because of the statutory limitation in Ontario. You have to wait a year. Including another unit, Accucaps, who represent the sister plant in 195 in Windsor, and we had the first vote in Strathroy, and almost to the day when we were eligible, we were successful.

So, we don’t lose votes in organizing. They’re campaigns we haven’t won yet, or as my predecessor, Paul Forder, used to say, delayed victories. Lisa spoke about the role of women in unions, and -- well, also the community chapter projects which are coming along. They were a little slow off the mark because of the vast nature of it and the amount of work that’s involved, but Roxanne Dubois has been doing great work on this file, and some of you -- I think there’s a picture of them on the agenda, actually, on the top left, second page, you’ll see our newest community chapter, the East Danforth Women’s Network.

Seventy percent of the 16,000 folks that joined our union are women, so kudos to the women recognizing that their best ability to succeed on all the issues that Lisa had highlighted in her report is through a union. So, they deserve to be commended for that. And then disproportionately, a higher number of equity groups that are joining the union. So, the face of our union is changing. I know there’s a number of parallel programs going on, equity survey, trying to get the landscape of the union. But, clearly, I mean, most organizers would tell you that the people joining the union are the new Canadians, racialized women, and that’s a good thing, by the way. I think it adds a lot of energy, diversity to the organization, but as a group, we obviously have to recognize the new challenges we face when we represent different people moving forward. And, I know that the leadership is fully mindful of that.

Out of the 16,000, 9,800 of the members have been in Ontario. So, Ontario gets -- again, it is the biggest part of the union and does get a lot of activity. The other highlight was the organizing forum in 2015 that rolled out a lot of -- well, first of all, the All In Campaign, but also tools and resources for the locals and our leadership to use to implement in the workplace to, again, further their organizing activity.

And then as mandated, another constitutional mandate was to have the regular organizing forum. So, the next organizing forum will be held in Winnipeg just before the Canada Council, so for those of you who were there for the first one, you realize how much you got out of it, and we certainly hope to see as many of you there as possible in August of 2017.

The one piece I just want to touch upon briefly was in regards to the organizing policy which outlined -- and this is available online on the Unifor website, outlined a number of areas where the union had to address in order to build a union culture and to really expand our efforts. I think Peter Kennedy was the one that challenged us at convention. He referred to the fact that we’ve done a good job in organizing. We organized lots of members, but there’s no reason why we can’t triple, quadruple it moving forward, and I happen to agree. Yes, that does put a lot of pressure on us, and that’s fine, but the fact of the matter is we know workers want unions. We know what model works, and the key to our success is going to be the work that all of you play in moving ahead.

And, again, the other piece of it is also the local union organizing program which I’ll touch upon, but we’ve adopted good organizing models, strategic organizing priorities, the role enhancing our collective agreement language to mitigate the response from companies. Sometimes when we’re organizing in their sister companies, it’s amazing how an employer behaves. On one hand, they want a very good relationship with the union when dealing with the day-to-day problems, but if their employees and other workplaces want to join the union, then they act no different than the most regressive employers.

So, we can mitigate some of that, and I know in the recent bargaining with the Detroit Three, there were provisions that were negotiated that are going to help in our organizing efforts. And, I’m not sure if I’m at liberty to say what they are yet, but Jerry can jump in and add them if he thinks it’s the appropriate time to talk about it.

Organizing and social unionism. Obviously, advocating for progressive change in our economic and social environmental policies, looking at how we can use the tools of today to fight the challenges of tomorrow, such as social
media and the different provisions that are available nowadays in order for us to do a broader outreach, being a lot more, I think, progressive and advanced in the work that we do. And, one of the things -- Walter Reuther said that. He said, you can’t solve the problems of tomorrow with the tools of yesterday, so we need to adapt to the changing times, help the demographics of the people we’re trying to target, and a whole host of other issues.

And, another piece of the policy is, of course, the financial support at 10 percent and national departments, specialized resources that support our campaigns, strategic campaigns where we can increase the density in those industries where our members work in. So, that would give us a much greater voice at the bargaining table advocating on behalf of our members.

The training component, not only the training of the organizing, constant training of the staff, but providing training available for our activists and our leadership. You heard a little bit about the fair laws, and you’ll hear some more about that tomorrow, and the Changing Workplaces Review, but key to our success is ensuring, and there’s a number of -- definitely in Ontario, we’re having some good discussions and work on the labour laws, but also in places like Alberta and British Columbia, we have some good opportunities. And then the other piece of the policy was the community chapter work that we were mandated to take on.

So, the last key piece, I think, is -- again, I think it speaks to the culture. I think too many times we talk -- and, again, it’s all on us because we talk to our members, our activists about how important organizing is, but I don’t think we provide enough guidance or tools in order to have you play a role in our organizing efforts. And, I think this paragraph -- I pulled this paragraph out of the policy because I think it’s very important and something that we need to be conscious of in the work that we do moving forward.

The organizing policy makes it clear that the union must organize new members in order to maintain and increase its power at the bargaining table, in the political sphere and in communities across Canada. As such, organizing must be a priority in all parts of the union and there must be a conscious effort to build an “organizing culture”. Organizing needs to be integrated in all aspects of the union, and everything we do needs to be looked at through an organizing lens.

There are many workers out there that want a union, and we are the vehicle of them taking that first step, and understanding the role that we have to play, whether it’s our educational work and our educational programs. There’s a much greater emphasis on our organizing efforts. I know, internally, we’re having meetings with different department heads, the Women’s Department, Political Mobilization, Human Rights, how we can collectively work and integrate the work that we do in our activists in order to help us build a union because -- and the other key is the role that your local can play in helping organize our union.

This is the second last slide. So, obviously, part of the work that we’re doing is the outreach to various local unions and activists and the role that they can play in supporting our organizing efforts. The initial strategic sectoral targets we’ve identified. We’ve had some very good success, especially in the gaming sector. Health care, we’ve liberated a number of folks from CLAC, and then the IPS. One of the IPS task force has some clear recommendation for our organizing efforts, which we’re implementing. There’s a number of locals engaged in the local union organizing program, and 87-M’s coming back onboard. Local 1285 recently had another great victory at Xerox Canada, and a number of different workplaces through the leadership of Leon and Justin Minello, our organizer.

So, there’s a lot of work to be done, and we need to all, I guess, collectively work together in collaboration and understanding that -- I think this is key to our success. It doesn’t matter how many staff that the union employs or hires. At the end of the day, where workers first connect with the union is in their communities, through the local union. It’s the work that all of you do day in and day out. So, I think we need to find ways that we can -- and develop plans, and we’re willing to do that, sit down with all of you, as many of you, and to figure out how best can the local assist us in our organizing efforts.

And, the beauty of it all is 99 percent of the time, if a local’s involved in our organizing efforts, those members are part of that local. So, it helps increase that local’s additional resources, new members, diversity. Again, there are some challenges we face, but I think at the end of the day, we’re a much better organization when we increase our tent.

So, with that is my contact information up there, or our contact information. I strongly urge all of you to consider your role in organizing, just like it is in political action, bargaining or education. It’s very imperative that we get as many of you assisting us as we can, and if we do that, I think, truly, we’ll all be much better off. So, again, thank you very much. Have a great rest of the conference, and I think it’s happy hour time.
DINO CHIODO: John, thanks for the great presentation providing us a lot of information on how we’re building and growing, and thanks for the great work that your Organizing Department does to make sure that we can continue to expand our great organization.

That being said, I do have a few announcements that I want to go to before we conclude. We do have a caucus meeting here for the Unity Team caucus right here in the Grand Ballroom upon adjournment. At the same time, right after our Unity Team caucus has completed, there will be an Aboriginal and Workers of Colour caucus meeting in the Sheraton Hall A.

Also, I would like to recognize Local 200, if I could. I know Chris Taylor -- I’m not sure if he’s in the room right now, and I know there was some discussion with reference to what went on in bargaining, especially some of the great achievements that happened at the Ford table, especially with the investment in their engine plant in Windsor, Ontario. But, I raise Local 200 because they will be celebrating their 75th anniversary in 2017, and they will be celebrating that in spring. So, I wish them all the very best. Seventy-five years of progressiveness is just amazing and they’re doing a wonderful job in Windsor-Essex County promoting working class people every day.

At the same time, I wanted to announce the Canadian Labour Congress Convention that will be coming up May 8th to 12th, and you might ask, “Why are you bringing that up so early for 2017?” It’ll be held right here in Toronto. It’s because we will be having an election at the Canadian Labour Congress Convention, and Hassan Yussuff, one of our own, the President currently, went through a very tenacious election going back a few years ago. And, in saying that, I’m just asking all of you to make sure that you do register as delegates so you could participate in that election. We’ll need all the votes there, and I’m asking everybody to make sure that they put that down on their calendar, May 8th to May 12th, 2017.

Also, with that said, on Sunday, the ORC, again, is hosting that optional workshop. There’s still some space available. Again, if individuals are interested, please register at the registration desk or the VIP room on the concourse floor. At the same time, I would like to make sure that I remind everybody about the Young Workers caucus breakfast meeting that will be held tomorrow morning, 8:00 a.m. in the boardroom on the 43rd floor. And, delegates, if you can, please make sure you remember to wear your t-shirts, the t-shirts that came with the ticket in your kit, and then you went and got the proper size for your shirt. That is for tomorrow and it’s in support of persons with disabilities for International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

And, in saying that, I just wanted to thank everybody for a wonderful first day of our conference. It’s just been phenomenal. There has been a lot of great speakers, some good debates. And, in saying that, you have all made us that much more proud being part of this great organization. And, in saying that, we thank you for participating. So, thank you very much. Have a wonderful evening and we look forward to seeing you here tomorrow morning, 9:00. Again, caucus will be in this same room, 5:00 p.m., or as soon as we’re concluded here. So, please, anybody that wants to stay, you’re more than welcome to participate in the Unity Team caucus. Thank you very much.

--- Whereupon the meeting is adjourned at 5:11 p.m.
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2016

--- Upon commencing at 9:10 a.m.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

DINO CHIODO: Well, I hope everybody had a good night last night. We had an excellent regional council for yesterday. It was well received. We got a lot of good comments over the course of the evening, and I’m sure a few people are feeling great this morning, a couple might not be feeling so good, and that’s why we decided to get coffee again. So, if you need a coffee, make sure you go out in the foyer and get one. We’re going to be starting in the next couple of minutes and get everything in line for today.

We’ve got an excellent program that’s going to be put together with reference today. We have a number of great speakers, and we’re looking forward to some good debate and discussion on the recommendations that are before us, and that were discussed by Naureen yesterday.

That being said, I do want to put a couple of announcements before we do get started today with reference to tomorrow. We’re hosting a workshop. We’ve talked about it a number of times, but at the same time, there’s still a few seats available. If anybody’s interested, you could register at the VIP room or at the registration desk. It’s going to be a workshop that talks about mental illness, and it will give you, as a workplace representative, the tools necessary to be able to make sure that you can deal with individuals that are suffering from any type of mental illness. And, at the same time, if anybody’s experiencing any types of mental illnesses, this is a good precursor to be able to get the tools necessary to cope with it yourselves.

I also want to thank all the delegates who did remember to wear your Unifor shirt with regards to Workers with disAbilities on International Day of Persons with Disabilities. We appreciate that, making sure that we recognize individuals that have challenges, have disabilities and have to go into work each and every day. At the same time, if you do tweet out a post, if you can, make sure to remember to use, #IDPD2016. Get that Twitter post out there just in support of workers with disabilities, and that’s in support of International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

At the same time, if you’re going to put any tweets out with reference to this Ontario Regional Council, I know we said it was, #UniforORC, although you can use that, we would also ask that you use, #ORC2016, that way we could track it a little bit easier and capitalize on that. So, it will be, #ORC2016 for any of your Twitter posts on behalf of Ontario Regional Council.

We’ll be debating a number of recommendations today. I believe there’s five in total that we’ll be trying to make sure we get through. Recommendations number 5 and number 4 will be happening early today. We’ll be trying to get through those in the next couple of hours. At the same time, number 6 will be heard as soon as our first speaker has concluded today, and Recommendations number 1 and number 3 will happen after lunch. That’s the intended process for the recommendations.

At the same time, obviously, there’s some fluidity, and in saying that, we can move things around, but we’re trying to make sure we give everybody a head’s up so they’re ready, they could be in the room to be able to get to the mics if they need to with regards to particular recommendations.

We do have a rally that’s going to be held today at lunch time. It’s your $15.00 and Fairness rally for holiday carolling action with our Young Workers at about, I believe, 12:30. Roxanne is going to be at the top of the escalators. And, if anybody would like to participate, we’re encouraging everybody to participate. Please be there between 12:30 and 12:45 to be able to go down to Dundas Square. It’s about a 7 or 8 minute walk and, again, it’s a great cause for the $15.00 and Fairness holiday carolling action rally, and we would encourage as many people as possible to be able to participate in that.

At the same time, your Workers with disAbilities caucus will be held today at lunch time. That caucus is going to be in the Sheraton Hall A. So, for the Workers with disAbilities, again, at lunch time, upon adjournment, you will have a caucus meeting in Sheraton Hall A. And, at the same time, your LGBTQ caucus will be taking place at lunch time also in the Wentworth Room. So, in the Wentworth Room, that will be taking place. So, if you can at lunch time, please make it for that event.

Before we do get started, what I would like to do is just introduce a few individuals. Now that Laura Hargrove is on the stage, you don’t have to go any place, Laura, right now, but I do want to take a minute because this has been a little bit of a complicated process trying to put everything together, organize all the rooms, the gifts, the speakers, the agenda that we walk through. She’s just done an amazing job, and I just wanted to make sure I could recognize all of her hard work and dedication behind the scene. Just fabulous. Thank you very much.
I also want to recognize a special guest and, really, he’s not a special guest, but at the same time, he does a tremendous amount of work for this local union. He is our newly elected Financial Secretary. I want to make sure I give kudos on where it’s due, and I want to recognize Bob Orr for all his hard work and dedication. Bob, thanks for what you do.

I know I made an announcement yesterday with regards to Local 200 and their anniversary, but I would be remiss if I didn’t mention one of the oldest locals in Canada that was part of UAW and CAW. They signed their charter, the first charter for the UAW in Canada, and I want to recognize Gerry Farnham and Local 195. They’ll be celebrating their 80th anniversary this year. Congratulations to you guys. Great job. Keep up the great work, representing some 52 workplace with about 3,500 members, and you guys do a tremendous job in Windsor-Essex County. So, thank you very much.

Also, I would like to recognize -- I think I saw John Cartwright in the room. He does an amazing amount of work representing, I’m going to say, upwards of 60,000 or 70,000 workers with his Labour Council in the Toronto and York Region. So, to John Cartwright, who does a tremendous amount of work and amazing job, I just want to say thank you very much and recognize you as one of our guests here at our Ontario Regional Council. So, thank you, John Cartwright.

Also, an amazing individual, also out of the Windsor-Essex County Region. She’s done a tremendous amount of work, an employee out of Local 200. She’s just a phenomenal woman, has so much energy and does just a great job as a Member of Parliament representing her constituents. She defeated Jeff Watson going back in the last election, and is just outspoken and really knows the issues, talking about TPP, the auto industry and everything that’s important for people in Essex County. I want to really recognize Tracey Ramsey. She does an amazing job day in and day out. Just an awesome person. If you get a chance to talk to her, please reach out and do that at some point today as well.

That being said, I want to, if I can, make sure I remind people to turn your phones, not off, but put them on vibrate, at least, just to give respect to other individuals so they can hear what’s going on over the course of the day today. And, again, if people can please keep the noise levels down. There was a few complaints that we received yesterday because people are talking in little pockets, and it’s a little hard for individuals to hear.

There’s a lot of great speakers and we want to give them the respect and courtesy to be able to hear what they are talking about and, again, making sure you hear the message that’s being conveyed as they are speaking. So, thank you for that, and if you have to talk, please go outside and just come in, in orderly fashion, to be able to hear the rest of the discussion that does take place, and I thank you in advance for that. So, thank you very much.

With that being said, what I’m going to do is I’m going to bring up the Credentials Committee. Actually, I do have a point on mic 4, I think?

SHAWN ROUSE: Yes.

DINO CHIODO: Point of privilege, mic 4.

SHAWN ROUSE: Thank you very much. My name is Shawn Rouse and I am the President of the Ontario or National Health Care Council, and we’re here as caucus at this Ontario Regional Council. And, I stand here in great pride and gratitude to the members, and delegates, and guests, and the executive and staff who have given their resources to help support the Ontario Health Coalition. We’re doing a 50/50 draw today just after lunch. And, the support has been overwhelming. We’re actually getting to the point where we’re running out of tickets to sell.

But, the winner today after lunch will go home with a very substantial Christmas present as a result of this overwhelming gratitude and gracious support for the hard work that the Ontario Health Coalition does without pause, an organization that works on volunteers and community groups all across this province to defending health care in every shape and format from all parts of Ontario; Niagara, Ottawa, down to Windsor, and otherwise.

So, I’m standing here today, very shortly, to say thank you, but also to let you know that we are running out of tickets. So, if you want to buy into the 50/50 draw, we’ll be up just after lunch to have our draw in public so everyone can see the massive tickets and the choice of the winner, and they’ll be able to congratulate everybody at that time. So, thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: So, that being said, and I appreciate you getting up at the mic and talking about that with the raffle tickets. What our intent is going to be, and that’s why I’m going to ask everybody right now, get out and buy those tickets because whatever you raise, we’re going to match it because what you guys do is amazing and we want to make sure that we can do that and bring it back after lunch to ---

SHAWN ROUSE: Thank you very much. Thank you.

PETER SCOTT: Peter Scott, Local 199. I just wanted to say happy anniversary to Local 195, all the brothers and sisters there. And, also point out that two weeks after they signed the charter, Local 199 signed a charter on, I think, December 13th, 1936. So, to my brothers and sisters at Local 199, happy anniversary. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. I don’t see any other points of privilege, so what we’ll do is we’ll get on with the order of the business of the day, and I am going to ask the Credentials Committee to come on up here. You can tell the report’s pretty big. I’m going to have Shelley read it. She couldn’t read the smaller version, so we made sure we had a document that she would be able to see. So, we’re going to have Shelley come on up and do the report on behalf of the Credentials Committee.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

SHELLEY SMITH: Good morning, everybody. The Ontario Director’s office sent out 758 credentials to 252 local unions. In addition, the office sent credentials to the National Executive Board members and the National Council of Retired Executive members.

As of December 3rd, 2016, the Ontario Director received 460 credentials representing 120 local unions, the National Executive and the National Council of Retired Workers. As of 8:50 a.m. today, registered for convention are 428 delegates representing 116 local unions, and the National Executive Board and the National Council of Retired Workers Executive.

The delegation is represented by 121 female, 103 male delegates. In addition, there are 133 national representatives, 20 special delegates with voice, no vote. There are also 24 alternates, 9 special guests, 74 observers and 13 other staff in attendance. In total, there are 227 female attendees and 478 male attendees. Total attendants, 707.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much to David Cayer and Shelley Smith for the credentials report. Getting into the order of the business for the day, we will have a speaker on behalf of the workers with disabilities, and I’ll have Derek MacLeod please come up and introduce the guest speakers.

DEREK MACLEOD: Good morning. As trade unionists, we know the importance of building an inclusive workplace, and together our union works to build a more equitable and inclusive society. Inclusion can mean different things to each of us. For workers with disability, inclusion must start with removing the physical, social and attitudinal barriers that too often prevent participation.

Last month, Unifor made a submission to advocate for accessibility legislation and the creation of a Canadian Disabilities Act. This submission is available in all your delegate kits, and it’s at the Human Rights table just outside in the hall. This Act was created, this federal law would have tremendous potential to positively impact the everyday lives of people with disabilities and to remove barriers.

Today, we are pleased to have with us a champion of justice, someone who knows firsthand about the need to push and demand the removal of barriers for people with disabilities, and that person is Bonnie Braynton, the National Executive Director of the DisAbled Women’s Network of Canada, DAWN.

Bonnie was named one of Canada’s bold visionaries in 2014. She is someone who has made an extraordinary impact to represent women with disabilities, both domestically and internationally for almost 10 years. In a society which devalues and often punishes differences of any kind, women with disabilities face many barriers in the workplace and society at large. DAWN’s mission is to end the poverty, isolation, discrimination and violence too often experienced by women with disabilities. Please welcome, Bonnie Braynton.

DISABLED WOMEN’S NETWORK (DAWN), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BONNIE BRAYNTON

BONNIE BRAYNTON: First, thanks very much, Ron. That was really wonderful. Sorry, Derek. Excuse me. Thank you, Derek. Good morning, brothers and sisters and friends. Hello. I would like to start, before we begin, with acknowledging that we’re on Indigenous land, the land of the Huron-Wendat, the Petun First Nations and the Seneca and the Mississaugas. And, again, to remind everyone that we’re in a time of truth and reconciliation, and that it’s very important to always acknowledge that wherever we are and whatever we do.

It’s a land of many and it’s a land that belongs to many, including people with disabilities. I want to thank, again, Derek, and Unifor and, of course, Sister Lana, and Rolly Kiehne for bringing me here this morning to share this incredible day with you. I had no idea how many people would be here. It’s very exciting to be standing up here and an opportunity to talk with all of you today.

So, first off, happy International Day for People with Disabilities, everybody. I also want to thank Unifor for their tireless efforts and support of disability rights, and women’s rights, and Indigenous rights and, fundamentally, human
rights. I’m happy to be here also to get you warmed up for a big day, including the fact that it’s important, of course, to support the initiative of barriers. It’s time.

I’m so impressed with Unifor, and hope that all the membership will get behind the leadership of the Human Rights Department, and the Workers with disAbilities Committee and, of course, all of us. In order to do that, one of the key things that we need to do, of course, is to support the new legislation to address the barriers faced by people with disabilities and deaf people. We would also like to share with you today that we like the National Accessibility and Inclusion Act as the name for the new Act because we think it’s more inclusive and positive than the National Disability Act. So, we’re hoping that when Minister Qualtrough and Parliament bring this forward, that they will actually call it an Accessiblity Act, instead of a Disability Act.

So, I was in Ottawa all of this week, brothers and sisters, and because of that, it’s been a bit of an intense week, but also a really important week. We were there training our women, in terms of media training, because giving a voice to people with disabilities, which is what you’ve done here today, is critical to really getting that message out.

And so, we were also working with our partners from the disability community including the Council of Canadians with Disabilities on a shadow report. A shadow report on the convention on the rights of people with disabilities and, again, the Government of Canada is going before the committee in Geneva in March. I want to acknowledge at this time, also, that DAWN Canada was privileged to go to Geneva in August of 2016 to meet with that committee. Thanks, again, to the labour movement and the sponsorship by the Canadian Labour Congress.

In terms of the other meeting that I heard this week, just yesterday, it was at Global Affairs, and it was a meeting about human rights and Canada’s performance on the international stage. And, to be really clear, Canada has slipped. Canada has slipped in so many different ways. We’re all aware of the fact that we’ve gone from being close to the top country to support women’s rights well down the ladder to, I believe, somewhere in the 20’s perhaps.

In terms of recent human rights reports and Canada’s performance under the CESR, which is the Centre for Economic and Social Rights, again, Canada is failing people with disabilities. In terms of the CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, again, a fail for Canada, especially with regard to Indigenous women and women with disabilities, and deaf women.

And, despite this, we do have some leadership under the new government that I think is important to highlight, including the fact of Minister Qualtrough, as we heard about already, moving forward with the possibility of legislation. She’s been touring Canada and she’s also been providing funding to national disability organizations and Indigenous organizations to provide further input, and to speak with our people directly, and you are our people.

So, I want you to know that it’s very important to us, and that we are going to be working closely with the unions to get your input, your position and your views on how we see this legislation moving forward because it is only through partnership that we really can move the agenda forward.

Indeed, I think we are at a convergent moment, my friends. And, that convergent moment is around many different things. One of the most exciting things that happened when I was in Ottawa, and many of you had probably heard this, although it didn’t get the media coverage it should, is that the Government of Canada, through Minister Dion and Minister Qualtrough, announced this week that they are going to begin negotiations for signing the optional protocol on convention on the rights of people with disabilities. Can I have a shout out and a thanks and a hooray for that? About time.

Why is this so important? Well, I’ll go to the fact that Canada, long ago, fortunately for women in this country and especially Indigenous women, signed the optional protocol on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. And, to explain to everyone that it was with the mechanism of the optional protocol that Sharon McIvor and women’s organizations in this country were able to take the Harper government to task and went to the UN, and we have the missing and murdered women’s inquiry now because of that. So, it’s really important to understand that supporting these other human rights instruments is critical to protecting us in difficult times and always.

I think the other thing that I would like to point out, since we have touched on the missing and murdered women’s inquiry, is to be clear on the fact that one of our greatest disappointments, however, is that Indigenous women with disabilities have not been included in any of this work, and in any of the understanding of the fact that when we get to the systemic issues, disability is at the core of many different oppressions that these women have faced.

And, again, I’m talking about convergence is that -- and, I’m not sure how many people here know that the 2015 Human Rights Commission Report for Canada had nearly 60 percent of all human rights complaints; 60 percent of all human rights complaints were disability related, brothers and sisters. That’s big. That’s really big.
And so, thinking about that, and what that means on scale, is that we are at a time when disability rights needs to be at the centre of the human rights discourse in Canada, and I want to, again, congratulate Unifor for recognizing that here today, and making disability rights a focus.

Canadians with disabilities have 43 issues under the current list of issues from the Committee on the Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities. In that list of issues, there’s a strong focus on Indigenous people, women, the deaf community, and people with disabilities in institutional settings, including long-term care, including prisons, and including, sadly, still, the reality that too many people with disabilities are not supported to live in their communities and, instead, are faced with living in institutions because there is nowhere else for them.

I think the other thing that’s important to think about when we think about what the long-term results of the oppression of people with disabilities is that it’s in many different places and in many different ways we don’t fully understand. And, I’m talking, at this point, about the criminalization of people with disabilities, and I don’t know how many people in this room know this, but more than 40 percent of women in prisons in Ontario have two things in common. One is that before they were in prison, they sustained a brain injury and that they experienced childhood sexual abuse. And, of course, abuse and violence against women with disabilities and girls with disabilities is one of the reasons DAWN Canada came to exist and continues to exist.

I will ask all of you to make sure that during the 12 and 16 days, whether you’re following the Quebec or the English campaigns is to follow DAWN’s campaign for the 16 days. We did a Twitter teaching yesterday, and I will certainly be doing some hash tagging today to link you all up to our Twitter account. I will be following you, and I’m asking you to follow us also.

Coming back to that point, right here in the City of Toronto, the same woman who did that research, Dr. Angela Colantonio, from the University of Toronto, also brought to light the fact that more than half of the people who are homeless in Toronto also live with a disability, a brain injury.

Another piece of research -- again, just to really amplify how big this issue is, and I know you understand, but it’s important to carry this information and share it with others, is that in a research that was done with sex workers in British Colombia, more than 35 percent of those sex workers revealed that before they became sex workers, they already had a long-term disability. So, again, more and more examples of the marginalization of women and girls particularly, and the fact that we have had no response with meaning for people with disabilities. And, of course, what it points to is the need, the critical need for system change, which is, again, why this legislation is so critical and so urgently needed.

DAWN Canada is currently doing a project called Legislation Policy and Service Responses to Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women. We’re doing this project here in Ontario, in Quebec and in British Colombia. Why are we doing this? Because we need to provide people with the empirical evidence and we need to make sure that policy reform is the next step. Legislative reform and policy reform will lead to better services and better responses for people with disabilities.

Between 35 and 80 percent -- this is one that I really want you to hold on to because it’s one that many people will be surprised by. Coming back to the point of the issue of violence against women, and I will say women, not women with disabilities because there’s many women out there who are disabled, who don’t carry that label or do not know that that is what is going on.

So, between 35 and 80 percent of women going into transition houses and shelters in this country have a brain injury. It may not get diagnosed. She may never know. It may be that she ends up with a mental health problem because she’s unaware and has not been supported to get the assistance she needs. And, she’s been brain injured because she’s been battered. She’s been thrown down the stairs. All the things we know about violence against women amplify, and to be really clear, violence against women is one of the reasons there is such a high number of women are becoming disabled through violence. I think that’s the point. And, what it does, of course, is it enforces a vicious cycle that keeps people, especially women and girls, facing the highest rates of violence and poverty and unemployment.

And so, coming back to, again, the really important and wonderful document that was created by your own team here, “No Barriers - It’s Time”, I also wanted to share with you some of the key principles that have come forward from the disability community and just to highlight those principles, which is to use the Act to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is to remember always that whatever is done, is done with people with disabilities, in full consultation with people with disabilities. Nothing about us, without us.

It is, as I had asked and suggested earlier, to ask that it be called the National Accessibility and Inclusion Act because, really, instead of talking about disability in a silo, let’s be clear. This is about inclusion for all. This is about everyone. This is about social justice. And, to focus on federal issues, of course, with the legislation, much of this
has already been well covered in other documents, and I invite you to go to the Council of Canadians with Disabilities website to look in more detail because I’m not going to stand up here and read something somebody else has written. Just look for the resources and, certainly, we’ll be happy to send some resources along to share with everyone.

The next point is it must have teeth. It must be clear. Unifor has suggested a prescriptive and performance-based approach and, certainly, DAWN Canada and the national disability community also see it this way. We cannot have something that is just another piece of paper. There’s been too much of that in the past, and it hasn’t changed anything for people with disabilities. People with disabilities are still the poorest, they face the highest rates of violence, the highest rates of unemployment, and it’s time for change.

And so, when we talk about that, we think to the final point, which is strong measures to support implementation. Strong measures to support implementation also means something, and I hope Mr. Bill Morneau and Mr. Trudeau are listening, because it means you need to put some dollars behind this. We need to understand that in order for policy to change, there has to be meaningful investments in people with disabilities. And so, I’ll close today with, again, supporting “No Barriers - It’s Time”, and to say thank you, and let’s celebrate today and think forward to a barrier-free Canada. Thank you very much. Thank you.

DEREK MACLEOD: Thank you, Bonnie. As a small token of our thanks for coming and joining us today, and sharing that information, we have a small gift for you.

BONNIE BRAYTON: Thank you.

DEREK MACLEOD: And, continue doing the valuable, often under appreciated work that you do. Thank you.

BONNIE BRAYTON: Thanks very much. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks so much. Keeping in line with the presentation that we have just seen, what I would like to do is ask Sam Snyders from the Workers with disAbilities Committee to come up and give his report on Workers with disAbilities.

WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

SAM SNYDERS: Wow. Thank you. Thank you all the Unifor members that look so great today. We appreciate your support for International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and we especially appreciate the support of the ORC for providing these fantastic shirts to us. Thank you everyone. You make them look good.

So, since the adjournment of the Ontario Regional Council last December, the Ontario Workers with disAbilities standing committee has been working hard at advocating for workers and people with disabilities. Our committee has accomplished a lot over the past 12 months.

We developed the Shining the Light campaign that raises awareness of invisible disabilities and challenges, people’s perceptions about them. People with mental health disabilities and those with addictions continue to face considerable discrimination, stigma and social exclusion in Canada. Many experience adverse treatment, negative attitudes and harassment in employment, housing and when receiving services. And, as a result, there’s a sense of inadequacy or fear preventing many of them from disclosing their disability.

People with mental health disabilities or addictions are more likely to have lower incomes, live in chronic poverty because of stigma and misperception about what others believe they can’t do. Yet, those with disabilities are often gifted, and they’re gifted with abilities that we don’t see straight away. So, our goal is to shine the light on their gifts, their abilities, and to help society recognize that these people can contribute.

In February 2016, the members of the Ontario committee met with the senior staff of the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities office, Carla Qualtrough. We presented Unifor’s position on Canada’s commitments as outlined in the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and we also discussed the Minister’s mandate to create a National Disabilities Act.

In addition, over the past year, we brought attention to our campaigns by providing reports, speeches and giving away various advertising products. As an example, we gave away the can cozies. Everybody remember those at the Constitutional Convention? And, this was a simple way to highlight how temperature regulation can aid those with disabilities and it also opened the dialogue to those that were not understanding invisible disabilities.

We raffled off two tablets at the Canada Council in August as a way to draw people to the disAbilities table. We raised $2,500.00 which was matched by Unifor, thank you, Jerry. And, in October, $5,000.00 was donated to the Ottawa branch of the Canadian Diabetes Association.
The committee also had many speakers at the Constitutional Convention speak to the resolution on having a designated seat for a representative from LGBTQ, Young Workers and Workers with disAbilities on the National Executive Board. They supported the view that Unifor can never be fully accessible unless issues are viewed through the equity seeking group’s unique lens and their voices are heard, and we’ll continue to advocate for a seat at the table for equity seeking groups.

We are very excited that we’ve had keynote speakers joining us this week, like Bonnie Braynton, thank you very much and, Derek, great introduction and amazing committee member. Thank you. But, I would like to share some stats, and this came off the DAWN Canada website, and they really drive the message home. At least 53 percent of all people with disabilities in Canada are women, and the unemployment rate among women with disabilities is up to 75 percent. Fifty-eight percent of the women with disabilities live on less than $10,000.00 a year. And, of those, 23 percent of them live on less than $5,000.00 a year. Think about it. With statistics like this, it’s evident that we have a problem, a very serious problem that needs to be addressed nationwide. We need to fix our social fabric.

We also have Victoria Maxwell joining us who will be hosting a workshop and speaking to the delegation about mental health this afternoon. And, Victoria is one of North America’s most sought after speakers on the lived experience of mental illness and recovery, dismantling stigma and addressing mental health in the workplace. So, please make sure that you go to that. It’s going to be worth it.

Now, I have highlighted some of the items that the Workers with disAbilities standing committee has been working on over the past year, but I would like to share with you one of our ongoing and most likely important disability and human rights campaign that we’re ever going to get the chance to work on.

The Government of Canada is creating a National Disabilities Act that will provide legislation to eradicate barriers for people with disabilities and ensure that everyone can fully participate. And, they began in September with public consultation meetings and they will continue across the country until the early spring, I believe the last date will be March. And, these consultation meetings are being held by the Government of Canada as a way to open up the discussion lines with all of the citizens of Canada surrounding a National Disabilities Act, and they’re seeking input.

They’re seeking input on the following: the overall goal and approach, whom it should cover, what accessibility issues and barriers it needs to address, how could it be monitored and enforced, when or how often it should be review, how and when to report to the Canadians on the implementation, and how can we raise accessibility awareness more generally and support organizations in improving accessibility?

So, why is that important? How does it impact you? Well, everyone in this room will be affected at some point by a disability. And, approximately 13.7 percent of the adult population have a disability, and of those, 10.1 percent of them are working age. That means millions of workers across the country are suffering from a disability, and that’s only the ones that we know about.

So, you probably know someone, work with someone, represent someone in your local or your region with a disability, and this is your chance. It’s all our chance to make a positive impact on their lives. It’s our chance to make history about doing something good for our brothers and sisters who struggle to participate as equals in a society that acts to disable them. It’s also our chance to help those who can’t work due to discrimination in the workplace.

And, the statistics, as you’ve heard from Bonnie, linking to poverty are stunning. On average, a woman with a disability lives on less than $8,360.00 a year. And, there’s inequity in there as well because a man lives on almost $19,000.00. But, just consider living on less than $10,000.00 a year. That’s what crushing poverty really looks like and it’s too real for many with a disability.

So, this is our chance. This is our chance to make a difference by promoting economic security, inclusion and equal participation of differently abled individuals, and here’s how you can support us, brothers and sisters and comrades. The Workers with disAbilities Committee will be putting a recommendation to the floor today.

It will include a request that the ORC express its support for the Workers with disAbilities Committee and for a national accessible legislation that will ensure barriers are removed and society is made equally accessible for everyone. It will also ask locals circulate the submission of the Workers with disAbilities, encourage discussion amongst their members and provide support to anyone willing to share their experiences at the consultations or participate online. And, it will also request that the national union support these efforts across the country.

The committee’s main focus at this time is to get as many Unifor activists and members to attend, share their stories at the public consultation meetings. These meetings are scheduled to wrap up early March, and it’s a crucial part of the information that the Government of Canada will be using to design the legislation for a National Disabilities Act. And, it’s easy. There’s a one-page information sheet out in the lobby on the table. Pick it up. It tells you how you can
participate in person or online. And, the committee itself has been actively involved in the public consultation process thus far, and we have designed a tool kit for locals or anyone planning to attend one of the meetings. Anyone, anyone can participate and speak to the issues.

And, the participation will demonstrate just how important the issue is to Unifor, to all of us as workers and to the people excluded from the world of work because of a disability. So, for anyone interested in attending one of the consultation meetings, gaining more information or picking up a tool kit, please stop by the booth. Come and see us. Talk to us. Come to the caucus.

And, the Political Action Department has been engaged with us in these efforts, and we are now well versed in getting our people the opportunity to share their stories and insights. Thank you, Rolly. And, in your registration kits, there’s a copy of a written submission that was prepared with the help of the Human Rights Department. And, if you require more, please stop by. Pick some up. Take them back to your locals. Share them in your workplaces. Encourage the discussion and build support for inclusion. We have as much work to do inside as the government has to do outside, and it’s an important task for all of us.

So, as you can see, for a brand-new committee, we’ve made a lot of progress over the past year, but this is just the beginning. We will continue our Shining the Light Campaign to bring awareness to the issues surrounding barriers to full participation with people with disabilities. We will continue to pass resolutions and raise awareness about the many elements faced by workers with disabilities and their families. And, the committee will continue advocating for locals to start their own Workers with disAbilities Committee to support, advocate and hear from their members with disabilities. And, as always, we want to hear from all the locals, the members, the delegates to provide input on what you would like to see from the Ontario Workers with disAbilities Committee.

And, lastly, there is still a proposal to have all of the Ontario equity committees participate in a strategic meeting. And, the Ontario Workers with disAbilities Committee looks forward to participating in this event and charting an inclusive and accessible path forward. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for all your support. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mohamad, Niki and Rolly, and the ORC for all of your support for this committee. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Sam, thank you so much. Much appreciated. Those statistics are absolutely mind blowing just to know that women are going to be living on less than $10,000.00 a year. Just unbelievable. Some of us have challenges living with $60,000.00, $70,000.00, $80,000.00 or $100,000.00 a year, so if you can imagine, it’s just absolutely terrible. So, I get that fully and we should all understand and work harder to make sure that we’re supporting initiatives with workers with disabilities as much as possible.

So, thanks very much for that intro to, obviously, Recommendation number 6. Naureen already spoke to it in her opening remarks. And, in saying that, just like we’ve done with the other committee reports, we’re not going to take any questions from the floor, but Mohamad Alsadi is the director that’s responsible for Workers with disAbilities. So, if anybody has any particular questions, any concerns or wants to get involved, by all means, please reach out to Mohamad. He would be pleased, and it would be a pleasure for him to be able to have that conversation with anybody that would be interested.

But, what we will be doing, just to keep up with the order of the day, is moving on to Recommendation number 6. And, again, as introduced, I won’t do it like Sam. Sam did an amazing job and I want to say thanks very much to him. What we’ll do is we’ll have Derek come up again and read Recommendation number 6.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6: ACCESSIBILITY LEGISLATION

DEREK MACLEOD: Thank you. Recommendation number 6, Accessibility Legislation.

The Government of Canada is engaged in a process of broad public consultation with the aim of developing accessibility legislation. Many Canadians continue to face barriers that affect their ability to participate in daily activities that most people take for granted. Visible and invisible barriers continue to impede the ability of the differently-abled to fully participate in public and private life, and existing legislation and programming have been unable to provide meaningful access for many.

Unifor’s Workers with disAbilities have drafted a submission to the committee examining the possible scope of new accessibility legislation and are actively participating in the consultations by sharing their own stories.

I therefore recommend:
1. The Ontario Regional Council express its support for Unifor’s Workers with disAbilities caucus and for national accessibility legislation that ensures people of all abilities are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful work, secure a decent standard of living and participate fully in all social, political and cultural institutions;

2. Local unions circulate the submission of the Workers with disAbilities to encourage discussion and inform members of the work being done to secure an accessible future;

3. Local unions participate in the consultations in their locals’ areas and provide support to members who wish to share their experiences at these consultations.

DINO CHIODO: So, that being said, we’ll go to speaker on mic 4.

DAVE MCCORMICK: Dave McCormick, Local 414. I do rise in support of this resolution. I’d like to, sort of, share a story with you. I recently went to Buffalo with my father-in-law, who’s been using a rollator almost all of his life because of his disability. And, we went into a restaurant and there wasn’t anything to push to open the door, and I thought, this is strange. And then we went to the mall, and when we went to the mall, again, there was no button, no access to open a door and we had to do that in person.

Here in Ontario, when I go out, every restaurant, every place has access for someone with a rollator to go through it. But, it doesn’t just mean that it’s needed for the person with a wheelchair or a rollator to go through it, it also deals with a parent who’s pushing their child through in a stroller, and it makes it accessible for them and it makes economic sense for the employer, and if at this time of year I got a little bit greedy and went and got too many bags of groceries or presents and I’m going out with them, well, I can push that button to get out too. So, it benefits all of us.

Now, I represent workers with injuries in the workplace, and often when we’re trying to get someone into the workplace, we’re looking at barriers. And, we’re looking at barriers on how do we get someone back into gainful, meaningful employment where they are working with their brothers and sisters, and they’re maintaining that social and economic relationship in their life because it’s not all about money. It’s about the friendship that we build within our union, the friendship we build within our workplaces and within our families, and it’s not just the money that we lose, we lose our connection to society when we’re not working.

And, what would it be like if instead of having to go through that type of a process every time someone gets hurt, all we had to do was push that button and open that door for our brothers and our sisters and our family to continue with a wonderful, productive life? Thank you so much for bringing this forward.

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

GARY PARENT: Thanks very much, Dino. Gary Parent, Local 444, Retired Workers Executive. I want to, first of all, thank Sam and Bonnie for their presentations this morning, and I want to -- hopefully, I’ll get through it, share a story. I first of all want to thank the delegates at this conference. My wife is going through Parkinson’s, and just recently has to use a walker, and the delegates at this conference have been great, but that’s where it ends.

My wife, like a lot in this room, likes to shop. She likes to go over to the Eaton Centre. And, I, first of all, have to tell you that there are rude people in this world, and I’m just recently becoming more aware, and that’s what’s so important to the program and the recommendation that we’re adopting here today, I hope unanimously, and I think it will be.

But, you go to the mall, and to get into The Bay, you’ve got two escalators that you have to -- one down, one up. And, the foresight was there, and they do have lifts there, but they don’t work. Then, you go the other way and the same thing, the lifts are there, but they’re not operated.

So, consequently, there’s no access for my wife or anyone else that wants to use it. So, she waits till after we’re done our meetings, and then I’m in the mall till 9:00 at night, but that’s okay, because quality of life is everything. Accessibility is everything. Even so far as the department stores and their aisles and their aisle ways are not accessible for people that use a walker or people who have to use a wheelchair. And, these are things that we all take for granted, but I can tell you, getting older, not old, older, more mature myself, things are different. Our bodies are different.

So, we’re all going to get there one day, hopefully not sooner, but much later in life. So, I encourage the delegates to really wrap your head around what these recommendations really mean. Take our blinders off. Look around us. And, once again, I want to thank the delegates at this conference for showing my wife and me the dignity. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Gary, thank you so much. In saying that, we did go a little bit over our time. I just want to, and again, not to take anything away because I thought it was amazing what you talked about, Gary, and so true, and it really hit home, but I would like to ask everybody just to try to maintain their comments to 3 minutes. There is markers on
the camera, so you’ll be able to see that -- I’m sorry, behind us, but just to pay attention to that so we can try and get as many speakers as possible through the conversation and discussion. Speaker at mic 2.

**BOB CRUISE:** Bob Cruise, Local 195, Windsor. I wanted to share that a woman who was reported in Windsor Star as having Parkinson’s and greatly debilitated from it, had DBS brain surgery implant with a special device. It doesn’t work with all Parkinson’s patients she told me. I did call her, and she was so motivated she organized a craft show from the County in Windsor at the Knights of Columbus, and full of energy as a result of this intervention. Not a cheap surgery, but covered.

It reminded me, after the Human Rights Convention in Port Elgin where we heard Mathieu Giroux speak about persons with autism, and he himself is such a person. We brought him to Windsor and got a very good response from health care professionals, doctors, people who look after and care for kids with autism. And, it occurred me to that many of our members listen, watch and think that that’s a good thing.

Just that one initiative led to other developments, and it’s a little story of the girl who was saw a very low tide where she lived by the shore, and she was picking up starfish and throwing them back in the water when a man came along and said to her, “What are you doing? It’s hopeless. There’s millions of these starfish. What difference will it make?” And, she said, “For these starfish, it makes all the difference.”

**DINO CHIODO:** Thanks for that, Bob. Speaker at mic 3, and I think I’ve got one more at mic 5; correct? Speaker at mic 3.

**FIZUL KARIM:** Fizul Karim, Local 112. I haven’t mentioned this to anybody in the years that I’ve been coming to councils and convention, many people in here that I know on a personal level. About eight years ago, my mom, who’s turned 89, 28th of November, fell and broke her hip. And, as a result of that, she had to be implanted with screws and bolts in the hip.

And, all of a sudden, her life, within less than 24 hours, had been changed because prior to that she was very active in her community, in her mosque. She travelled all around the world. And, lo and behold, what I didn’t realize is that I became her caregiver. I had to take care of all her bills. Everything has been transferred. I have to make sure everything is okay.

If her TV doesn’t work, I get a phone call at work, “Oh, my TV is not working.” “Okay. On my way home, I’ll stop in and fix it.” It’s just a switch of a button, but she’s 89 years old. “The telephone is not working,” I’ve got to go and do it. But, that’s the responsibility placed on able-bodied who have got to take care of elderly or people with disability. You suffer that in silence.

Tomorrow will be two weeks, my wife fell and broke her fibula. And, again, I work 16 hours a day. I go to work, come home, I’ve got to cook. I’ve got to do the laundry. I’ve got to vacuum, and you keep that inside. You tell your friends, you tell your co-workers or you tell your family, they’ll listen to you, they’ll empathize, but the burden is strictly placed upon you.

And then you look at resources, and you’ve got to struggle to find where you can get those resources and help from, and that is why accessibility and forcing the government to recognize that legislation must be passed to make people with disabilities’ lives a little more easier and a little more palatable because poverty is one of the cornerstones that further people with disabilities, because physically and mentally, you’ve also got that poverty issue that they’ve got to deal with.

And, when you’ve got to live with poverty, it also plays strange things with your mind. There’s no help out there. And, if you don’t have people around you, and family and friends that really play a role in helping people out, you live a very solitary life, and that’s why you have to get involved in these organizations, and the government needs to do more.

One of the things that we can focus on in pushing the government is to look at the **Building Code**, downtown, Toronto here, all these high-rise buildings and skyscrapers, yes, they have -- maybe they have started where you can get in, but when you get in to those buildings, look at the inside. How is the washroom organized? When you open the door, you don’t bang your, whatever.

So, we have to start by looking at a better **Building Code**. It’s not that it can’t be done; it can be done. It’s just innovation to go there and start that. So, once again, the poverty level is the most debilitating part of people with disabilities, mental, physical and otherwise, and we have to get people out of that poverty. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you very much. Thank you very much, brother. Speaker at mic 5.

**JANE KAanje:** Hi, Jane Kaajc, Local 103, Ontario Northland. I stand in support of this recommendation. But, first, I would like to apologize to this council and the brother who asked our members with mental illness to stand. I remained
sitting, and it bothered me all night. I am so happy today to stand before you because you have created a place of inclusion and respect.

Unlike my employer who only recognizes my disability, you recognize my abilities. You have provided education and awareness to our local union leaders that, in my case, has ensured my inclusion in the workplace, and my financial and personal success. I have to thank my local union president, Andy Mitchell, and my unit chair, Debbie Graham. You have provided a safe environment for all of us, and I trust you. So, even though I didn’t stand yesterday, count me in and count on my voice.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks so very much, sister, for that strong message. Thank you. Speaker at mic 2.

NIKI LUNDQUIST: Hi, there. Niki Lundquist, staff. I’ll be very brief. I have been very fortunate to be working with the Workers with disAbilities Committee and been involved in drafting this submission, and that’s not why I’m here because I want to throw a plug in for myself. But, I want you to understand that what’s in this is something that can ignite people in this union that have otherwise been in excluded. So, don’t leave this in your kit. Don’t leave it in your bags. Take it back to your locals. Post it. Engage in conversations and let’s actually work on building a more inclusive world for everybody. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Right on. Good point. Seeing no other speakers at the mic -- sorry, one last speaker at mic 2.

DAMIAN BRYCE: Hi, Damian Bryce, Local 195. Just a quick little story. I want to put everyone -- I support this as well. Everyone who has never experienced -- sorry, disability on a skilled trades work very hard. We’re a 5-minute step from hurting yourself at work, and you lose the respect from your employer after 16 years, being treated differently, not being allowed to perform your work. So, you can be 5-minutes away from being injured and that respect is taken away.

Thankfully, with the support of my sisters and brothers, I took on the fight. I started a harassment and a human rights argument. Unfortunately, I did it myself. I didn’t have the support of the union, probably because I took it on myself. So, I encourage you not to allow your brothers and your sisters to fall away.

If you know someone who’s silent, I tend to be a little quieter, maybe that’s why I didn’t have the support of the union, just be aware that there could be people in your plant on the floor who find that they’re struggling with that disability. Give them that support. You don’t have to get up on the soap box, but ask them, “What can I do to make your life easier?” “What can I do to support you?” And, to continue that fight.

And, we need to argue with the government. We need to say, these people that overcome their disabilities, just in overcoming that and being productive, again, are so much more stronger and enabled. It’s a great -- in some way, it’s a blessing; okay? To go through that struggle and finding that inner strength to overcome. You still fight the way you’re treated with your co-workers, but the people that really know you say, “You give me strength.” You’ve overcome that disability. We’re not broken. We rise above that disability and we’re still productive. So, I do have a hidden injury. It’s a back injury, upper and lower, however, I still do my job, and we just ask for that dignity to carry on. So, I do support this resolution. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: I’ll recognize the last speaker now at mic 3.

RICK POOLE: Hello. Rick Poole, Local 1075, Thunder Bay. The one thing that I want to let people know is that I do a lot of return to works. Arguing with my employer, using legislation, that’s the easy part. The hard part that we have in the workplace is having our members, the other workers that work alongside these people that are being accommodated in the workplace, their support.

They don’t recognize that person is being fully able to do the job. “Why do I have to pick up slack for that guy there?” “Is it really an injury?” So, what we can do, all of us here, is make sure that when we go back, we educate our members to support those people with abilities, not disabilities. That’s all I’ve got to say.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, brother. I want to thank some of the new delegates that went up to the microphone that I haven’t seen before. I think that’s just amazing, contributing to the discussion and debate. That’s so important. Thank you very much for putting your input into the conversation. What I’ll do now is we’ll go to the vote with regards to Recommendation number 6. Thank you to all for the good discussion.

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down. Opposed, if any?
(opposing votes shown)
Carried. CARRIED.
Thank you very much to each and every one of you. Getting on with the order of the business, we are running a little bit behind, so I’m going to ask Sue McKinnon to come on up to recognize our next guest speaker in our agenda.

**SUE MCKINNON:** Thank you, Dino. So, in regards to Amanda Dale, she is a recognized voice in the media, public policy, law reform. She is devoted to changing the condition threatening women’s safety, dignity and equality. Her leadership is pivotal to the Jane Doe Audit of Toronto Police sexual assault investigations, the successful restriction of the use of religious arbitration in the settlement of family law matters in Ontario, the development of the women’s shelter in the Arctic, and the success projects in Sudan that resulted in increased women’s political participation, an establishment of legal services for women experiencing violence.

She is a member of the Ontario permanent Violence Against Women Roundtable, a consultant to the Minister of Roundtable of Sexual Abuse of Women Patients. A sought-after voice, at many other political policy tables, Amanda Dale received 2013’s Woman of Distinction Award for social justice.

Since 2010, Amanda has been the Executive Director of Canada’s only legal counsel language interpretation clinic, women experiencing violence, the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. Her leadership ensured the clinic’s participation in numerous test cases in Canada. For three decades, Amanda Dale has remained active in women’s issues, contributing to many organizations.

Amanda holds a Master’s in International Human Rights with distinction from the University of Oxford. Under her leadership, the Schlifer Clinic launched the Charter challenge to Canada’s destruction under the gun registry. She also led the clinic to intervene numerous legal test cases affecting women who experience violence. In addition to her work, the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, Ms. Dale is currently working on her PhD at the Osgoode Hall Law School. Please welcome, Amanda Dale.

**BARBRA SCHLIFER COMMEMORATIVE CLINIC, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMANDA DALE**

**AMANDA DALE:** Thank you. Sorry for the long wait. It’s a long walk from over there. I want to thank you so much for inviting me to the Ontario Regional Council. I wasn’t prepared for how emotional this morning would be, and all the testimonials that have come from the mics could be things that people say in my workplace. And, I want to talk to you a little bit about my workplace and about the workplaces that we’re all in.

I’ve been asked to talk to you about what I do for a living. It’s kind of hard to explain, but I’m going to touch on a few things that’s important in the work that I have been doing for the last 30 years. You’ve already been talking about the nature of human rights, and this morning, Bonnie talked about the progression of human rights. I’m going to talk to you a little bit about the meaning of human rights in the context of violence against women. I’m going to talk to you a little bit about the pervasiveness of violence against women. And, something that came up at the mic this morning in relation to that, which is the importance of compassion and friendship in the workplace.

I’m also going to talk to you a little bit about the power of sharing our personal stories, which is clearly just the norm here. But, outside of this delegation, I fear that it’s not something that is done often enough, and I think personal narratives help us shift the world around us to a more humane and positive place.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, let me situate myself and introduce a little bit of what we do. The Barbra Schlifer Clinic is Canada’s only integrated legal counselling and language interpretation clinic for women experiencing violence. There is some material that you have, I believe, somewhere in this room that looks like this that is a short summary of the work we do. We also have information on our website, of course. There’s also a pamphlet that looks like this that tells you a little bit about our interpreter services. I’m going to tell you a bit more about this as well.

The work we do provides legal assistance, representation and information to women who are experiencing violence. We work in the areas of immigration law, criminal law and family law. We also have a language interpretation service that assists women to communicate with the services they need in the language of their choice, and we do so for free in up to 200 languages.

But, additionally, we have a small social purpose enterprise, and that enterprise trains women, mostly new immigrant women, who want to have flexible work, and maybe work from home while they’re raising children, and often these are women who have had to leave behind professions in their countries of origin because Canada is not recognizing their skills. And, we train them with 152 hours of training to be certified to do language interpretation, and that business allows us to give them skills and autonomy, which you can imagine in situations of violence is a very important thing to have.
And, when they go out on jobs in non-violence against women scenarios, such as doing interpretation in hospitals and so on, they’re able to make a living, a good, fair wage, and this is not offshore. This is not people who are doing this from abroad. This is local women who get employment. And, through this enterprise, we’re able to subsidize the training so that it’s affordable for them.

Additionally, we have a counselling program, and that program assists women at various stages of dealing with violence in their lives to get the support and understanding they need to make their next steps, including practical support, like income support, housing, et cetera.

So, when I talk about this, what does it make you think of? Do you picture a poor victim cowering from blows? Someone that we pity? Someone we feel is far away from us? Or, do we think of our daughters, our sisters, our mothers, the woman next to us at work, the woman on the bus or ourselves?

The clinic that I work for grew out of the shock of friends who did not see a victim in the woman they admired. The clinic embodies the vision of its namesake, Barbra Tina Schlifer, a promising young feminist lawyer who, when returning home from celebrating her admission to the bar of Ontario, was brutally sexually assaulted and killed in the basement stairwell of her apartment building.

We embody her ideals and passion for justice. Her fighting spirit. Her agency, not the fact of her victimhood. Barbra’s death changed the lives of those who were close to her, and they resolved to use that act of violence as a springboard for changing the world. And, since we opened in 1985, the clinic has assisted more than 60,000 women whose experiences of violence have intersected with the law.

Just last night, I was reading through some old archival material of the clinic, and I had an e-mail exchange with Michele Landsberg. How many of you know Michele Landsberg? So, Michele Landsberg was a reporter at the Toronto Star in 1985 when Barbra Schlifer was murdered, and I wrote to Michele Landsberg last night who, of course, replied right away because she’s amazing, and I asked her for her first article on Barbra Schlifer’s murder. And, the headline was, “Barbra Schlifer’s Death Brings to the Fore the Fear that All Women Have”. That has not changed since 1985, I’m afraid.

Somewhere in the article, somebody from the then Metro Rape Crisis Centre, which is now the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, was quoted saying, “If Barbra had lived, she would have been victimized a second time in the justice system.” That, I’m afraid, has also not changed.

As a result of the work of the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, however, more than 3,800 women a year experience access to legal rights, but also they experience less isolation through group and community programs. They experience more stability and more control over their lives, over their relationships, and they experience leadership development and advocacy training, and the sense that they are part of a global effort to rectify the injustices they have experienced so personally.

The clinic is also there to challenge the law when it fails the women we work with. As you heard in our introduction, we’ve been in the courts challenging unjust laws for many, many years now. And, through challenging those laws in the courts and doing public policy advocacy work, we push the boundaries and advance the protections of the law.

And, this brings me to the question of human rights. Often, when we think of human rights, we imagine the lone, heroic man of conscience incarcerated for his belief by a coercive state abroad. You know, the guy in prison that Amnesty International has a campaign for. But, women are actually the world’s most populous human rights defenders; un glamorously facing tyranny and violence, defending their dignity and beliefs everyday in their homes and in their communities the world offer, often in the midst of conflicts they do not stand to benefit from.

You talked a bit about the UN this morning, and I want to bring you a quote that has been helpful for framing this discussion. UN’s Secretary, Ben Ki-moon has stated that there is one universal truth applicable to all countries, cultures and communities, violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable and never tolerable.

Violence against women violates the human dignity of women, as well as numerous other rights, including the right to equality, non-discrimination, physical integrity and, of course, freedom and security of person. The UN has classified the occurrence of violence against women as a global pandemic. Think about this. It is a public health crisis of a pandemic nature. Worldwide, up to 70 percent of women and girls will be beaten, coerced into sex or, otherwise, abused in their lifetimes.

As part of the global movement against violence, the Barbra Schlifer Clinic has partnered in the establishment of legal clinics for unrepresented women in the family or personal law courts of Khartoum, Sudan, and in the counselling and legal clinics established to fight sexual violence in Swaziland. We still fight to keep the lights on down at College and Bathurst. We are active in the global use of textiles as therapeutic healing techniques equally for displaced women in
Toronto and those stuck in refugee camps worldwide. Canada can be, but is not always, the alternative to these statistics and life situations.

Are you alarmed when I tell you that half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16? Did you realize that approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner, and that Indigenous women are killed at 6 times the rate of non-Aboriginal women? And, I woke up this morning, as I do far too many mornings, to hear of another domestic homicide that occurred yesterday. Three children left without their mother.

Can you imagine that on any given night in Canada, 3,491 women and their 2,724 children sleep in shelters because it isn’t safe at home? Be furious that on that same given night, about 300 women and children are turned away because the shelters are already full.

The work I do, alongside an incredible team of strong, determined and passionate women is not a job. It’s not a career. It’s not even a vocation. It’s a trust. It’s a passion. It’s a lifeblood of caring for the world we live in and making every day count towards making it better. What we do serves as a link between those whom society would rather forget and the wheels of power, no matter how disempowered we ourselves often feel.

Canada has an open secret. All this violence can only mean one thing. Women are not equal no matter what our laws say on the books, but our situation is paradoxical. At times, it seems certain that the world has taken enormous strides towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. And then, suddenly, we have an admitted sexual assaulter as the President of the country to the south of us.

Sixty-seven percent of Canadians say they have personally known at least one woman who has experienced physical or sexual assault. That’s why I wanted to tell you a little bit about the power of personal narrative. The people who gave their narrative this morning moved our discussion, and that’s true for this issue as well. Statistically speaking, nearly everyone in this room has a story to tell about violence. And, my story is no more interesting than anyone else’s, and likely a good deal less interesting, in fact, than most. But, as leaders in the movements for social justice in the women’s, labour and solidarity movements, we who take it upon ourselves to tell the stories of others also need to take responsibility for our own stories.

In my case, my family’s relationship to the use of violence is buried in secrets in the past. It is evident in the alcoholism of my parents, the drug addiction of my brothers. The fact that my oldest brother who was the first in the family to ever enter university killed himself when I was 13, and his younger brother, my older brother, who had already done so two years before.

I left my parents’ home at 13, shortly after that death. For the last several years, I was completing my university degree, and when I completed my Master’s thesis, I also worked in a downtown women’s shelter, a place where women who are chronically homeless and had experienced multiple forms of violence had emigrated from war torn countries or had left life on a reserve only to find similar conditions on the streets of Toronto. It was a place where those women fought hard for their own survival and found a place to rest their heads.

Late night confidences in the shelter office with the brave and resilient women who had opened the shelter in the decades before, and the long stories of resilience and survival of the women who came there for protection all forged a resolve I wasn’t even aware of, that I saw something that I needed others to be aware of, and that I needed to be part of making change. This is evident in my passion to make sexual abuse in families, violence in personal relationships, control, stalking, demeaning, harassment, bullying and belittling to be a thing of the past.

Violence against women is not inevitable. It is not synonymous with the cultures we are willingly and joyfully a part of that help us make our sense of meaning and belonging, but violence does need to be challenged even when it masquerades as a natural part of who we see ourselves to be. This is our collective challenge. When we make that one gesture to that one brave woman who reaches out to us at our workplace, she must be made to feel that she is part of a worldwide movement. She’s not alone. She’s not to be ashamed. She’s heroic and she’s part of something big, that for that one act of courage, she has joined millions who raise their voices to say, “Enough.”

How can you help? Talk about it at work with your friends and colleagues. Use your power to assist someone who has lost theirs. Become knowledgeable and challenge yourself and those around you when violence is made to appear inevitable and normal. Sometimes that means challenging a friend, a colleague, someone in power, someone you love.

Remember, good people do bad things, and bad people do good things. Do not judge. Listen to and believe what a woman who has said she’s experiencing violence tells you. And, as our brother said at microphone 2, listen to
those who aren’t speaking, those who are quiet, those who become invisible, those who change from having been part of something to withdrawing. Find out why.

Most importantly, listen, listen, listen. Listen not just to words, but to gestures, to behaviour, to ways of being. A friend of mine’s mother says, “You have two ears and one mouth. Listen two times more than you talk.” Together, we will tell the truth wherever it needs to be told to the public that supports us, when we vote through the elected governments. To the men here today, don’t be afraid that women hate you when we deal in facts about the realities of our lives. We want your solidarity.

In the courts, tribunals, hearings and arbitrations where women’s stories are contained and constrained by the rules, step outside. Imagine a new way. Hear the story in the fullness of its narrative. In our everyday lives, in all the places we live, play and work, we can make a big difference by how we respond, how we challenge and how we act with compassion, and I believe you’re going to have a resolution before you shortly that invites you to do just that. Together, in these very troubling times, we will prepare for the worst, expect the best and take what comes. Thank you. I’m going to be over hugged apparently.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: Amanda, on behalf of ORC, we would like to give you a gift. And, on a personal note, I would like to say thank you for telling the stories that are not often told. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: That being said, what we do want to do is we talked as an executive board up here, and we would like to make a donation to the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic and present that on your behalf, Amanda. So, in saying that, I would like to have a motion for $2,000.00.

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)

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

Carried. CARRIED.

Thank you very much.

SISTER AMANDA DALE: Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: And, Jerry’s standing behind me saying that the national union is going to match that. Great job. Thank you everybody. Okay. Now, moving on to the next component on our agenda. I would like to ask Ken Bondy to please come up to introduce our next guest speaker. You know what? I apologize, I actually have jumped the gun. Ken, you’ll be on standby, I apologize, because what we’re going to do is go to the recommendation that would be connected to Amanda Dale’s discussion. So, what I’ll do is I’ll ask Kari Jefford to come up and go over Recommendation number 5. So, in your booklets, Recommendation number 5.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5: PAID LEAVE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

KARI JEFFORD: Good morning. Paid Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence.

Unifor has been a leader in advocating for solutions to gender-based violence; a 2015 Canadian survey demonstrated that domestic violence is a workplace issue with one-third of workers reporting experiencing domestic violence in their own lives.

Over half of the survivors in that study reported that the domestic violence followed them into the workplace; 38 percent reported that it impacted their ability to get to work; and 8.5 percent reported that they had lost a job due to domestic violence. Economic security is a prime indicator of safety.

Paid Domestic Violence Leave provides the security of retaining employment and some continuity of earnings while dealing with the effects of domestic violence. Paid Domestic Violence Leave is the law in Manitoba and there are private members bills in Ontario and British Colombia on this issue. The Government of Ontario has committed to taking action on gender-based violence with their It’s Never Okay initiative and will be updating their Domestic Violence Strategy for 2017.

Unifor has also negotiated Paid Domestic Violence Leave in many of our collective agreements, allowing our members to access paid time off to deal with essential issues. Unifor has passed a number of resolutions supporting putting Domestic Violence Leave into employment standards protection for all workers. Most recently, this resolution was passed unanimously at our 2016 Unifor Convention. The responsibility to advocate for and protect those who need us to be their champions at such a critical time in their life rests on all of our shoulders.

I therefore recommend:
1. That Unifor members lobby their Members of Provincial Parliament to follow the example set out by the Province of Manitoba and include Paid Domestic Violence Leave in employment standards legislation.

2. That Unifor leadership continue to negotiate paid leave at the bargaining table for all domestic violence survivors.

**DINO CHIODO:** Kari, thank you very much. It looks like there are a few speakers at the mic. We’ll go to mic 5.

**BOB HOFFMAN:** Thank you. I’m Bob Hoffman from Local 39, Thunder Bay. I stand in favour of this resolution. Also, just a reminder to everyone that Tuesday, December 6th is the National Day for Violence Against Women. And, at Resolute Forest Products in Thunder Bay, we’ve asked the manager to fly our flag at half mast and they’re going to put an e-mail out to everyone in recognition of that date. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Excellent job. Thank you. Speaker at mic 6.

**TIM CARRIE:** Thank you, Dino. Tim Carrie, Education Director. Obviously, I stand in favour of the recommendation, and sometimes I feel we have to talk about this too much. I want to thank Amanda. I look back, and 50 years ago, this summer, as a 12-year-old boy with two younger brothers and two younger sisters, I sat on the step as I watched my mother leave, and I didn’t see her for close to 35 years. And, she left because there were no facilities like what Amanda talked about. There were no women’s shelters. There was none of that kind of help for women that were suffering violence and for the children that witnessed it.

So, today, I speak, as I have spoke so often, to the brothers in the room. Brothers, this is our issue, and there’s many ways that this issue exacerbates itself in the form of behaviour that we witness far too often and, quite frankly, are silent when we hear it.

You know, brothers, it takes courage sometimes to tell, as Amanda talked about, a friend, a co-worker, a boss that their comments are unwelcome and that they have to stop because comments -- for example, you’re in a restaurant with your buddies, you’re in one of those restaurants like Earl’s or those other ones where they force women to wear these skimpy clothes in order to serve food, and you see a brother make a comment about that young woman, who’s somebody’s daughter, about the way that they look or a comment that is sexually abusive, quite frankly. And, for you to be silent when you hear that is a lack of courage, brothers. It’s a lack of courage.

We’ve got to do this. Fifty years ago, as I said, I watched my mom leave. On Valentine’s Day, this year, my mom passed away, so I lost her for a second time, but don’t let that happen to our granddaughters, to our daughters. Do all you can to eradicate this from our society. So, brothers, stand up, fight back, do what we need to do. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Good job, Tim. Speaker at mic 2.

**KARI JEFFORD:** Kari Jefford, Unifor Local 229, President. Two quick messages I wanted to bring to the delegates. Rob Giovagnoli that comes from Local 1359 in Sault Ste. Marie, he asked me to a bring message to the floor. If you remember, folks, that he was here last year and had just gotten word that his daughter, a young daughter, 19-years-old, had been just brutally attacked by her boyfriend, was kidnapped and he made some comments about the police getting to him before he did. He just wanted me to say thank you to all of the delegates for your support of him and his daughter, and also of all women suffering in silence.

And, the second piece I just wanted to quickly talk about was in the last few months, we were dealing with a worker from our Catholic School Board, and the rep got a call at the office that this person was going to be terminated. So, of course, that rings alarm bells and we usually get involved at that point.

And so, Jody Powers, our recording secretary for the local, a service rep, attended a meeting where they brought this sister in and said to her, “You’re put off on paid suspension pending an investigation for theft,” and there were some concerns that this worker was suffering from some addiction issues. And so, they left that meeting. The worker went home, but Jody was kind of concerned about the worker just didn’t seem right, and asked the employer to make contact with the worker, make sure she’s okay. She stopped answering the phone. She disappeared.

And so, we forced the employer to do a wellness check. Have the police go and make sure that this worker is okay, that she’s not suffering, and we were frankly afraid that she was suicidal. She was okay. We set a meeting up with her at the office, and Gary Bragnalo, our national rep, Jody and myself. I said, “Something else is going on here. Something’s not adding up.”

And so, we met with this member. She came into the office, obviously suffering in pain, and my first thought process was, “Perhaps she’s suffering from addictions issues or something’s going on.” And so, she’s in a room full of strangers, Jody, Gary and myself, she doesn’t know us, never heard of us, really. And, I said to her, “What’s really going on? Someone doesn’t just walk in one day and decide to steal money or be accused of theft.” And, she said, “No, nothing. Nothing. I’m just having a hard year,” and she was very upset and ashamed.
And, I could smell alcohol, a very strong scent of alcohol, and I’ve been known to be quite blunt, and what I said to her was, “Listen, I know something else is going on. I can smell the alcohol on you. Do you have an addictions issue? We can get you help and speak with the employer, and make sure you’re going to be okay.” And, she said, “No, no, no. No, I don’t have a drinking issue. I only have a drink once in a while.”

Anyhow, I continued on with my bluntness and I just said, “Look, I think you have an alcohol addiction and we can get you help for that, but you need to tell us so that we can work on that with you.” And, it came out. She said, “I don’t have a drinking problem, but it’s been a really hard year. You see, I left a domestic violence situation, and he didn’t go to jail, and he has been chasing me ever since. And, I just drink so I can sleep at night, but I don’t have a drinking problem. And, I’ve lost my daughter, my 14-year-old daughter because I can no longer take care of her because I don’t have an income and I can’t feed her at home because I only work part-time. But, it’s not the domestic violence that put me here.”

So, what I’m asking you folks as reps and as leaders within your communities, read between the lines. So, when we’re getting called for a termination or an investigation on whatever that may be, absenteeism, it could be workplace interactions, someone’s arguing with someone else, bullying investigations, theft, that we really need, as reps, to read between the lines and find out what’s really going on.

In the end, now, she was put off work and the Catholic School Board refused, and we invoked our language in the collective agreement under violence against women, and that she couldn’t be terminated for such, but they fired her anyway. And so, now, she has a choice, we’ll take her to arbitration or not, but she’s going to have to go in front of an arbitrator and tell her story again, and you can imagine that that’s not going to happen. So, don’t give up and read between the lines.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks so much for that story, Kari. Speaker at mic 3.

ALLISON GIBSON: Allison Gibson, Local 1090. I represent the workers at Great Blue Heron Casino, and I support this resolution fully as I did in Ottawa, but I want to go further with this. I was born in 1985, the year that Barbra was murdered, and 31 years later, we’re still talking about the same situations.

For me, in the 90’s, growing up, it was -- there was a huge focus on teaching our daughters, “You’re beautiful no matter what. No matter what your body looks like. No matter how your face looks like,” things like that. And, we thought during that time that it was an intelligent thing to do for our daughters, but what I’m asking you as parents, as grandparents, as aunts, uncles, teach your daughters and teach your sons about women’s purpose and value, and not about their beauty no matter what they look like, but how much value they hold in their minds, what they’re capable of doing, things like that, instead of focusing on the outer.

We’re still talking about the gender wage gap, and that’s another thing that goes into their value. It’s perpetuated all the time that we’re worth less than what a man is worth. So, as I’m saying, please teach your children, both women and men, about women’s value instead of about their beauty or their outward appearance.


GARY PARENT: Thanks very much, Dino. Gary Parent, Local 444, Retired Workers Executive. I, obviously, stand in favour of the recommendation that’s before us and remembering that this is after the fact. I think that when I stand here again this year, and I’ve done it for a number of years, I do it on behalf of my wife, my daughter, my two granddaughters and daughter-in-law. And, this year is a little bit different.

My one granddaughter is going to Fanshawe out of Windsor. She’s moved into the residency on Fanshawe. And, the wife and I, we had a doctor’s appointment at University Hospital, so we went and picked her up, and it’s a different environment. First time away from home, she’s unsure of herself, but she’s settling in quite well. But, I worry about her. I worry about her because of us males. We have still not got the message. We still go on and think negatively against any woman.

So, I encourage everyone in this room, if you have memorials for December 6th, this Tuesday, to attend them. Particularly, the males to show the support for our women within our union and within our society, and more in general, and make sure that, as men, we stand up for our women, that we defend them and we stop the violence against women so that we can have a civil society and that we’re all equal men and women with no violence. Thank you very much.
DINO CHIODO: Thanks, Gary. I’ll take the speaker at mic 2.

DARLENE MARCUZ: First time at the mic. I’m Darlene Marcuz from Local 2458, and I stand here to support this recommendation, not only as a victim of domestic violence, but as a survivor now of 10 years. And, thanks for my sisters here and for my daughters and future women. This will all go away some day. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Speaker at mic 1.

LISA KELLY: Lisa Kelly, Women’s Director. I want to echo the speech that we heard from Amanda Dale about talking about the power of personal narrative. So, to Darlene, to the others that came to speak about how violence has entered their lives, I think that that’s so important. And, what’s also important is to link that to our calls to action so, again, to have Kari speak about what we can do as reps.

So, I want to really highlight what’s on your tables and what’s in your kits, which is the lobbying guide for workers facing domestic violence. Many of you have actually bargained this in your collective agreements and that’s fantastic, and we want to actually then bring this to all of the non-union women as well that are out there. So, please take that back.

I think we have a strong chance of getting this. I know our Regional Director, Naureen, has been meeting with the Premier on this. We have a chance of getting this, but people need to raise their voices, get it into their collective agreements, and then talk about how it happens.

The other thing is the interpreter services that Amanda Dale spoke about. You’ve got a flyer there. These are women that have been trained. They are mixed in with other interpreters as well, but it’s a social enterprise where, as Amanda explained, there’s training for the women who have used the clinic, and then there is money that comes back that funds the training.

So, anybody in this room who has got union literature that they put up, a poster, that they want to have translated, please use this service. For those of us who actually provide translation, simultaneous translation, use this service. This is something that has a double good.

So, I just want to end by saying, I really like the shift in the discussion that we’ve been having away from women just as victims to women as whole human beings. Women are not born vulnerable. Women are made vulnerable by the laws, by the policies, by the actions of others. So, we’ve got the action in this room. We’ve got the commitment in this room. We’ve had brothers at the mic that talk about their responsibility and how they’re urging others to change that. We can do this together. So, thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Looks like I have a last speaker. Mic 3.

BRUCE MALCOLM: Bruce Malcolm, Local 444, Unifor, out of Windsor. Of course, it’s Unifor. Anyway, what I would like to talk about a little bit too is this is a great initiative, but some of the things we as reps have to be aware of, or representatives of our union, is how the insurance carriers also treat women of violence.

I’m going through that right now with an individual who is being questioned on a violent assault that had taken place years ago, but it has reoccurred by however chance that is. The perpetrator, or whatever, has been released and they’re free, and she feels very uncomfortable. And, the problem is she ended up going off work. She’s under a lot of stress, fear, all of that is there.

And, unfortunately, the insurance company calls her and says, “Well, when did it happen?” And then, “How did it happen? Why did it happen? Did you report it to the authorities?” Those kinds of questioning is ridiculous, and we also have to make sure that that doesn’t happen. This woman called me and said, “This is what they’re saying.” I called the insurance company and I told them, “Hey, you are not entitled to that information. You have the doctor’s letters. She’s doing what she needs to do. She’s following a treatment program. That’s all you need to know.” But, they’re still reviewing her claim.

I was notified on Friday that it finally got passed, but this woman has to wait four weeks in order to get paid. That’s absolutely ridiculous. So, we have to be on this, and this is very important, especially getting the paid leave, what type of questions they’re going to want on that because there’s a lot of disclosure that takes place that hurts, and we may not have the ability to say what it is. So, I just want to bring some awareness to that too, as well, because it is very important that nobody is entitled to that, especially insurance carriers for that information. So, anyway, thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Bruce. Looks like there’s no more speakers at the mics, so what I will do is we’ll take the vote on the Paid Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence.

All those in favour?

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

Thank you very much. Excellent. I’m going to go a little bit off of our agenda today just to make sure I can keep up. There’s a few people that won’t be able to stay for the entire day, so I’m just trying to get through as quickly as possible. So, what I would like to do is I would like to ask Debbie Montgomery to please come up and introduce our next speaker. Sorry, I’ve got a point on mic 4.

SHAWN ROUSE: Thank you. I don’t want to interrupt Debbie because I know what she has to say is very important, so we will be brief. Shawn Rouse from the Health Council again. We’re back. The amount of overwhelming support just this morning caused us to be completely sold out of our 50/50 tickets. Thank you to everyone.

So, instead of making everybody wait until after lunch to find out who is buying dinner tonight, we thought we would do the draw early, and then we’re going to post it on the boards outside, and we’re going to get it on Twitter, and then hopefully the winner is still around and can claim their illustrious prize.

So, we have a small conundrum here right now as we’re trying to find someone who may not have bought a ticket and actually be our draw person. Susan. There we go. They were sold out. We couldn’t sell her a ticket, so she’s going to draw the ticket, and once she draws the ticket, we’re going to tell you what the amount is. There we go. Just for those who want to know, it is the yellow ticket, the solid yellow tickets. And, the number is, 8404524. Everybody’s checking their tickets like mad crazy people, I can tell. Someone’s hand’s up. We have a winner.

DINO CHIODO: So, imagine the guy that won is the person that said, “Hey, are we doubling all the funds for the people who win too?” Just amazing how things work out. Congratulations.

SHAWN ROUSE: So, today, for the winner we have -- that’s the winner. Here we go. Has the grand total of $2,615.00 for their 50 share. Before we go...

JIM KENNEDY: Before we go, I do want to add, we’ve got a lot of wonderful hearts in this room. The council would like to see -- we’re giving a good sizable donation to the Ontario Health Council, we would like to see the winner of this take it, enjoy it, use it for Christmas, and if they want to donate some of it, go ahead and donate some of it, but not back to us, please. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: So, that’s great. At the same time, what’s that total again? Can you tell us? $2,600.00 and what?

SHAWN ROUSE: $2,620.00.

DINO CHIODO: And, I make a motion to make sure that we do the same thing coming out of Ontario Regional Council like we committed earlier. Can I have a mover?

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

Thank you very much. Great job, brothers and sisters. Sorry, now getting on to the agenda of the day. I’ll ask Deb Montgomery to introduce our next speaker.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: Good morning, everyone. What an inspiring council, and a lot of good causes to support, and I encourage everybody to do that before we leave today. I commend everybody for their courage and their contributions for coming up to the mic and telling their personal stories. It really makes a mark on all our hearts what we hear and what we share.

It’s my pleasure today, this morning, to introduce Kaylie Tiessen. You may remember her as the strong voice of reason and knowledge, as one of the panellists at our Good Jobs Summit right here in Toronto in 2014. She was, then, with the Canadian Centre of Policy Alternatives, and now we are lucky to have her as part of Unifor’s Research Department. Please join me in welcoming, Kaylie Tiessen.

CHANGING WORKPLACES REVIEW PRESENTATION
KAYLIE TIESSEN: Good morning, everybody. It’s really nice to be back here again. My first ever union meeting was Ontario Regional Council in 2013, so I’m really pleased to be back here again, but actually be here working with you and for you every day. It’s pretty exciting.

My job this morning is to introduce to you the Changing Workplaces Review. Some of you might know a lot of what’s going on. I’m going to fill you in on a few details. There are actually a lot of really nitty-gritty details we could talk about, and I encourage you to talk to some of the experts that we’ve had from Unifor working on this issue, like Fred Wilson, Anthony Dale, Lewis Gottheil, who I think is coming maybe for a bit this afternoon. If you have more questions, definitely take the time to ask them.

I want to start today with a couple of headlines. “Temporary Agency Work Trapping Women in Modern Day Slavery”, “Too Many People Fall Through the Giant Cracks in Ontario’s Employment Laws”, “Ontario Lagging on Paid Sick Days Leaving Low Wage Workers Stranded” and “‘Get used to multiple careers, short-term contracts and job churn,’ Finance Minister says.”

So, what do these headlines have in common? There’s two things at least. One, many of them were written by Unifor members right here in Toronto, so a quick shout out to all of the journalists who have actually reminded us of how important and relevant the labour beat actually is to changing and informing public opinion. Just a quick shout out to those journalists.

And, two, they’re all pointing to some aspect of precarious work. Ontario’s labour market in the last 20 years has changed quite dramatically. The labour market that we face today is very different than the labour market that was faced by workers 20 and 30 years ago. Increasingly, workers are facing temporary work, zero-hour contracts, low wage work, unsafe conditions, the list goes on and on, and on.

These are not new facts for you. One thing that I think is really great about what we do here at Unifor is that we actually protect each other from the worst of what the labour market has to offer everyday through our collective agreements, through advocating for each other and for working on these important issues.

So, the Changing Workplaces Review. What is it? It’s a consultation process enabled by the Ontario government to open up both the Labour Relations Act and the Employment Standards Act. So, the Ontario government is actually acknowledging that the changes that have taken place in our labour market are not good for people, and they’re not good for our economy, and we clearly need new and stronger rules for everyone.

And, I want to take a moment to highlight how important it is that these two laws are being looked at, actually, in tandem. When they’re looked at in tandem, we can look at how the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act work together or work against each other in order to either lower standards or lift standards for workers, and that we can talk about raising the floor for everyone, often, actually, using examples that we’ve implemented in some of our collective agreements. So, lifting the floor for all workers across the province based on our own experience here at Unifor, and then talking about how we ensure that everyone has access to freedom of association and the right to join a union if they choose.

So, the process has been, politely, very long already. And, as someone who is eternally an optimist, and though my parents might disagree, fairly patient when it comes to government process, it feels like this has been going on forever. It’s already been two and a half years. This process was announced in July of 2014, was put into motion in February of 2015, the government collected its first submission in the fall of 2015.

And, just to point out how much work Unifor has actually put into this, we submitted a book, basically, to the special advisors, 150 pages outlining all of the ways that the Labour Relations Act should change, the Employment Standards Act could change in order to lift everybody up. And, it was actually really well received, so very important that that happened.

And then they asked for more submissions. So, we gave them our book with all of our opinions and all of our thoughts, and they said, “We want more.” So, we gave them a second book that was about 70 pages long providing more details. And, today, we are cautiously hopeful that the report will make recommendations on both of the Acts that will improve the labour market for people.

And they asked for more submissions. So, we gave them our book with all of our opinions and all of our thoughts, and they said, “We want more.” So, we gave them a second book that was about 70 pages long providing more details. And, today, we are cautiously hopeful that the report will make recommendations on both of the Acts that will improve the labour market for people.

So, let’s just highlight a few of the recommendations, and I don’t know where Mr. Mitchell is at this moment, but I don’t want you to take this as our official list of our top priorities. It’s a small fraction of our top priorities. So, make the certification process more fair, implementing successorship rights in the contract sector so that bus drivers, at the federal level, if we could move this forward, so that airport workers actually get to hold on to their union membership even if their contract is flipped to a different contractor over time.
We need to implement regulations for broader based bargaining so that homecare workers, workers that work in franchises, other workers in small workplaces have access to practical solutions to joining a union. We also need to raise the floor on precarious work for everyone. So, that means that part-time and temporary workers should not face discrimination in pay. Part-time workers, temporary workers, full-time workers, permanent workers should all make the same amount of money for doing the same work, and we could put that into our legislation and ensure that part-time work, contracting out temporary work was less attractive to employers.

We could also ensure that workers have access to their schedule and fair scheduling in a reasonable amount of time, and are guaranteed a certain amount of hours every week so that you can plan -- well, you can plan to be able to pay your bills on a regular basis. That’s always nice. But, also, you can plan childcare, you can plan going out with friends, and those sorts of things in advance.

And, finally, it’s important to make sure that these laws have teeth by enforcing the rules. One of the headlines that I read earlier is that when the Ontario government did a blitz and looked at a number of employers across the province, they found that over 70 percent of the employers that they looked at were actually breaking the laws that we have today, and that also is not something that we find acceptable.

So, that’s what’s been going on. Those are some of the things that Unifor has said, and I’ll leave you with a few more headlines. “Metro Deal Sets New Precedent for Fair Wages and Scheduling”, “Pilot Project in Toronto Aims to Protect Vulnerable Restaurant Workers”, “Unions Keep Workers Safer, Report Finds”, “We Must All Push Back Against Precarious Work”.

What do these headlines have in common? Two things. They tell us that people are fed up and they’re ready to fight back, and they tell us that there are many solutions to precarity that are already out there and we are showing the way for how the government could improve things for everyone.

So, the last piece, what do you get to do? In order to make sure that the government does move forward with these, hopefully before the next election, is that we need to remind them and let them know every day that we care about this issue, that it’s important to us and that if they make these changes, that they might attract a higher approval rating and some votes come election time.

So, take this card that was on your table, join the rally this afternoon. I understand there is some creative lyrics to the Christmas songs that we will be singing, and that’s one of many steps that you can take to make sure that this actually moves forward in a way that’s appropriate and builds strength for everyone. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Kaylie, thanks so much. Great addition to Unifor. Just here for a short number of years, but obviously doing some tremendously wonderful things. At the same time, just hearing that your first membership meeting was Ontario Regional Council, I’m glad to have been part of that with all the people in the room here. You’re doing an amazing job, so thank you very much for all your hard work and dedication.

Now, I’m going to ask Katha Fortier, our past director of the Ontario Regional Council, and now the assistant to the President, to introduce our next guest speaker. Katha Fortier.

KATHA FORTIER: Thanks, Dino. Morning, everyone. How are you? So, I’m really incredibly proud of the work that Unifor has done on the Changing Workplaces Review, and you’ve just heard from Kaylie, and you heard from Naureen talking about this in her report yesterday, and you know how involved we’ve been. And, really, not only involved, but very determined to change how work is regulated in the province.

So, today, we’re joined by one of the two advisors of the review. Michael Mitchell has spent his career immersed in labour and employment law as the former senior partner at Sack Goldblatt Mitchell. Michael gained extensive experience both arbitration and labour board in court proceedings involving both private and the public sector. He’s worked closely with unions and he’s worked closely with workers.

Last year, Michael became a full-time arbitrator. He was appointed a part-time vice-chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, and was also appointed as a special advisor to the Ontario Changing Workplaces Review. He is actually what we refer to as “our guy” bringing the labour perspective to the panel.

After extensive consultation across the province, Michael, along with his co-advisor, former Justice John Murray, they released a balanced and thoughtful interim report, and it was really apparent that they considered the real work stories that so many of you shared with the panel, with the advisors during this process. So, please join me in welcoming, Michael Mitchell.
MICHAEL MITCHELL: Good morning. Thanks so much for the invitation, and I really, on behalf of both John Murray and myself, really want to thank your union for the enormous work that it has done on this review. I mean, obviously, we’ve done our own research, and our own had a bunch of academics and civil servants doing research, but it was extremely important to us to have thoughtful, creative submissions based on what’s really going on out there, and we really did get that in spades from Unifor, and I’m not telling you anything we haven’t told them privately. They did an extraordinary job. So, Fred, Lewis, Naureen, Jim Stanford was there early on, people we met with and, for sure, there are all kinds of people behind them. I think we were going to meet with Jerry Dias one day, and we cancelled on him, unfortunately.

They not only made an important contribution, but we’ve had an important dialogue. And so, hopefully, in that give and take, something reasonable can emerge. So, when this review was announced, the then President of the OFL said, “This is a once in a generation opportunity to change the laws that directly impact the ability of workers to form unions and to make important gains in the workplace.” Once in a generation opportunity; no pressure there at all.

So, given that somebody has advised you that this may be only a once in a generation opportunity, and I actually think that’s going to form one of our recommendations. It’s kind of silly, frankly, that in a society and workplaces that are changing as rapidly as ours do that we don’t have a regular process of looking at the necessity for ongoing change because it comes up, that remains and is a factor a lot more than once in a generation. So, undoubtedly, that will be one of the things that we will say to the government.

So, I don’t want to -- unfortunately, part of this process is, and it goes with the hard work of pushing for change, is the creation of expectations for change. And, given those expectations, I certainly am not going to jack your expectations up any higher than they might already be. But, I do want to talk to you a bit about the process because, obviously, I can’t say anything about the result. We’re only in the process -- this coming Monday, another day of talking and deciding. Every day is another day of writing, so it’s an ongoing process and we share that first with the Government of Ontario and with no one else.

But, I do want to talk to you a bit about the process and what we’re grappling with, and some of the considerations that we’re taking into account. So, this is the first time in Ontario, and perhaps in Canada, and I think it actually is in Canada, that there is a major independent comprehensive review looking at the issues from the point of view of change in the workplace. It’s the first time there has been an independent review looking at this generically based on the workplace and looking secondarily, then, at the two Acts that might need to be amended. All the other work has been done separately.

It’s the first time there have been explicit criteria, to the best of my knowledge, where we were given the mandate to improve the security and opportunity for those made vulnerable by the structural-economic changes going on in our society, and those experiencing precarious work while, at the same time, supporting business in a changing economy.

So, this is not a one-sided street. For every change that we are asked to make to improve security for vulnerable workers and improve the situation of those experiencing precarious work, we have to take into account the flip side of that coin and the effect, and the possible effects including the unintended potential effects of business in a changing economy. And, this is explicitly part of our mandate and one that we are reminded of, as you would expect, often enough by the employer community.

The keyword that I used in what I just described was independent. There is no -- aside from the terms of reference that we were given, there is no agenda that we were given by the government, and with one small, maybe not so small exception, which I’ll talk about in a minute, they did not have and do not, insofar as I’m aware, if they have an agenda, I don’t know what it is.

And, the one exception to that is that last fall in the government’s fall economic statement in 2015, they said they committed to doing something about personal emergency leave, and they asked us later on whether we would agree to make our recommendations on that early. And, I can say, frankly, we weren’t too happy about separating out that one thing from the rest of our recommendations, but we have done that. We did make our recommendations. It’s up to them if and when they make them public, and that was sort of a bit odd, but that occurred. So, where they did have an agenda, we at least knew what it was and they announced it publicly so everybody would know what it was.
So, this is also a strange process because there are two of us who were doing this. And, when you think about it, that’s a pretty odd number. I mean, usually you would expect this kind of thing -- there would be a single reviewer or there would be three so that there would be some way to break a deadlock, or five, or some odd number, but this has two. And, when you think about it, it means that it forces us, essentially, because no one is interested and there aren’t going to be any dissents, that we have to reach consensus. And, if we can’t reach consensus, the item won’t be part of the report. And, it’s not really a negotiation. It’s not the same kind of thing as give and take because that kind of trading -- we’re not at a bargaining table. But, certainly, there is a strong exchange of views going on and a lot of thoughtful problem solving.

So, given that this is a consensus driven process, it’s kind of important to the people, and in that respect, we’re both functioning in the world today as neutrals. We’re both arbitrators and mediators, but we have very different backgrounds where John, for a very long time, was a senior management labour lawyer, and he then went and became a Superior Court judge, and he’s now retired from that position. And, as you have heard, I was in practice, practicing on the trade union side for a long time.

And, we had cases against each other, quite a few of them. And, we settled a lot of those cases, and you folks in this room know more about those relationships, or you know as much about those relationships as I do. You know the people that you have to deal with everyday, the kind of understandings you have to try to come to with them, and sometimes you find terrific people and sometimes you find people that are difficult. And, in our case, I guess we had a very long period of working respectfully with each other, mindful of our differences, and I guess somebody thought it was a good idea for us to try and take this on. So, for better or for worse, that’s what we’ve got.

The process that we’re going through, the factors that we’re taking into account were set out in our interim report. And, that interim report, and I’m mindful of our last speaker complaining about how long this has taken, that interim report was not originally going to be there. But, what we found as we went through the process of public consultations was that the employer community, they participated, but they didn’t really participate in a way that was responsive to what both the unorganized worker community was saying to us and what the trade union community was saying to us. They weren’t really aware of the breadth of the issues, the detail of the issues, and they didn’t really have, with some exceptions on personal emergency leave, hours of work, maybe a couple of other things, they didn’t really have an agenda except to say no to everything else.

And, frankly, we thought it was just too important an opportunity for us to bring out our recommendations and for the public debate and understanding of what was on the table only to begin at that point. We thought it was really important that we bring out an interim report, put out, particularly, and especially for the employer community, which hadn’t really got it up to that point, the breadth of things that were on the table that were being said to us so that the debate could be important and lively, and our recommendations could be more intelligent, more nuanced, more responsive to what they were saying, and that they really wouldn’t have, and nobody would have an opportunity to say when this was over, “Well, nobody told us what was going on and we didn’t really have an opportunity to participate.” So, we made that change. The government permitted us to do that, and hopefully the little added time in that process will turn out, at the end of the day, to be worthwhile.

As I say, we’re writing now. Our recommendations are due to the government at the end of February. It then takes them a really long time. They have to translate them. They have to get them ready to go on the web. They’re not very quick or efficient at doing that. And, there’s no commitment from them, and this is -- they probably don’t know yet what they’re going to do necessarily with the report, when they’ll release it, if they’ll release it or what happens to it. It’s their report once they get it from us.

So, let me just talk briefly about some of the main things that we’re thinking about, the criteria that we’re applying to this process. The first is we’ve endorsed and said we accept the principle of the necessity for the decency standard to apply in the provision of minimum standards through an Act like the Employment Standards Act. And, what that means is that no worker, no matter how limited their bargaining power, should be asked to accept under conditions that Canadians would not regard as decent.

Now, decency in the ILO, and in the jurisprudence, and Harry Arthurs’ report, that was made federally many years ago, needs to be applied and, undoubtedly, we would disagree, or you would disagree amongst yourselves as society as to what precisely decency is in any given circumstance. Certainly, your standards of that are likely to be higher than the minimum standards that are ultimately going to be legislated. But, it’s really important to keep that decent, fair-minded approach that the trade union movement has always advocated for all of society in mind in trying to make our recommendations, and both John and I are very mindful of that.
And, by the way, I think decency extends to the ability to be able to articulate a collective voice and to try to have harmonious labour relations and meaningful collective bargaining. And, that, frankly, takes us to the second point because the law has really changed in this respect in the last couple of years in a very important way, and I’m not sure everyone is aware of it. Certainly, I don’t think the business community is aware of it.

And, that is that the Supreme Court of Canada has now made very clear that freedom of association includes the right to meaningful collective bargaining and meaningful access to collective bargaining. The right of people to ban together to improve their economic conditions vis-à-vis a much stronger employer, and that is a fundamental constitutional right that exists in our society, and that has not been the case up until now. We didn’t have a Charter until 1984, and up until 2015, really, or 2014, it was given what many thought was a very restrictive interpretation that didn’t extend to what I just described. And so, this is a new and major development which really has an impact on a lot of how I think we’re required to approach this new world.

The third thing that we’re taking into account, and which is extremely important at the same time, is creating an environment supportive of business in our changing economy. We can’t, by what we do, create an environment that is non-competitive for them, that impedes their flexibility to such an extent that they aren’t viable.

Now, the problem is business wants to maintain its extreme flexibility on everything, and as much as they have, they don’t want to give up. And, this is pretty natural. So, almost every change, not everyone, some of the changes are ones that you may not be very happy because they might look like concessionary things to you, but most of the changes that are on the table are ones that will come up at the expense of somebody or other in the employer community, and we have to look at that very seriously as to what impact it may or may not have.

But, we’ve said to these folks, “Look, you have to give us evidence. You can’t just say you want flexibility,” because, frankly, if all it was, was flexibility, there would be no rules at all. There would be no collective agreements. There would be nothing. So, every rule and every change in every contract condition, in a way, is a curtailment of the employer’s flexibility. So, the question is how much and what? And, on that, we just have to get down to brass tacks and the details, obviously, are critical.

One of the last things that we’re looking at is the need for stability and balance, trying to look at what is reasonable, what we can sell and what is sustainable. Because we went through a period of labour relations change in this province that I think we still haven’t quite recovered from, where we went from a period of about 30 or 40 years where it’s probably not fair to describe it as a consensus, but in some things, in some aspects, particularly the certification laws, if there wasn’t an acceptance, there was at least -- or, if there wasn’t enthusiasm, there was at least a consensus about the rules that were there.

And then we went through a period of about 10 or 12 years where the rules changed, or were perceived to change, sort of, first moving one way, pro-labour, then moving another way that was extremely pro-management, to moving back a little bit, potentially. And, where the law is changing every time the government changes in things that are so important and fundamental to the labour relations community, it’s not a good circumstance.

So, one of the things that we’re thinking to ourselves, and this may be, sort of, a conservative element of what we are thinking, but it would be great if we could come up with solutions that could be broadly acceptable to a broad audience. Now, that’s not always going to be possible. Sometimes we’re just going to have to make hard choices. Most of the time we’re making hard choices, and I guess one of the things that both of us understood when we took on this responsibility was that, at the end of the day, we would have a lot of people that were unhappy at the end result of what we did.

The worker community has got a very big book. They had their own book of changes that they wanted. They have known from the beginning, but it’s not going to make it any easier that not all those things are going to get done. The business community has had its book of things, not really nearly as large, but they know there were going to be a lot of changes that were going to be recommended that they’re not going to like. And, the trade union movement, at the end of the day, I don’t think will ever say, even if they are happy, they will never say they’re happy, and why should they? They’re going to have a long list of changes that they’re going to want to continue to push for over time.

So, this is a tough balancing act which you don’t make people happy at the end, but I have to say, in my professional life, I’ve never had this opportunity to influence public policy before, and I’m very happy for the opportunity. Thank you for your welcome today and for this opportunity.

KATHA FORTIER: Thank you, again, so much for speaking to us and taking the time to talk about this process. I know you said we won’t ever be completely satisfied, and every one of us that sits on a bargaining committee will always
feel that as well, but we are looking forward to some positive changes. We know you understand the decency of work, and I think those words were so important to hear today. So, thank you very much on behalf of our council.

MICHAEL MITCHELL: Thank you so much. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. So, trying to get back -- and, I know that the clock is somewhat ticking, but I would like to at least have one more speaker come up, and I would like to have Ken Bondy to come to the stage and introduce our next guest speaker. What I will try to do is I’ll try to at least get through the recommendation, and we’ll stop at 12:00 to then get into our nominations for the election so we can get that completed to identify if an election is needed for after lunch. So, Ken Bondy. Go ahead. Point on mic 2, sorry about that.

KARI JEFFORD: Kari Jefford, Local 229. I just wanted to put a motion -- maybe we can hear a motion on the DAWN, Bonnie Braynton, and maybe make a donation from the floor to the DAWN Network.

DINO CHIODO: So, the recommendation is to look at an amount of donation. So, what we did, I think, is we gave $2,000.00 to Amanda Dale for her organization, so the recommendation is $2,000.00 to the DAWN project. Can I have a mover?

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down. Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown)

Carried. CARRIED.

Thank you very much. Much appreciated. Okay.

KEN BONDY: Thanks, Dino. I’m here to introduce Jamie Kirkpatrick. Jamie is the program manager for Blue Green Canada, which is an alliance of labour unions, Unifor being one of them, represented by Dave Moffat, Fred Wilson and myself on the board of directors, and a coalition of environmental organizations advocating for working people in the environment by promoting solutions to environmental issues that have positive employment and economic impacts.

Prior to joining Blue Green Canada, Jamie was the Chief of Staff to Toronto city councillors, Mike Layton and Shelley Carroll. He has a long history of environmental activism, running environmental campaigns related to public transit, air quality and protecting green space in the Toronto area. Please welcome our friend, Jamie Kirkpatrick.

BLUE GREEN ALLIANCE, PROGRAM MANAGER, JAMIE KIRKPATRICK

JAMIE KIRKPATRICK: Hello, brothers and sisters. It’s just before lunch, that’s what I’m going to get. Hello, brothers and sisters. All right. So, I have lots and lots of slides that I’m going to whiz through. If you see something interesting and it goes away before you can actually take it down, let me know, and I’ll give you the slide deck later.

Thank you, Ken, for that introduction, and here’s what Blue Green Canada is, really, a partnership between labour and environment working together to promote positive solutions to environmental problems. They’re good for people and the environment, and this report was out on the table. It seemed to be pretty popular. I’m just left with my French versions now, so you’re welcome to those as well, but I’ll bring more later.

And, we are really trying to point out that you don’t have to choose between a healthy environment and good jobs. We need both. And, since Blue Green Canada started, that was a message that wasn’t as well received, and now it’s almost something that I hope I don’t have to say anymore because people understand you need a healthy environment and good jobs.

This is a thing that we put out a couple years ago that got a lot of attention. Not saying anything against oil and gas jobs, but if we shift and diversify our economy a bit, you get a lot more jobs in things like green power, in home retrofits, and things like that, than you do from investing in the capital-intensive oil and gas worker. But, that’s the history.

I was just in Alberta. We held a great event there. I thought I would just plug this because we would love to do more of this across the country, promoting in Alberta the need for a just transition for the workers there. We know they’re phasing out their coal plants, and now Canada will be phasing out coal-powered electricity between now and 2030, and we had a great event. And, there was a crowd full of happy Unifor folks that participated.

And, Ken mentioned himself, and Dave Moffat, and Fred Wilson are on the board. I just wanted to -- I don’t see him now, but I just want to say thank you to Fred for his years of service. I understand he’s retiring, so he’ll be moving off my board, and I don’t believe he’ll ever stop the work that he does, but I believe he’s not going to be officially with Unifor doing it anymore. So, thanks to Fred, and to Dave and Ken.
So, I was asked to talk about this thing called cap and trade that the Ontario government is bringing in, will take effect officially in January. So, I pored over reports. I looked at charts and graphs, but what we’re really talking about is addressing climate change, and here’s some other pictures of -- this is stuff that, I think, the Ontario government might have put out. It shows the idea of putting a cap on emissions, and then those factories that are able to do it can sell those emissions to factories that aren’t able to, and we gradually lower the pollution.

But, this is all about climate change. Climate change is a big problem, and I hope everyone in the room is aware of this issue, and I’m not going to harp on it or beat on these points. Sometimes in this work, we get stuck on the details about what program works, what will be this or that, but the surrounding reality is we’re changing the climate, and if we don’t start moving beyond talk into action now, a lot of these bad things are going to become a reality. This is, sort of, just a quick picture. It’s probably not the best visual up there now, but it shows how things have gone along until the industrial age, and now we’ve shot up the CO₂ and pollutant emissions in the atmosphere, and we’ve got to act on that, and we have to do so in a way that respects workers, respects the environment and make sure that generations to come can still have good jobs.

So, in Paris -- everyone heard a lot about this Paris Climate Summit. This was the place where almost 200 nations agreed that we better do something to stop this climate change from going beyond two degrees of global change. And, they even went as far with the Canadian government saying, “Let’s aim for one-and-a-half degrees of change.” So, even doing that, which is a herculean effort, we’re still going to see impacts. We already see impacts. There were those images that were pretty prevalent here in Toronto when people were trapped on a GO train because a flash flood occurred that wasn’t something you usually see. So, even with action on climate change, and even if we push as hard as we can to meet that one-and-a-half degree limit, we’re still going to see impacts even in Canada here.

The trick with climate change is, of course, as with many things, the west feels the effects last. We caused a lot of the issues, but it’s the folks in the north and the folks in the south that are really impacted the most. Everyone has seen the images of arctic ice caps melting, and it doesn’t feel as close to home. But, then when you see whole parts of our country in drought, it makes it easier to put that to -- bring it home.

So, we have to act, and this is what Ontario has been doing so far. They started in 2004 announcing the coal-phase out, the Green Energy Act. That, actually, is where Blue Green got started. We were working with workers to make sure that the Green Energy Act was a jobs plan as well, and that when we are putting things in place to increase green power, we’re also doing it in a way that makes sure we’re creating jobs locally.

And, we worked to push to make sure that all of the new wind and solar that was being built for this plan, at least half of the wind and 60 percent of the solar needed to be made in factories in Ontario. And, this worked well for two years until the World Trade Organization caught up with it and said, “You can’t favour local business;” for some reason, and that got overturned. But, it did give us a good boost and a good start, and we got a lot of jobs created. There’s factories that had been shuttered, and workers that were out of work that were then put back to work doing similar things. So, I highlight this just to show that climate action can also mean job creation as well. Whenever there is a problem, there is also an opportunity. And, if we work together and work on this, we can make changes, create good jobs for now and for the future as we need to gradually transition to a lower carbon economy.

This is just a snapshot of what had happened in Ontario between 2008 and 2014. There was a lot of investment in these things, and there were a lot of jobs created. There needs to be a push to make sure that these are all good jobs, and there needs to be a push to make sure that as many of these jobs have the opportunity to have organized workplaces as well, and that’s, sort of, where you folks come in. So, I hope we can work together on that.

Now, where we are now. This is the Ontario government’s 5-year climate action plan. And, in there, these are what the goals that we have all agreed are going to be. We need to reduce the emissions that we put into the air by 15 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and that’s part of why this cap-and-trade program exists. It’s meant to gradually bring down the pollution that we put in the air in a way that means that we can meet our targets, we can work to keep -- well, keep things working, basically, is what we’ve got to do. So, I believe with cap and trade, and with the other measures that are slowly being announced, Ontario might get that 2020 target. It’s going to take a lot of work. We might get it.

You’ll notice that the bigger numbers are always way farther away when they’re not connected to current elected officials. Everyone can agree that in 2050, we need to act really, really a lot because no one’s going to be elected at the time for that, but that’s important. That’s where we got to get to, close to zero emissions.

So, that climate change plan has a lot of detail. And, specific to cap and trade is they’re planning to see $8.3 billion brought in from the cap and trade program to fund initiatives that will compliment the cap and trade program,
things like better transit, home energy retrofits, seal-in windows, better land-use planning, a lot of issues that have been touched on in different reports in different conversations that have happened. So, the cap and trade program both helps to reduce emission, but it also helps to fund innovation to create new low carbon technologies and services.

As Blue Green Canada, we got together, and when the Climate Change Action Plan came out, we said, “Well, what can we do to make sure this is not only just an action plan for climate, but it’s also a plan for good green jobs for workers?” And, we focused -- if you look specifically, there’s between $2 and $3 billion in funds over the next five years that are going to go to make our homes and our workplaces and our buildings more efficient. Things like upgrading the heating and cooling systems, swapping out gas furnaces, bringing in better Building Codes, and things like that.

And, we looked at this and thought, “This is where we could have the most bang for our buck in terms of creating good jobs for our workers.” A lot of people that already have the skills could be put to work if we make this program as broad as possible. There’s also, in the budget there, up to $70 million for training and skill development to get people cued up on installing solar, installing the latest other home retrofit pieces.

And so, when we got together, we realized we also want to make sure that when this is done that the work is going to where it’s most needed. There’s a big chunk of the plan that talks about retrofitting social housing. Well, wouldn’t it be great if there was a way to bring in some of the folks living in social housing as apprentices to teach them some of the skills to do this work, bring them into a trade union and teach them work that they can do in their own community that could lead to a career for them? So, we’re pushing for things that will help with that, like community benefits agreements, targeting apprenticeships, as I said there, and making sure that these things happen.

And, we looked at it. If this money is spent in the way it could be in using similar math that gave us that previous graphic up top, we could see up to 64,000 jobs created from this $2 to $3 billion in Ontario. Good jobs, people doing work that will help us be more resilient for the future. So, we’re pushing for this. We’re going to continue to call on our friends in Unifor to be around the table, at the Premier’s table with the Minister of Environment to make sure that the jobs part of this plan doesn’t fall away if people keep getting whipped up by Conservatives about the price of electricity. We need to make sure that we’re investing in our future and we need to make sure that that creates job as we do it.

So, we’re pushing for better standards to make sure that when these jobs are being done, they’re not being done by Bob’s fly by night, they’re being done by registered trade workers. They’re being done by people that have training for skills at heights, things that are important, and we don’t just have a situation where people come and put in new windows and say, “There. Those are the environmental windows you asked for,” but they’re not. So, we want to make sure there’s teeth behind the program that are introduced.

And, also, we want to make sure we take a picture of what the workforce looks like in Ontario, and where do we do things well on low carbon jobs, and where are we going to have an impact on those jobs that are in the energy intensive and trade exposed sectors. And, that’s where we need to have programs in place that slowly transition those workplaces that make sure that if a worker is in a workplace that is carbon intensive, in a factory that has pollution, that they’re not seen as the problem and they’re involved in the solution as well.

So, let’s get into the nitty-gritty here. So, our national government changed, but our climate targets haven’t. We’re still pushing for 30 percent below 2005 by 2030. This is still the weakest international target, but that’s what our target is, so we’ve got to work hard to even meet that. And, next week, we’ll hear a lot of talk about this because I believe the Prime Minister and the Premiers are meeting to talk about the next pan-Canadian climate change framework. And, if they have all agreed to it and they’re all smiling, it’s probably not strong enough, to be perfectly frank, but that’s coming next week.

And, we think that a climate action strategy has to ensure that the cost of this transition aren’t borne by working women and men alone, and any impacts on workers need to be measured and they need to be offset by training programs, not just training programs, transition programs, things that makes sure that if someone has a pension, maybe they get bridging to that pension if their job is going to be eliminated early.

But, I’ll talk specifically now in the last little bit about the cap-and-trade program, or this idea of pricing carbon. There’s lots of different ways it’s talked about. In B.C., they’ve got a carbon tax. In Ontario and in Quebec, they’re introducing cap-and-trade legislation. Quebec’s had it for a few years, and they’ve seen their emissions drop, and it helps that they are fully powered by hydro, but that doesn’t mean that they haven’t been acting. And, this means that 80 percent of the country is under a carbon pricing regime, and I think after next week, we’ll say the whole country will have some sort of program to reduce emissions.
And, globally, we’re not alone. This is happening everywhere, thank goodness. There’s action across the world on climate change. And, this is last year. If I had the current version, there would be even more colour up there to show all the different parts of the world that recognize that we need to act if we want to have the future that we all want.

And so, the basics of cap and trade. Here’s that fun image again. So, basically, the system is designed in such a way that every year the government says our cap is this high, next year it’s going to go this way. It’s going to continue to be ratcheted down.

Every bit of emissions that go up a stack require an allowance or a permit. So, basically, everyone has to account for the emissions that they put up. If they stay under that permitted limit, they have extra permits they can sell to companies that might actually not be able to meet those targets, and they get rewarded by giving in money to the company. If they aren’t able to meet those targets, they need to go out into the market and buy permits for those emissions.

And, the way this works is it’s focused entirely on reducing emissions as opposed to how much you’re going to make someone pay for that service. A carbon tax is all about $30.00 a ton. Cap and trade, it could end up being $15.00, $18.00, but what we do know is for certain, that the emissions will continue to go down as it’s legislated to do so.

So, there’s going to be a lot of quibbles. There have already been quibbles with the cap and trade program. I think this week the Auditor General came out with lots of concerns with it, and this is why we need to be active, and continue to watch it and make sure that this isn’t something that just sees money being pushed into a different corner that we hear about in 2018 when the election comes up.

The way the cap and trade program is set up is that every dollar that’s brought in goes into a fund that is only able to be used for things that will further reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It’s called something like the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Account. And then all of those programs that I showed about improving home efficiency, building transit, those are going to be funded out of the revenue that comes in from this cap-and-trade program.

And, I hadn’t until just this morning saw the resolution that is likely to be read after I speak, and I think you guys are on the right track, and I think it’s focused on making sure that workers are protected by this action. The cap-and-trade program, as it’s been introduced, gives free allocations or free permits to the majority of, what the term is, energy intensive or trade-exposed industries.

So, a lot of the auto manufacturing, a lot of the oil refineries, they still have to report on their permits. They still have to meet the target that’s set for their industry, but they’re not being charged for those permits in this initial round between now and 2020 because we don’t want to basically end up putting all of our workers at a disadvantage to offshore companies that aren’t doing any carbon pricing.

So, the cap-and-trade program between now and 2020 isn’t going to charge those energy intensive trade exposed industries per ton that’s emitted, but they’re still asking them to reduce and they’re still asking them to come down. So, that’s a key part of your resolution, and I think a very important thing is to follow on and make sure that the consideration for workers that are in those industries is not lost.

And, this is a fun graphic that the Ontario government put out. I just thought I would show this to you. This is how they see the system working. We’re going to see how this works starting in January officially, but you see how we’ve got that smoke stack, the high carbon, number one there, cap and trade brings in the money, the money funds those actions in the action plan which result in lower carbon Ontario, and then the cap is reduced, the factory is a little greener, and the process is meant to continue until we’ve reached those lofty goals of 80 percent below by 2050 or whatever the new goals might be.

Eighty-two percent of all emissions in Ontario were covered by this cap-and-trade program. There’s some that you can’t capture, some that are really small, some that just don’t make sense to be put into that. It would be more work to track them than it would actually reduce them, and the cap does lower every year. And, I think I covered a lot of this off.

Kudos to the A/V guys for slotting this deck in. I only got it to them very late, and it’s quite long, so I’m going to whiz through and we’ll just -- but, basically, I made this point, cap and trade is not about price, it’s about the cap. It’s about ensuring that in Ontario and across the globe, we’re reducing our emissions. We’re not just worrying about paying polluters or paying for pollution.

And, again, this point -- some people think you only get charged if you go over. We’re charging -- once the system is fully integrated, everybody gets charged for the pollution that they put out on a market level, and then you have to stop polluting when you get to that cap level. So, it’s about making sure that, as I’ve said a couple times, it’s about emissions being reduced.
And, we’re not alone in this. Quebec’s already been doing it. B.C. has a program. B.C. is a good cautionary example because they were early adopters. They brought in a carbon tax which has now been frozen for the last several years at the same price, and now we’ve seen B.C. as a province actually have their emissions go up as a result. So, the point is that when you commit to one of these things, you have to see it through, otherwise you can very easily see the system fall apart, and B.C. is now seeing emissions going up.

And, this is one that -- apparently, people want to see action in climate change, and people like the idea of this program. We’ll see how it feels once we are in it. What we will like to feel, starting in January, gas will probably be about 4 cents more, so that will be the immediate impact. But, a key point to all this is we can’t fix this without doing something, and the cap and trade is the measure that the government picked, so we might as well see that we can have input into that and make sure that it works as best as possible.

The program that they have agreed to is between now and 2020. They will be reviewing it as we go, so it’s going to be important for workers and for everybody to be feeding into that process so that if there are things that are working, we pilot those. If there are things that aren’t working, we make sure we speak up on those and make sure that those problems are addressed.

And, this is how you can get in touch with me at “bluegreencanada.ca”. I’m happy to take any questions, but I also know you have a resolution where folks will be able to speak on this. And, I’ll just say, it’ll be very easy to criticize this program when it comes out, but the piece that I would ask everyone to come back to is the fact that we’ve got to do something, and the debate about is cap and trade right, is carbon tax right, that kind of that has to be done with now. If we don’t start acting on climate, all of this is going to be irrelevant.

So, cap and trade is a step. If it’s not working perfectly, let’s make it work, and let’s continue to -- I’ll pull together through groups like this, through Blue Green Canada, through other alliances to work to make sure our workplaces are greener, that we’re creating good jobs and that we’re working on climate across Ontario and across the world. So, thanks for your time.

KEN BONDY: So, thanks again for that important message, Jamie, and the work that you’re doing. The ORC would like to give a small token of appreciation to Jamie for his presentation today. Thanks, Jamie.

DINO CHIODO: So, Jamie, thank you very much. It was very much appreciated. I know you’re going to be staying for, I think, pretty much -- a little bit after lunch as well. We are not going to go through the recommendation because we do have to get through the order of the day with regards to the nominations. So, I would like Peter Kennedy to please come up with reference to doing the nominations for the elections that are going to be proceeding over the course of the day.

And, in saying that, maybe while I’m waiting for Peter to come up, I can go over something quickly. There were 10 tickets that were drawn with reference to Karam, which means generosity, and it’s basically the Generosity Foundation, but it is the Karam Foundation for the Syrian soap basket winners. We do have the 10 numbers. I’ll announce them at lunch time, but when you’re leaving for lunch, there will be a list of all the numbers for the 10 individuals that did win the basket, and they basically raised a total of $1,825.25. So, thank you very much for supporting that initiative.

That being said, I would like to put a motion on the floor. The national union has agreed to match the $1,825.25, and I think it’s fitting for Ontario Regional Council to do the same. So, can I get a motion for $1,825.25?

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

Thank you so much.

PETER KENNEDY: Anybody that is a potential candidate for one of the positions for which we will take nominations have to vacate the stage, others can remain. Good afternoon, sisters and brothers. It is afternoon now, officially.

As Dino has indicated, we have nominations that I will open the floor for, for the executive of the Ontario Regional Council, Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and eight members-at-large. We also have nominations for two standing committees which are elected in plenary, Health, Safety and Environment and Political Action. Three members, respectively, of each of those committees.
And, we do have openings for five equity committees, some of whom have already met and elected their delegates in caucus, so they’re representatives in caucus, and that is the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour, the Young Workers and the Women’s Committees who have elected their representatives, as I say, at caucus meetings that have already been held throughout the weekend.

And, upon adjournment at lunch, we do have the LGBTQ Committee and the Workers with disAbilities Committee to be nominated and elected within their respective caucuses. And, I would just like to remind those who Dino volunteered, or volun-told I guess as he described it yesterday, for the Election Committee, that if it is necessary to have an election for any of the positions that are open, that will take place later on this afternoon, at 3:00 this afternoon. So, there is a meeting to be held at lunch with the Election Committee. I’m not sure what room that is, but I’m sure that will be announced before we adjourn.

So, having said that, we will now open the floor for the executive positions that are available on the Ontario Regional Council. And, I would like, first, to open the floor for nominations for the Chair of the Ontario Regional Council. Microphone 3.

JAMES STEWART: Yes. I’m James Stewart. I’m a Vice-President of Local 444 in Windsor, and the person I’m nominating is a true workhorse on behalf of his members in Windsor and those in need, more general.

As the President of Local 444, he represents members across a broad range of our economy, almost every sector, including auto, gaming and hospitality, energy, health care, transportation, IPS Parts. He is a true example of a leader in the community in Windsor-Essex. As chairperson of the FCA Council and master bargaining, he was instrumental in garnering about a $3 billion investment in Windsor’s assembly plant going back a couple of years ago, creating 1,500 jobs in that plant and thousands of spin-off jobs in auto as a result of that across Ontario.

More recently, he was a vital part of garnering an investment for a new paint shop at Brampton assembly in the recent negotiations with the Detroit Three. And, without that investment, that plant did not have a viable future for long-term. He also managed to garner millions of dollars’ investment for the Etobicoke Casting Plant, and that’s a plant, for anyone that knows, was shutting down eight short years ago and, today, it’s got lifeblood. It’s got a good future.

So, I stand here to nominate my friend, my local president, the first Unifor Ontario Regional Council Chairperson and the current, I nominate Dino Chiodo for re-election.

PETER KENNEDY: Brother Chiodo has been nominated. Any further nominations for the position of Chair of the Ontario Regional Council? Last call. Seeing none. Brother Chiodo, do you accept the nomination from Brother Stewart?

DINO CHIODO: So, obviously, with thanks to my nominator, with total thanks to my local behind me here, they do a tremendous amount of work in our community, and with thanks to the Ontario Regional Council because every one of you just do an amazing amount of work in support of our membership, I do accept, and I accept that humbly. Thank you very much.

PETER KENNEDY: So, I declare Brother Dino Chiodo acclaimed as Chair of the Ontario Regional Council.

Nominations are now in order for the position of Vice-Chair of the Ontario Regional Council. Microphone 2.

MARILYN NETEMEGESIC: Hello, I’m Marilyn Netemegesic from Local 7-0 and seven sacred gifts. And, I want to nominate Candace Lavalley for my sister who is the President of our Local 7-0. She’s a very strong, very -- I don’t know what to say, but she’s very strong and outgoing, and a very proud Anishnabe Kwe, and I just want to nominate her for the Vice-Chair of the Ontario Regional Executive Committee. Thank you.

PETER KENNEDY: Thank you. Sister Lavalley has been nominated. Any further nominations for Vice-Chair? Last opportunity. Sister Lavalley, do you accept the nomination from Sister Netemegesic?

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Thanks. Meegwetch to my Sister Marilyn for the nomination and thank you to the ORC for an excellent past three years on the Executive Council, and I proudly accept my nomination.

PETER KENNEDY: I declare Sister Lavalley acclaimed as Vice-Chair of the Ontario Regional Council. I will now open the floor for nominations for Treasurer of the ORC. Microphone 2.

BRUCE DICKIE: Thank you, Peter. Bruce Dickie, President of Local 2458. I am proud to put forward the name of Tullio DiPonti for Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Regional Council. Tullio is presently the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 2458, as well as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Windsor-Essex County Skilled Trades Council.

Tullio has been a great friend and colleague for many years. He has also been a solitary unionist for over three decades, and it’s with honour that I nominate him for the position of Secretary-Treasurer.

PETER KENNEDY: Brother DiPonti has been nominated. Any further nominations for the position of Secretary-Treasurer? Last chance. Again, seeing none. Brother DiPonti, do you accept the nomination from Brother Dickie?
TULLIO DIPONTI: Yes, I do. Thank you, Peter, and thank you to the delegates of Ontario Regional Council. First, I want to thank my nominator, my President, my friend, long-time friend. I do appreciate it. And, my local union for all the work that they do for our members, I really appreciate everything and your support. I accept it with great honour because I’m going to save you guys more money.

PETER KENNEDY: I declare Brother DiPonti acclaimed as Secretary-Treasurer. And, as a former Secretary-Treasurer myself, hold him responsible to that comment that he just made. Okay. We now have openings for eight members at large for the Ontario Regional Council. So, nominations for members at large. Microphone 2.

ANGIE MARTZ: Angie Martz, Financial Secretary, Local 229. It’s with great honour I stand here before you, brothers and sisters, to nominate my local president and mentor, Kari Jefford, for re-election to the ORC member-at-large.

Kari is a great union activist and always in the thick of issues affecting our local and our region. Most recently, when a CEO in Thunder Bay of a large health care employer publicly placed blame on our health care members, Kari took it to the media and shamed that CEO. And, that’s the kind of leadership that we need on our Regional Council. So, I ask you, again, to accept my nomination for Kari.

PETER KENNEDY: Thank you. Sister Jefford has been nominated. Microphone 4.

MARK ROY: Good morning, fellow Leaf fans.

PETER KENNEDY: Don’t push it.

MARK ROY: I first met this individual, this knuckle head, hammerhead, Tim McKinnon, about 30 years ago as his afternoon shift committee person. It’s been an honour to watch him grow from a rank and file activist to a respected GM plant chairperson. Tim’s been there approximately 30 years, like I said. He’s held a number of elected positions over the years, and he is currently our GM plant chairperson and he is the vice-chairperson for the GM Master Bargaining Committee.

He’s received some awards as a Volunteer of the Year for youth and sports for the City of Welland. He’s well respected in the local union and in the community. He was one of the driving forces that got folks out to our recent strike at Seneca, and it is my pleasure to nominate Tim as the member-at-large to Unifor Council. Thank you.

PETER KENNEDY: Brother McKinnon has been nominated. Microphone 6.

PAUL MCKEE: Good afternoon. Paul McKee, Vice-President of Local 4268. We’re an amalgamated local of roughly 1,900 transportation workers with units representing school bussing, long-haul trucking, dock workers, mechanics and the waste industry. I stand before you to nominate our President, my friend, Debbie Montgomery, as a member-at-large for the Ontario Regional Council.

Debbie has been a tireless advocate lobbying for government for change and protection for precarious workers during the Changing Workplaces Review. Debbie has also been an outspoken advocate for school bussing in Ontario and in the GTA at the bargaining tables through the media, at all levels of government.

Debbie has championed Unifor campaigns of steering clear of the RFP-Trap. Debbie’s tenacity and commitment to our workers who represents us is unmatched, that is why we, the Local of 4268, nominate Debbie Montgomery as member-at-large.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Montgomery has been nominated. Microphone 5.

DOUG CARTER: Doug Carter, President of Local 975, representing gas workers in Ontario. I would like to nominate Stephanie Haskell for position of member-at-large. Stephanie has been in the gas industry for 34 years. She’s a great friend. So, with respect and honour, I nominate her for the position.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Haskell has been nominated. Microphone 3.

BRAD MCCONNELL: Brad McConnell, Local 112 in Toronto. I’m here today to nominate a responsible, self-driven, goal-oriented individual that will continue to achieve the goals as set out by the ORC. This individual has been an active union member for over 30 years and has supported the local union and the national union that entire time.

His love for getting involved is evident. I thought about ways of trying to count how many demonstrations, injured worker days, events, rallies, campaigns and marches he had participated in, but they’re just too numerous, so I gave up trying to count that. I, then, thought I would count on how many Labour Day events, picnics, strike committees, dances, et cetera, that he organized. Again, there’s far too many to mention.

In December 1999, he was elected as the WSIB rep at DeHavilland Aircraft. He was later, in 2010, elected as the financial secretary of the local, and in 2013, as President of Local 112.
I’m fully confident that his dedication and experience over the last 30 years will be an asset to the Ontario Regional Council. Local 112 has shown their support in him as their President, and I’m asking that the delegates here do the same today. It’s my honour to nominate my friend, my colleague, worker, Scott McIlmoyle, to the ORC as a member-at-large.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Brother McIlmoyle has been nominated. Microphone 6.

**VERONIQUE PREVOST:** Veronique Prevost, Local 6004. I would like to nominate my friend and mentor to Pearl Almeida. Pearl is in her third term as President of Local 6006 and an advocate for working people and their families. She works tirelessly for women’s rights and women’s issues, so it would be my honour to nominate Pearl Almeida.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Sister Almeida has been nominated. Microphone 5.

**LISA LEM:** Lisa Lem, Local 333, Treasurer and Unit Chair. I would like to nominate our President, Ken Cole, for the position of member-at-large for the Ontario Regional Council.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Brother Cole has been nominated. Microphone 3.

**JIM WILKES:** Jim Wilkes, Financial Secretary at Local 27. It’s really a privilege for me to be able to put forward the name of somebody I have worked closely with in the office at Local 27 for the last 15 years. His knowledge, his dedication to our union will serve this council very well. It’s a pleasure to put forward the name of my friend and the President of Local 27, Jim Reid.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Brother Reid has been nominated. Any further nominations for member at large? Last opportunity. Seeing none, I will go through the list and ask the nominated candidates if they accept the nomination. And, I will start with Sister Jefford.

**KARI JEFFORD:** I stand and accept my nomination with great thanks to my nominator and Sister Angie Martz, as well as my local union and my past Presidents, both Vice-President and President, Katha Fortier and Andy Savela, and thanks to ORC.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Sister Jefford accepts. Brother Cole.

**KEN COLE:** I certainly do accept my nomination, and I certainly do thank and appreciate the kind words by my nominator, Lisa. Thank you very much.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Brother Cole accepts. Brother McKinnon.

**TIM MCKINNON:** I humbly accept the nomination. I would like to thank my local, the ORC. I started at it a little bit late when -- I would also like to recognize Brother Wayne Gates, whose position I got. Getting into it a little bit late, I would like to also thank Dino and Katha for bringing me in, and it was a worthwhile experience, and I’m glad I get to continue with it. And, that’s it. Thank you very much.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Brother McKinnon accepts. Brother Reid.

**JIM REID:** With honour, I thank my nominator and thank the Ontario Regional Council, as well as the executive, Sister Fortier and Sister Rizvi, and look forward to working with all the delegates and working with the executive in the interim. Thanks very much.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Brother Reid accepts. Sister Almeida.

**PEARL ALMEIDA:** I would definitely accept my nomination with many thanks to my local, first and foremost, who are always very supportive in everything I do. And, also, to my Sister Veronique, who has recently been elected to the Women’s Committee, for her nomination. Thank you.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Sister Almeida accepts. Sister Haskell.

**STEPHANIE HASKELL:** I accept the nomination with thanks to my nominator and my local, and the support of all the gas workers.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Sister Haskell accepts. Brother McIlmoyle.

**SCOTT MCILMOYLE:** It’s with great thanks that I accept my nomination. My friend, my co-worker, Brad, does a hell of a job as a financial secretary. I want to thank my local union. They make it pretty easy to stay dedicated. And, on a lighter note, it’s always a pleasure to give a call home to my mom and say, “By the way, I’ve been elected as a member-at-large.” I’m sure she’ll have a chuckle. But, anyways, thank you.

**PETER KENNEDY:** Brother McIlmoyle accepts. Sister Montgomery.
DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: It’s with great honour that I accept my nomination. I thank my local. I very much enjoyed my first term on the Ontario Executive Board, and I anticipate learning more and working harder for everybody. Thank you.


So, that is the new executive for the Ontario Regional Council. As I indicated, we have two standing committees that are elected in plenary, so I will open the floor for nominations for three positions on the Health, Safety and Environment Committee. Microphone 4.

NADIA ANTON-COLLINS: Nadia Anton-Collins, Financial Secretary, Local 707, and I’m retiring July 1st. Not only is it my last time that I attend council as a delegate, but I have the great pleasure to nominate my friend and colleague, Emil Mesic, to the Health and Safety Committee of the Ontario Regional Council of Ontario. It’s the Health, Safety and Environment, and Workers Compensation Committee. Mouth full.

Emil is a strong, dedicated health and safety advocate. For many of you who don’t know him, he works endlessly on behalf of workers of the province. He has been instrumental in helping me of achieving success with occupational illness claims for some of our members in members of the province. So, I do nominate Emil Mesic as a member of the Health, Safety and Environment, and Workers Compensation Committee.


ELAINE KAMENAR: Elaine Kamenar, President of Local 1859. I nominate Susan Markus for the Health and Safety Committee. Susan Markus has been a strong advocate for health and safety for over 25 years at her workplace, as well as being a discussion leader for over 20 years. In 2012, Susan was a recipient of the Bud Jimmerfield Award for her dedication to health and safety. So, it’s my honour to nominate Susan Markus.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Markus has been nominated. Again, microphone 4.

MIKE NICOLOFF: Mike Nicoloff, President of Local 27-C. I would like to nominate my friend and my fellow co-worker, Stephanie Brownlee, of Unifor Local 26. Stephanie has been in our union, experienced and wanting to know more about her contract negotiations that were taking place. She stepped up and became a steward, and eventually chief steward.

Through her journey, she has served the membership in many roles, including local president, health and safety co-chair, bargaining rep and, currently, local secretary. Stephanie has volunteered a week in the summer vacation to teach health and safety at the Canadian Labour Congress’ women’s summer school. She is a discussion leader for Unifor and is an incumbent on the Ontario Regional Health, Safety and Environment Committee. It’s my honour to nominate Stephanie Brownlee.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Brownlee has been nominated. Any further nominations for the Health, Safety and Environment Committee? Last chance for nominations. Seeing none, Brother Mesic, do you accept?

EMIL MESIC: With many thanks to my nominator, Nadia Anton-Collins, who has been active in Local 707 as long as I have been a member, and to my local who elected me as a delegate to the Ontario Regional Council, I graciously accept the nomination and look forward to the next three years.

PETER KENNEDY: Brother Mesic accepts. Sister Markus.

SUSAN MARKUS: I humbly accept my nomination with thanks for my nominator. First time speaking at the mic, I got her up one way or another, so thank you and I’m looking forward to working with the committee.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Markus accepts. Sister Brownlee.

STEPHANIE BROWNLEE: With much thanks to my nominator and to my local, I accept. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Jamie and Scott for their last three years of guidance and support, and I look forward to working with Sue and Emil in the next three years.


ANGELA DIVITARIS: I am Angela Divitaris, Local 240 in Windsor. I’m proud to stand here today to nominate an individual whose passion for politics is infectious. She has demonstrated this during the last federal election, and
especially helping Tracey Ramsey defeat Jeff Watson in the Essex riding. And, currently, she is working hard on the campaign to stop the TPP. This past year, she actually won the Gary L. Parent Award for political action, and I’m not only proud to call her my sister, but my friend, and I nominate Sister Jodi Nesbitt.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Nesbitt has been nominated. Microphone 2.

JAKE MOORE: Thank you. Jake Moore, President of Local 79-M, and I stand here today to proudly nominate Jackie McIntosh to the Political Action Committee. Jackie should be no stranger to anybody here today, and let me say I’m glad she’s on our side.

Jackie fights for workers’ rights every day, whether that’s through her work as an organizer for Unifor’s Right at Work campaign, her hard work on Unifor’s election campaigns to ensure that Tim Hudak and Stephen Harper did not get their chance to implement their anti-worker plans in this country, and her daily work at the local to ensure that we have a strong equity committee in place.

Jackie is also no stranger to MPs and MPPs. Her various lobbying work has brought her face-to-face with politicians to discuss the TPP improvements to both the Employment Standards Act and the Ontario Labour Relations Act. Even at work, Jackie breaks the mould. She was the first woman to be hired full-time in the CTV Operations Department.

Jackie is truly dedicated to political advocacy. Numerous times I receive calls asking for a plane ticket and a hotel room to Ottawa to fight the good fight, and there is no one I would rather send than Jackie. Jackie even keeps flags and whistles in her car just in case there is an urgent need from her union. Thank you.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister McIntosh has been nominated. Microphone 5.

BRIAN CHAPMAN: Yes. Brian Chapman, first Vice-President of Local 27 in London. I’m very proud to stand here and nominate one of our sisters from Local 27. She’s been a long time RPN in our local. She’s a long-time activist. She is our first ever elected health care vice-president for the local. I work side-by-side with her day in, day out quite often. She works with a tireless energy that’s very contagious. I know she’s going to carry that over. I stand here and proudly nominate Ann Marie Tulett.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Tulett has been nominated. Any more nominations for the Political Action Committee of the Ontario Regional Council? Last opportunity. Seeing none. Sister Tulett, do you accept the nomination?

ANN MARIE TULETT: I accept my nomination and I thank my nominator, Brian, who I also refer as Batman. We work daily together, and I’m proud to be a part of that team. Thanks.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Tulett accepts. Sister Nesbitt.

JODI NESBITT: It’s with great pride and gratitude that I accept this nomination, and with thanks to my nominator, my local and the Ontario Regional Council. Thank you.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister Nesbitt accepts. Sister McIntosh.

JACKIE MCINTOSH: Thank you, sisters and brothers, for this great honour of being nominated. I want to thank everybody that I work with at work all the time in the news room. We’re always hearing about the corporation’s doing a great job, and the different levels of government doing a great job, but every day is so refreshing to know that our organization, Unifor, puts it out to the media, constantly, that we’re doing a fantastic job.

I love the fact that pushing the politicians from making the laws and changing the focus that we do at Unifor to make members’ lives liveable is working. I wanted to thank Rolly, Patty and the whole Unifor National Political Action Department for having this opportunity. I want to thank Jake, my nominator, for my local, for encouraging me to do what I need to do.

A big thank you to Randy Kitt. Two years ago, he encouraged me to have a different focus on my life, and so I have done that. And, to my sisters and brothers throughout the whole union, thank you again. Much love to my family and friends, and everybody that gives me these opportunities to be involved in Unifor. Thank you.

PETER KENNEDY: Sister McIntosh accepts. So, I will declare Sister Ann Marie Tulett, Sister Jodi Nesbitt and Sister Jackie McIntosh acclaimed as the Political Action Committee of the Ontario Regional Council. And, with that, I will turn the Chair of the council back over to the Chair of the Ontario Regional Council, Dino Chiodo, and thank you all very much.

DINO CHIODO: So, Peter, thank you very much for holding the nominations for the different positions. I want to thank everybody who did have their name called and basically participated. It’s an honour to be elected, acclaimed, basically named with reference to trying to represent working class people. And, in saying that, there is no bigger
honor than being able to have that recognition. So, to everybody that has just gone through the process and has been acclaimed, congratulations to each and every one of you.

I think I have a few points of -- are those points of privilege? Okay. I think I have a couple of points, but just before I take those points, I would like to make a couple of quick announcements. Actually, why don’t you go ahead? Mic 3.

MARY ELLEN DANCE: Mary Ellen Dance, Local 1106. Workplace is Breckles Insurance Brokerage and Unifor Home and Auto Insurance in Waterloo for all Unifor members across Canada.

As you all know, we had a table out in the lobby. There was an e-mail sent out to about 450 members earlier in the week to come to our table to register, to fill out a ballot for Toronto Maple Leaf tickets, and we have those ballots here now. We would like to do that draw for one of our lucky members.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Rod McGill.

DINO CHIODO: Rod McGill.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Please come out to our desk. We’ve got a pair of tickets for you for the Leafs. Thanks for your support.

DINO CHIODO: Way to go, 1459. Okay. That being said, I do have a couple of announcements. I don’t see any other speakers or points of privilege. In saying that, we have a caucus meeting for the Workers with disAbilities caucus that’s going to be in Sheraton Hall A. We also have the LGBTQ caucus which is going to be held at lunch time as well in the Wentworth room, so they will be in the Wentworth Room. And, for individuals that are going to participate in the rally that’s going to happen today at lunch time with the Young Workers rally, $15.00 and Fairness, they’re going to be meeting at the top of the escalator on conclusion at lunch time, and Roxanne will be there to walk with everybody over to Dundas Square where they’re going to be holding that rally and event.

There are a few individuals that I would like to recognize as special guests that have come in over the course of the day. Wayne Gates, a Member of Provincial Parliament in the Niagara region, a member of Unifor doing an amazing job. So, Wayne Gates, keep it up. He was at the rally on Wednesday with Bill C-70 and Section 17, did a great job speaking in works on behalf of working class people pretty regular, does a great job and we appreciate that.

I want to also recognize Dan Perriera. He’s from the Toyota Cambridge South Plant here with us today and, again, we’ve been trying to organize the Toyota facilities at the same time. We appreciate his commitment to continue to come back and work with us in hopes of getting organized and certified. So, Dan, thanks for being here today and supporting Ontario Regional Council.

I would also like to recognize Greg Brady. Greg Brady, if he’s in the room, from Local 199, the President there. He is 56-years-young today, so if you see him, wish him a happy birthday and sing a bit to him if you can. Also, Bob Chernecki, an individual from our CAW family who comes to a lot of the events, he still participates, going through a couple of challenges with his family with some health issues, but Bob Chernecki is just an amazing individual if you have an opportunity to chat with him. And, Bob Chernecki, thanks for being here in support of Ontario Regional Council.

I would like to ask the Local 444 group to please come up to the front. They’re going to be taking some photos up here today, and we’ve got a few extra kits available for observers or anyone else to bring to local’s retirees if they want them. Please, if you can go to the registration desk to pick those kits up that would be great. We will be starting promptly at 2:00 p.m. So, everybody, again, thank you for the wonderful day, the wonderful debates and all the work that’s been going on.

We appreciate all your input and support, and make sure to purchase your 50/50 draw tickets in support of the United Way of Chatham-Kent. There’s only a short time left to purchase those tickets, so on your way out, please try to do that. Sales are going basically until 2:00, and they’ll be making the announcement of who the winners are on the 50/50 draw at about 3:00. So, please, if you can, dig a little deeper to get your tickets for the United Way. Everybody, enjoy and have a good lunch.

--- Whereupon the meeting was in recess - from 12:43 p.m. to 2:14 p.m.

DINO CHIODO: We’re going to get everything rolling in the next couple of minutes. We are waiting for a few people still to come back that participated in the Young Workers’ rally, the $15.00 and Fairness. But, at the same time, we’ve got a lot of work to do. We’re going to have to get through a number of recommendations, so we’re going to start probably in the next 3 or 4 minutes.

So, I’ll start off with point of privilege. Go ahead, mic 3.
CHASE ROBINSON: Hi, fellow delegates. My name is Chase Robinson with Local 247. I just wanted to take a minute today to talk about Operation Christmas Cheer. For those who don’t know who we are or what we do, Operation Christmas Cheer is a charity founded by Casandra Robinson, my mom and fellow Unifor member, back in 2004.

She, along with my dad, made the decision that the 24 members of, now, Unifor Locals 324 and 102-O who were on strike deserved a bit of help over the holidays 12 years ago. With a bunch of locals and individuals who made donations, they were able to provide those 24 families a Christmas food basket and toys for all their children.

Having gone to both Dryden and Pembroke to provide this little bit of support, my folks had no idea this would only grow year over year due to strikes and lockouts across Ontario, some of which have gone upwards of five years. Would they still be driving across this great province in December to support union brothers and sisters and their families? In 12 years, we can probably say that we have supported every single local on strike or lockout across Ontario.

Just last year alone, we travelled over 1,325 kilometres, delivered 10,000 pounds of food, 390 toys to 655 members including Unifor members of Local 1688 and 4266 in Ottawa. We raised $95,646.00 all with the help of 66 volunteers, 124 unions, locals, labour councils and individuals from across North America.

This year, five locals are on strike or lockout across Ontario currently. Fifty-eight CUPE 2974 members in Windsor; 435 CUPE 4914 members in Mississauga; 25 United Steelworkers 1005 members in Hamilton; 45 SEIU health care members in North Bay; 50 PSAC members in Sarnia. That’s 613 families on strike or lockout across Ontario currently.

Every dollar donated to Operation Christmas Cheer goes directly to the members affected in the form of toys, food and gift cards. Everyone that makes this happen, does so as a volunteer. If you’re unable to donate, even just helping to put together food bags or even showing up at the various locals’ picket lines can make that big difference for those families going through a strike or lockout this holiday season.

For more details, as well as the delivery dates, which some are still being set, check out our call of action, our website, “operationcheer.com”, as well as our Facebook page. Thank you so much, brothers and sisters.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Before you go though, we’ve got a tradition, obviously, working with Operation Cheer. And, in saying that, I think it’s an important initiative, and on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, our executive board, we would like to have a motion, if we can get it supported, to pass $5,000.00 to your organization, to continue to help our workers that are going through some challenges, striking especially through the holiday season. Can I have a motion for $5,000.00?

All those in favour?

(opposing votes shown)

CarrIED.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much and keep up the good work. You’re doing a great job. I’m sorry, are you guys together?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. Go ahead, please.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, Dino, on behalf of the Ontario Communications Council that met last week, we would also like to make a donation of $5,000.00 to Operation Christmas Cheer.

DINO CHIODO: Great job. Great job. And, at some point, we might even squeeze Jerry and Bobby for another $5,000.00 or $10,000.00. We’ll see how that works out over the course – oh, look at that. Go ahead. So, Bobby Orr is suggesting that the national union is going to match the $10,000.00. Congratulations. Good job. Nothing like peer pressure. Way to go, guys. Thank you very much and keep up the good work, guys. Great job. Thanks, Bob. Mic 4.

PAUL MCKEE: Thank you, brothers. Paul McKee, Local Vice-President of 4268. I stand here on a point of privilege. We’ve got a couple of active campaigns out here. The School Bus campaign, I know we’re going to talk about later. Just come by, sign your petition, go online, sign the petition to repeal Bill C-27, also, and I just want to remind you there’s a couple of tables out here if nobody has access to the internet. We’re able to do it for you. All right. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: No, thank you very much. Much appreciated. I don’t think there’s any more points of privilege at the microphones, so what I’m going to do, when we left off, we heard Jamie Kirkpatrick actually have a good presentation with regards to Blue Green Canada. So, in saying that, I would just like to continue off from there and bring
up Recommendation number 4. So, if you can open up your packages and get your recommendations out, we’ll be going over Recommendation number 4, and I’m going to ask Tim McKinnon to come on up and present that recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4: CAP AND TRADE


In May 2016, the Wynne government in Ontario passed legislation, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low Carbon Economy Act. The meat and potatoes of the plan features Ontario’s commitment to join the Western Climate Incentive’s Cap and Trade program.

Unifor has given critical support to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and to Ontario’s Climate Action Plan. However, we have consistently raised concerns on the need for transitional credits beyond 2020 for “EITE” industries, requirement for “cross border carbon adjustments” to ensure that products entering Ontario from jurisdictions without a carbon price are not creating unfair advantage, and the clear need for framework on “just transition” for workers affected by climate change. Our convention in August passed Resolution 20 that included a full range of support for workers including:

1. Employment transition
2. Re-training
3. Re-location assistance
4. Early retirement
5. Pension bridging
6. Income security/stabilization

“Emissions Intensive Trade Exposed”, or EITE, industries employ thousands of Unifor members in oil extraction, upgrading and refining, natural gas processing and distribution, petrochemicals, automobile, truck and bus manufacturing, aerospace, mining, aluminum and pulp and paper. Our members work in 30 of the 150 large emitters listed on Ontario’s database.

The government must take concrete steps to demonstrate to Ontario workers that they will not be left behind as economic and environmental change transforms our province.

I therefore recommend:

1. ORC Health Safety and Environment Committee’s primary goal on Climate Change and Just Transition be the fulfillment of commitments for certainty and support for EITE industries; a clear Just Transition policy and framework within the Ontario Climate Action Plan and that this undertaking be in conjunction with the national union.
2. ORC continue to work with partners in the Ontario Clean Economy Alliance, Blue Green Alliance, Green Economy Network (CLC) and the OFL on these related issues of climate change, energy policy, Just Transition and Good Jobs.
3. Local union utilize the courses offered at our Unifor Family Education Centre to better understand the modern-day crisis of climate change. Specifically, I recommend Environment (Community), Environment (Workplace) and Good Jobs in a Green economy to investigate the emergence of a green economy through a labour lens. This course will also equip members in the ability to be part of a broader discussion on developing sustainable action plans for good jobs in a green economy.

Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Good job, Tim. Thank you very much. I have speakers. Speaker on mic 4, Dan Mathewson, go ahead.

MARK MATHEWSON: Mark Mathewson.

DINO CHIODO: Mark, sorry.

MARK MATHEWSON: That’s all right, Dino. Mark Mathewson, Local 848, Shell, Sarnia, Ontario. I rise, obviously, in support of this, and let me just walk you through a few things as to why. There’s four refineries in Ontario, all of which, when you came here, drove here, if you used any kind of car to get here, we made that gasoline for you.

We have a lot invested in this. There’s a lot of good jobs that are associated with this. The Sarnia-Lambton -- when you heard the guy talk about the EITE, so Sarnia-Lambton area has 25 percent of those emitters, and that’s a huge amount of jobs. You look at, say, 500 jobs at each of those sites, it’s a couple thousand jobs in the Sarnia-Lambton area that are affected.
So, we’re up here, and I’m rising up here. So, you’re listening to this, you heard a lot of stuff on these conferences about why you should get involved. Listen to me for a second and I’ll try to explain to you why you should get involved, how this impacts you. This isn’t just about refineries. Cap and trade is not going to be just about refineries.

So, as the brother said earlier from the Blue Green Alliance, they talked about what the costs will be. Well, the cost per credit when you pollute, right now, is starting out at $18.00. So, when it goes up, it will because it’s not just for the people that emit that are involved with this. People can speculate on these credits, so that can drive the price up.

When it goes up to $35.00, $40.00, $50.00, is when the government will inject credits to hold that ceiling on, those kind of costs go up to $35, $50 million a site, at my personal site, to do that. But, we’re not just talking about refineries. We’re talking about the auto industry. We’re talking about the mining. We’re talking about transportation, heavy manufacturing, any kind of manufacturing that’s burning hydro carbon. Look at the ancillary spinoffs, the jobs that are associated with this.

So, in our industry, in the refining and the petrochemical industry, we’re looking like 4 to 1. So, those 2,000 are now 8,000 jobs that are impacted. Auto is 10 to 1. So, when you start looking at those and the numbers, everybody think about what it is and why you’re here today. Think about if everybody’s impacted and there are no jobs anymore, the government doesn’t get involved and make these companies stay here in the market that they supply, look in this room. A third of us will be gone. We won’t have these jobs, and when a third of us are gone, we don’t have the buying power to go to retail and buy that, and the jobs just keep spinning out of control.

Think of Northern Ontario. Think about when the pulp and paper mills left those communities. They devastated those communities. They left them to the point where people could come in and buy someone’s dream with a credit card, buy their house, because that’s what it did to the economy. That’s what it did to their community. It absolutely devastated it. This plan has that ability to do.

So, what I’m going to tell you is climate change is real. We all have to change. We have to make those commitments to change. But, in the process, we don’t have to give up our jobs. We don’t have to give up our economies. I urge you to support this. I urge you to learn more, take the courses. We all have to rise together and, as Unifor, mount the campaign to work with this government that only Unifor can do. Go and talk to your lobbyists. Make sure that they understand what impact it will have on their communities. So, please support this. It’s important to us all.

Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Mark. Speaker at mic 1.

KEN BONDY: Thank you. Ken Bondy, national coordinator, Health, Safety and Environment. I rise in support of this important and progressive resolution. Again, as Mark laid out some of those concerns, myself as well, coming out of the Ford Windsor engine plants, I know my Local 200 President, Chris Taylor, is equally concerned about these issues, these impacts as we’re building internal combustion engines. What are the effects going to have?

And, I just wanted to talk about how our union has been working intensely to ensure that these trade exposed sectors were some 30 different sectors that our members work in. We are going to work to ensure that they are protected so that the jobs aren’t lost because, again, the reality is, I think we all know in this room, from all of the presentations, including Jamie’s earlier presentation, that climate change is real. And, we may out live the serious impacts of that, but our children and our grandchildren certainly are not.

And so, the importance of understanding, when you see the complexity of the resolution itself, when you see the complexity of the presentations, you can understand that there is a lot of work to be done. So, I just want to focus, finally, on the last point of this recommendation that Naureen has included in here, which talks about our courses that we offer at Port Elgin.

We have three courses at Port Elgin that talk extensively about these issues, the challenges to us as working members, as people that have to live in this country and live with the climate that we’re going to have developed. So, I want to encourage everybody to take a look, when those schedules come out about our educational courses. We’ve actually just updated the Good Jobs in a Green Economy course which is now going to be called Climate Change and our Jobs, and it’s going to talk about the different policies that have been put in place in the Paris Agreement and what is going forward in the future that is going to protect our jobs and protect our environment. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Ken. Speaker at mic 4.

SUSAN MARKUS: Susan Markus, Local 1859, newest member of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee. I would like to thank the executive to put this recommendation forward, and of course giving it to the Health and Safety Committee being one of our goals to work towards.
We listened to Jamie Kirkpatrick’s presentation, and looking at -- you know, over the years, everything’s been dragged on, dragged on, trying to reverse some of these climate changes. It’s time for us to make those changes now, and we don’t want to make those changes as a result of job losses. So, I’m really looking forward to working with the committee and looking at what we can do to help make this a real-life document. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Susan. Not seeing any more speakers at the mics. All those in favour of the recommendation before us?

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down. Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown)

Carried. CARRIED.

Thank you very much. Much appreciated. Continuing on, I’m going to kind of jump ahead a little bit. I’m going to ask Deb Montgomery, member of the executive board for the Ontario Regional Council, to come up and look at Recommendation number 1 and read that out with reference to the School Bus campaign.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1: SCHOOL BUS CAMPAIGN

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: And, this is very appropriate because I am a school bus driver. Number 1, School Bus Campaign.

The Ontario government bidding system for school bus contracts in Ontario called Request for Proposals (RFP) system has forced large operators to give up routes, driven small, independent operators out of business. This RFP system led to chaos at the beginning of this school year, when thousands of students in both the public and Catholic school boards were left stranded because there weren’t enough drivers for all the routes. On the other end of the spectrum, a wave of job losses swept across the province caused by the RFP system and a bidding war that saw contracts flipped and a race to the bottom on wages.

I ask that all Ontario local unions actively support the campaign efforts of Unifor members working in the school bus industry. The union is calling on the Province of Ontario to implement a fair wage policy for school bus drivers, to protect collective bargaining rights in the event of a contract flip, and for more safety inspections of school buses on Ontario roads. Full details and materials for the campaign are available online at “www.unifor.org/schoolbuscampaign”.

I therefore recommend that all local unions encourage their members to:

1. Sign the online petition to the Minster of Education, entitled: “School Bus Drivers Deserve Better”;
2. Send a letter to their Member of Provincial Parliament expressing their concern over deteriorating work standards in the school bus industry; and
3. Contact their local school board trustee to raise awareness of the union’s campaign.

The Ontario Regional Council will also work with local unions in the school bus sector, as well as parents, teachers, municipal leaders and fellow allies to organize a community solidarity event to raise further awareness about the challenges facing Ontario’s school bus drivers, the school bus industry and related struggles.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, Deb. Going to speakers at mic 4.

PAUL MCKEE: Hi. Paul McKee, Local Vice-President of 4268. I obviously stand here in favour of this recommendation, but what I’m here -- representing hundreds of school bus drivers myself in the Province of Ontario, I would like to introduce you to two individuals that have just negotiated their first contract. They were a very public face up in Markham. This is their first council, and they’re coming up to the mic to step forward and speak to this recommendation themselves. Brother Rudy and Brother Eugene.

RUDY: Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. As you guys probably remember about a month ago, not even a month ago, the very publicized first contract we had to negotiate with First Student, which we did. It was successful negotiations of our first contract. Now, we’re coming to the problem where they are not even wanting to recognize the contract. It’s been so degrading and so awful for this past week which was our first pay from -- out of those negotiations to where -- if you see me yawning and you see I look a little tired, it’s because I’m trying to listen to some of our members, some of our single mothers calling us saying that they messed up the new pay structure.
So, we ask that you guys take a look at this recommendation and support it with us. We need all the help we can get for the mere fact that they have no respect for us as drivers, that when they even talk to us it’s very condescending, and thank you. We need that.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother.

EUGENE: Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. I just -- not much what I have to say. He said almost everything. But, we’re here to let you guys know the way we’re feeling with the First Student company, especially in the Markham division where we get no respect from the manager. We get nothing, and we’re working, and the worst thing is, we transport in our buses the most precious of cargo. We transport the future in there.

So, we get through to too many things, especially now after the first collective agreement, the company doesn’t want to honour the agreement, and they try to do whatever they want. So, I know I have the support from all of you guys, so thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. And, just before I recognize the speaker at mic 4, I would like to ask all the newly elected representatives that have been elected this morning, if you can make your way up to the stage, we would like to do the oath of office. So, I will recognize the last speaker. Thank you. Deb.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: We have a number of critical initiatives this weekend, and we thank everybody for listening to us. We’re thankful to present, yet again, because our campaign has been going on since 2014, and things have really gotten much worse for school bus drivers in the Province of Ontario. They were never great. It was never a great job.

I’ll tell you a little bit about the job so you know what we’re up against. We work split shifts. We’re not paid for all our time. We’re not accredited with the proper EI hours. Every day, it’s a battle with these employers, and I want you to focus, when you see them on the street, the two worst multinationals, First Student and Stock. You heard from our committee members, they treat their workers -- I hope there’s no children in the room, they treat them like shit. And, since we bargained our first collective agreement with First Student Markham, we’ve been under some serious attack.

We organized the company’s jewel in the crown, and they don’t like it one little bit. They’re deliberately misinterpreting our collective agreement. I have committee members who haven’t even had an opportunity to get training, and they’re getting their feet wet right from the door filing grievances. Two weeks, folks, and we’ve got half a dozen grievances, and I’m booking off committee members to spend a day writing more. So, we’ve got a real challenge with this employer.

These people generally make -- they work split shifts. They’re precarious workers and they, generally, across the province, make $40.00 to $65.00 a day with a time investment that can be anywhere from 4 to 12 hours, minimally. They’re responsible for the safety of the children. They have a relationship with their children. That’s generally the first people your kids see in the morning when they embark on their school day. Most of us -- many of us, all of us, I have to say, love what we do and we love it because of the kids. We’re sure as heck not doing it for the money.

The RFP has really driven down the quality of our jobs. It’s compromising the safety of your children. And so, we have a lot of concerns. And, the big problem for us is we’re not noticed until we don’t show up or until we’re late. All of a sudden, people see what’s driving the bus, and that was what happened in Toronto this year that made headlines and got a great deal of media attention. It’s going to continue. It’s not going to get better. There’s not much there to attract people to the job.

So, we have a lot of struggles with corporate and management, and at the end of the day, I know these committee members feel the same way I did after spending hours in the office, taking on the employer, I couldn’t wait to get to my bus and just deal with the simplicity of the kids. And, there’s challenges there too. I wouldn’t say it’s a simple job all the time dealing with children.

So, please, if you do nothing else, you have an opportunity to help and support. We need to send a strong message to the government. We need to make people publicly aware. Anybody whose children ride a bus, talk to that driver when you meet the bus. If they’re not union, talk to them. Tell them why they need to belong to a union because these people are not supported anywhere else. So, they do need a union.

When we held our ratification vote for Markham, because of the publicity, we actually had workers in the school bus industry from other companies who heard about our ratification vote and came to that vote wanting to talk about union. So, it’s an important initiative. I’ve got to wrap it up. Please sign that petition. If you have a glitch, take your school bus home, before you make a bus for your kids, read the back and join us and help us by filling out the online petition. Thank you.
**DINO CHIODO:** Great job. Thanks, Deb. Speaker at mic 4.

**JACKIE PEARCE:** Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. My name is Jackie Pearce. I’m from Local 4268, and I’m a school bus driver, and I just want to reiterate what you have heard from Debbie Montgomery here today about the value -- the undervalue that is being placed on school bus drivers across this country.

There’s something that a lot of us -- well, most of us in this room have in common. In one way or another, if you interact your children, your grandchildren, your nieces and nephews, chances are, somebody you know, some child that’s important to your life rides a school bus. We are undervalued on a daily basis and disrespected by our employers across this country. We are partners in education in every way. We are the first person that a young child greets every morning as their school day begins. We’re sometimes the last friendly face they see at the end of the day. What we do matters. We deserve better.

And, we can’t thank you enough for your ongoing support, not just as Unifor members, but as I said, as mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, we need to have our voice heard. What we do needs to be respected. We’re on a race to the bottom with the RFP process. Our wages are being compromised. The safety of the vehicles we are in have been compromised because maintenance has been cut.

We need your help. You need to support any initiative in your community that you see for school bus drivers. Speak to your drivers. Support them together as a country, as parents, and people that care for children. We can make a difference, and we need to have our voice heard. And, we appreciate your support and thank you so much. This is my first convention, by the way, and it’s spectacular. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Good job. Seeing no more speakers at the mic, I’ll take the vote for the Recommendation number 1 on the School Bus campaign.

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down. Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown)

Carried.

**DINO CHIODO:** Once again, thank you very much, brothers and sisters. Okay. Trying to move on with regards to the order of the day. What I am going to do is ask Bobby Orr to come up and read the Oath of Office for all the newly elected and acclaimed officers for the Ontario Regional Council and all the standing committees. Bob Orr.

**BOB ORR:** Okay. So, give attention while I read to you the obligation. Do you pledge, on your honour, to perform the duties of your respective offices as required by the constitution of the union and to bear true and faithful allegiance to Unifor?

**ALL:** I do.

**BOB ORR:** Do you pledge to promote a harassment and discrimination-free environment and work to ensure the human rights of all members are respected?

**ALL:** I do.

**BOB ORR:** Do you pledge to support, advance and carry out all official policies of the union and to work tirelessly to advance and build the membership of our union?

**ALL:** I do.

**BOB ORR:** Do you pledge to deliver all books, papers and other property of the union that may be in your possession at the end of your term to your successor in office and, at all times, conduct yourself as becomes a member of this union?

**ALL:** I do.

**BOB ORR:** Your responsibilities are defined in the bylaws, constitution and policies of Unifor. Should any emergency arise not provided for in these, you are expected to act according to the dictates of common sense guided by an earnest desire to advance the best interest of the union. I trust you all faithfully perform your duties so that you may gain the esteem of your brothers and sisters and the approval of your conscience. You will now assume your offices.

**DINO CHIODO:** So, I know I congratulated everybody earlier after the nominations, but I do want to congratulate everybody who had an acclamation or an election. It’s an amazing feeling, and thank you very much to our Ontario
Ontario Regional Council for the support they have provided not only to me, but to your elected executive board, and at the same time, for our standing committees.

I know there’s a lot of work ahead of us. There’s a lot of things to do as you’ve been hearing from the standing committee reports, and I know that the people that have been elected are committed to do a great amount of work and do great work for the Ontario Region. So, thank you very much to each and every one of them, and to our governing body here in front of us. So, thank you to all of you as well. Point of privilege. Mic 1. Is that what that is?

JACKIE MCKINTOSH: Yes. Yes.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you.

JACKIE MCKINTOSH: I wanted to let you know that I was handed a fabulous sheet outside by a table. It’s about the -- next week, December 9th, they’re going to have a rally down by Dundas Street, the entrance just west of Yonge Street. It’s to keep the LCBO public. So, if you can check that out. Tina’s at the table outside directly through one of the doors, and OPSEU is doing the rally. So, next Friday, December 9th, there’s a rally for LCBO to be kept public.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. So, thank you very much for that. I don’t see any other points of privilege. So, let me do this. Apparently, they’re asking us to take a picture, but I do want to recognize the next order of business because I think it’s very important, and I would like to recognize Sari Sairanen that will be coming up to introduce our next guest speaker.

SARI SAIRANEN: Hi, everyone. Thanks very much for returning this afternoon to hear our next guest speaker. As we heard from the previous speakers on mic 4 talking about the School Bus campaign, you heard a lot about the psycho-social factors in the workplace. You heard about disrespect, incivility in the workplace, lack of recognition, lack of value placed on the work that you do. Imagine every day getting up, going into a workplace where you have that backpack of life that keeps getting heavier and heavier and heavier because of that mental distress that’s being placed on you.

The world of work has been evolving, and we have been part of that evolution. Sometimes we have reluctantly been part of that evolution because we’ve had to take on the fights. The fights in the workplace not only of having physically healthy and safe work environments, but also now psychologically healthy and safe work environments.

In 2013, we finally were able to get a made in Canada standard on psychological health and safety in the workplace. It’s the first of its kind in the world, and Unifor was able to participate in that technical committee. So, when you hear talking about a standard CSA-Z1003, it’s part of the suite of those standards that are part of health and safety management systems. But, we all know management systems is really putting that foundation into our workplaces of a health and safety culture.

So, this afternoon, I have the great privilege of introducing our next guest speaker, Victoria Maxwell. Victoria, at the age of 25, was diagnosed with bipolar anxiety psychosis and disordered eating. Imagine that backpack at the age of 25. For five years, Victoria refused to accept this, and in turn she went in and out of different hospitals. And, it was only after she acknowledged that she had some health concerns and needed to look after herself, and with the assistance of her family and a brilliant psychiatrist, she became proactive in her recovery.

Since then, she has become one of North America’s most popular speakers on the lived experience of mental illness, recovery, dismantling stigma and creativity and wellness. She’s worked as a mental health worker and has been blogging for Psychology Today magazine for over 10 years. And, in her spare time, she’s a playwright. She’s an actress, and her most recent solo show, “That’s Just Crazy Talk”, the play was named as one of the top anti-stigma interventions by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Please join me in welcoming, Victoria Maxwell.

MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATOR, VICTORIA MAXWELL

VICTORIA MAXWELL: So, I’ll be speaking about mental illness, specifically my own experience, and going into my show, I just wanted to say a couple of words before I start.

The stats for mental illness, you probably heard, are 1 in 5 people will be affected by a mental illness at some time in their life, and that’s a spectrum from very mild to very severe, from anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, agoraphobia, eating disorders, depression, social anxiety. It runs the gamut. It’s an umbrella term.

And, for me, it was bipolar disorder. It used to be called manic depression. And, like all disabilities, mental illness affects all of us. It’s not a “them” and “us”, and so if there’s 1 in 5 people that are affected by it, there are other four people who are indirectly affected by it. So, if you count the people at your table, you’ll know that at least one or two people will experience or have experienced mental illness.
But, the ironic thing is that it’s as common as cancer, but we don’t talk about it. And so, because we don’t talk about it, the stigma continues to get perpetuated and people don’t reach out for help. And, what we need to realize, which I think you probably already do, is that mental illness can be terminal. If it’s not treated and if it’s severe, people die from mental illness. People die from depression. People don’t die by suicide, they die because of an illness that was not properly treated because people felt ashamed to speak up.

And, one of the things that I have seen today is that you are champions of equality and social justice, and you are the voice of the silent many. And, I am standing here today because of people like you. Because in my journey of recovery, I had advocates that said, “No, this isn’t okay.” “This is what you need,” because I was scared and I was stigmatized, and I remained silent. And, it was because of people like that, that gave me the courage to step forward and into my own power and to find my own voice.

And, this is even more important in the workplace. I live by this one quote that, “Treatment got me stable, but work made me well and it keeps me well. But, unless I have equal opportunity, and access, and accommodations, and empathy, and understanding in a healthy cultural and corporate environment, it means nothing because I can’t stay well at work and I won’t work.”

And so, if you can take anything from what I’m going to say today about my story with mental illness and recovery, it’s this, is that what you’re doing today not only matters, but it rebuilds families, it mends communities and it helps individuals regain what they have lost and felt that they could never get back, which is their sense of identity.

So, when you partner with people as advocates and you walk out of this room, know that you are creating legacies, and those legacies will go through generations, and I cannot thank you enough. I know a few of you, but not many of you, but I know that what you do makes a difference because it’s made a difference in my life, so I want to say thank you.

So, in a little less serious note, the show that you’re going to see is my story of getting back to work before, during and after my experience with mental illness. It’s about 35 minutes, and we’ll have some time for question and answers afterwards as well. I use a lot of comedy, and so please feel free to laugh if you feel so moved to do so. I feel laughter heals, and so I think the more that we can feel comfortable laughing and comfortable talking about it, the more that the awareness of mental illness increases and the stigma and prejudice and discrimination decreases. So, I invite you to sit back, relax and enjoy the show.

--- Presentation

VICTORIA MAXWELL: Thank you very much.

SARI SAIRANEN: Thank you very much, Victoria, for that very insightful, exhausting at times. I felt that I was living your day-to-day existence with you. And, I think all of us have seen our members in Victoria or see parts of Victoria in many of our members in our workplaces, and hopefully this has given you some insight into what does take place in someone who is going through an episode of a psychosis or some form of mental illness.

And, Victoria is going to be doing her workshop tomorrow morning starting at 9:00 a.m. and I had a cheat sheet here, but somebody took it away, and it comes back, and of course I don’t have my glasses on. So, it is Sheraton -- the workshop tomorrow morning is going to be at Sheraton Hall B.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: No, I think it’s Dominion Room, I think, unless it’s changed. I’m not sure.

SARI SAIRANEN: All right. So, we will have that information for you before the end of today where the workshop is going to be. We’re nimble on our feet.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: I know, I’m flexible; right?

SARI SAIRANEN: However, prior to the workshop tomorrow morning, Victoria is going to be available. She has DVDs that she has created on her performance, so those are going to be available for sale, as well as Victoria is available for anyone who is experiencing some triggers that her performance may have caused in you. I had a few moments as well there that I was wringing my hands that -- it brought up some memories for me, as well from my workplace in the dark clouds that I experienced. So, we have a few moments for some questions. I’m looking at the Chair here. I have a nod yes.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: And, I just wanted to just also reiterate that the table’s just outside, and there’s a signup sheet. So, if you have -- even if it’s not about yourself, but you have questions that you would like to ask more one-on-one, there will be just little 10 minute things where I can just offer resources or my own insights because, to me, part of doing this is about starting a dialogue and continuing the dialogue outside these rooms, ideally, with people that aren’t
part of the choir because I think a lot of us are already in the choir and we’re already revved up and passionate about advocating and making change.

But, often, the people who need to hear this are never in the room and, to me, that’s who we need to speak to, and speak in a way that doesn’t shame them either or stigmatize them. I think one of the reasons I use humour is because I think it’s okay to be politically incorrect. I can joke about it myself because I’ve been there, so if you have never been on a gurney with your bare butt hanging out, you can’t joke about it. But, if you have, go ahead, and I just find that it’s one of the most -- it’s an equalizer and it lets people feel like you can ask any question.

And so, if any of you do have comments or questions, I’m always interested to know how it relates to the work you do, if it relates to the work you do, if it gave you or shifted insights of what you thought mental illness looked like or anything like that. I don’t know if there’s anybody at the mics, but if there are, please speak up. I would be really happy to hear. And, as you can tell you, I’m an open book.

SARI SAIRANEN: I know there’s a person going up to the mic, so mic 2.

DAMIAN BRYCE: Thank you. That was very interesting and I really appreciate your talking about your path, the path you’ve taken. I was wondering, along -- I’m looking for a coincidence. Is there a time along the path when an intervention might have happened earlier or did you have to go through three crises in order to get where you went? And, also wondering the place of other people, if we see people in difficulty, is it a good idea to intervene actively or to, sort of, open a door that somebody might walk through, if you get what I mean?

VICTORIA MAXWELL: I do. I do. I think it’s two-fold. I’ll answer the last question first. I think if someone’s at risk of hurting themselves or others, it’s an automatic. You intervene. And, I believe that if you see a person in distress, it is about opening that door.

Mostly for me what it was is that people continued to build rapport and trust, and I needed to know someone had my back because for me, at the time, I couldn’t accept that I had a mental illness. I didn’t see it for various reasons. I didn’t want to see it. And, what helped was -- I mean, it was my parents. It was certain friends. I wasn’t working enough to have co-workers around me, but it was that because of their consistent presence and support, even if we were arguing, which is sort of the irony that even though I had quite an acrimonious relationship with my parents for a period of time, I knew that they were the soft place to fall.

And so, I always encourage people that if you see someone or have a loved one, or a friend, even if there’s tension in that relationship, but you let them know that you’re here if you need them -- like, if they’ve obviously refused to -- you know, they get defensive, they refuse, they don’t want to talk about it, it registers somewhere that they know that you are there.

And so, for me, what it is, is that it’s somehow like a sliding glass door that at one point hopefully that window of opportunity, when that person, for myself, when that moment of insight where I go, “I need help,” matches up with my recognition that there’s a person that’s willing to help me. And so, it’s not a short game, it’s a long game.

Sometimes it can’t be a short game because people are too much at risk. So, the one time -- I was committed twice, and once was with my dad. My dad had to take me in a room while the nurses were trying to get a doctor, or whatever, so it was traumatic for both of us and it also saved my life. It was the only option at that time.

So, for me, it’s really about recognizing what your relationship is with that person. How prepared are you? Do you feel that you have resources to direct a person to? And, are you prepared to potentially have conflict? And, if you can say “yes” to those things, and when I say “conflict”, be comfortable with someone getting angry with you, to say, “This is it. I don’t want to be friends. I’m not going to talk to you about it.” If you’re okay with that, then I would say continue to move forward, and you may be surprised. And so, it was little by little. My mom has bipolar disorder, and so I was quite lucky that my family, in some ways, were very accepting of the diagnosis. They saw what was happening way before I did.

And then the first part of whether it would have helped if someone had intervened earlier. The very first psychosis that I went through, actually, happened -- and this is not to say meditation causes mental illness, it’s actually the opposite, but there was a whole number of factors. I was in a meditation and I had a psychotic episode. And, within that episode, I had a lot of profound spiritual experiences, but when I went to the hospital, everything was pathologized.

So, I felt my whole personal experience was pathologized, and what made the difference was after three times in the hospital, I met a nurse who said, “When you touch that limitless part of yourself in meditation, it can be overwhelming.” And, in that one or two sentences, I got that she really understood. She said somehow that I didn’t just have a mental illness, but I could also have a mental illness and a spiritual awakening, or whatever I wanted to call it. It
was meaningful to me, and it was her relationship with me that I started to trust, and then that’s when I started to ask her for questions.

So, to me, it’s really about understanding where the person’s at, why a person isn’t wanting the help, and sometimes it’s about just practical issues. If it’s about housing and a person is continually getting evicted because they’re smashing walls or they’re putting tinfoil on windows, or something, finding out -- so, can we find you a stable place? And, it’s a very delicate balance.

There’s a gentleman, Xavier Amador, and I don’t know if any of you know him. He has a program called LEAP program, and it’s really about letting go of the power dynamic, equalizing it, so that you’re actually able to speak with someone who has a very different reality, so it’s a non-shared reality, but there’s no power struggle. So, that’s some of what I can do, and I’ll talk, probably, more about it tomorrow. Tomorrow is about, also, wellbeing and really recapturing that for everyone.

SARI SAIRANEN: All right. Thank you very much. Mic 3.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello, sister. I just want to thank you for that presentation. It’s courageous, and I feel like I understand what bipolar disorder is for the first time hearing you present it in that way. As representatives, sometimes we’re the first person that somebody may reveal that to, and I just want to know what to do in terms of pointing them to resources and stuff. But, what do you want to hear back from somebody when you first tell them that you’re struggling in this way? What’s the dream response that you’re looking for from people?

VICTORIA MAXWELL: Mine would have been, “That’s okay,” and “I’m glad you told me and we’ll figure this out together,” because what I needed was I needed partnership. I needed to know that I wasn’t alone in this, and that because I felt I couldn’t do it on my own, and I needed to have other people reassure me and, sort of, set the vision for me that I could never hold.

So, it’s simple words of just telling someone that, “It’s okay that you told me and I’m really glad, and I’ll support you in any way that I can, and let’s find some practical steps.” Some things are really common sense are sometimes difficult, but I don’t think for you guys compassion and empathy is difficult because, honestly, I have never seen a group of people together sharing such heartfelt stories and really coming together. So, I don’t know if that actually -- it’s not any sort of magic, but it’s sometimes rare that it happens.


GWEN CAMPBELL: Hi. Gwen Campbell, Local 1285, Ontario Regional Women’s Committee. I just wanted to share something. So, at the very beginning you had said that you were bipolar or your mental illness is not exactly something you would put on a résumé. So, just a couple of days ago, those of us on the Ontario Regional Women’s Committee and Kari Jefford as well, we were honoured to help choose the Daughters of the Vote, so through Equal Voice Canada, for the 138, I think, or whatever it was, young women who are going to be in Ottawa for International Women’s Day. And, it was sad, but also awesome that so many of those young women, as part of their résumé as I’m reading through it, wrote down that they suffer from mental illness.

So, sad in the fact that they’re struggling with that, but that they put that -- here, they are putting their name forward for this huge honour to be chosen for this and say in the first few paragraphs, “This is what I suffer from...” A couple of them had bipolar. Anxiety was a huge one. They discovered it after they had been in university for a year or finishing high school, so I had shared that with Naureen the other day, and we were saying, hopefully, people suffering from mental illness, hopefully, are able to speak out more because there are so many of us who do suffer from it. So, it’s a positive step that the young people feel confident enough that they were able to share that. Thank you.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: Thank you. And, I could qualify that, that when I worked at the Canadian Mental Health Association and The Kettle Society, which is a drop-in centre on the downtown east side, and those words you place is where I actually did put on my résumé I had lived experience, and it was the first time that being crazy was actually an asset. And, it was awesome because they knew that it was going to be helpful that I was going to be able to relate to the people that I was going to be serving, so I think things slowly, slowly in some sectors are changing.

SARI SAIRANEN: Thank you. And, mic 5.

LUCAS NUPPONEN: Hi. Lucas Nupponen, Local 598. I just wanted to say great presentation. I’m a counsellor at -- I work with people who are in recovery, and just any words of advice -- you shared in your story there was one worker who had a big profound impact in terms of your recovery, and just any words of advice for me would be very helpful.
VICTORIA MAXWELL: Oh, wow. I’m trying to think of -- one of the things that has always been helpful is some self-disclosure. And so, with the people that I worked with that had the most impact shared who they were with me, even if it wasn’t that they had a mental illness, but they really brought their full selves to the table.

And so, I could tell -- I don’t know, I think everybody has a really good bullshit detector, but I think people with mental illness in particular do, people with disabilities or any sort of people who are disenfranchised or marginalized. And so, I knew when people were calling it in. And so, when people were really present -- and so, Job did this particularly. He was so there. You know those people that just -- when they’re with you, they’re -- like, “You are so with me.” And, that, I think, engenders a sense of self-respect and dignity because you are taking the time to be with them.

And, what I also found is those people didn’t recoil from me, and there was so much self-rejection and self-hatred for a long time that I had to have experiences of other people showing me an embracing of who I was before I could actually embrace myself. So, it’s more about your presence than about what you say exactly. That’s been my experience.

LUCASE NUPPONEN: Okay. And, one last thing, I just wanted to say your description -- I have a mother who’s got bipolar as well, it was really on point. So, thanks for that.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: You’re welcome.

SARI SAIRANEN: Great. Thank you. Is there somebody at mic 6?

MARIA PINTO: Hi, Victoria.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: Hello.

MARIA PINTO: Thank you so very much for sharing with us your sickness and the condition of a lifetime to define everything related with mental illness. I wish I could attend your seminar tomorrow. Unfortunately, due to other commitments, I can’t make it. However, I have two questions for you.

I just happen to have a niece that suffers from exactly the same situation that you do. She is bipolar. She has done well in the sense that she discovered at an early age that she suffered from it, and she’s totally functional. She ended up being a lawyer and she’s totally functioning; however, her mother never accepted it. So, my question to you is, how do you deal with a situation when your parents can’t even speak about mental illness? That’s the first.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: It’s always quite devastating when your blood relatives or friends don’t accept or acknowledge it because as much as bipolar disorder isn’t who I am, it’s a part of me. It’s one of my war wounds, so to speak. But, what I have learned is that I need to pick my battles, and sometimes it’s a combination of making sure that I stand up for myself if something is not -- if I’m not being treated well because of someone’s ignorance, but if I can have a decent relationship with someone and I don’t have to convince them of what I’m going through and it doesn’t -- and I can still have a cordial relationship, sometimes the effort to change their mind isn’t worth it.

And so, I try to find other ways of connecting. And, I don’t know if that’s -- it sounds like because your niece is in a fairly good place, it’s somehow -- for me, a lot of it was also grieving the parents that I did have, grieving the parents that I didn’t have, and when I did that, it allowed me to love them for who they were, for the limitations that they had and for their wonderful idiosyncrasies because when I was going to my psychiatrist and I talk about something around my parents that I would start complaining, and he says, “Oh, so you still want them to change?” And, I thought, “Hey, you’re my psychiatrist. You’re supposed to sympathize and empathize with me.”

But, I realized it was doing me more -- it wasn’t doing me any good. So, I don’t know if that is helpful or if that’s what you were asking but, to me, if I -- and, what’s also imperative is that she has support in other ways. So, she is surrounded by people who do reinforce her, that do acknowledge it where she does feel included. And so, there might be a pocket of her world where she can’t bring that part of herself to the forefront, and that’s okay. So, it was a lot more about my work with myself in relation to these other people, not to put my energy -- because sometimes I would have to pour my energy into it and it just would exhaust me.

MARIA PINTO: Thank you. The second part of my question is, she has to get that balance. It really takes a lot of medication, and my question to you is, with all the problems related with medication, is there a different solution, I don’t know, exercising, whatever, that eventually could be a substitute for all of the chemicals that she’s putting in her body?

VICTORIA MAXWELL: I mean, I’m a layperson, so I can’t give a professional opinion. My experience is I’m still on medication. I’ve been lucky that I have very few side effects. I’m sure they’re still affecting my organs in ways that wouldn’t happen if I wasn’t one them. The only thing that I can say is that depending on -- the kind of condition I have with the severity of bipolar disorder, I have to be on medication. I have tried many times not to. I still, and I’ll talk about
this tomorrow, exercise, meditating, chi-gongs, spirituality, social supports, eating well, sleeping well, all those things I still have to do. It maybe reduces the amount of medication I have to have, but it doesn’t eliminate it.

And then some people, depending on the continuum, if it’s a mild or moderate, or where it comes from, may have to be on it for a period of time or not at all. The thing that I always caution people is that medication is only part of the solution and treatment, and ideally you’re doing all of the other things you can do first, like therapy, like exercise, like eating right. And then if that’s not working, then medication can be part of the solution as well.

But, if I only took medication and didn’t do anything else, it would be the equivalent of a dry drunk. So, if I gave up drinking, but I was an alcoholic, I still would have really bad interpersonal skills, or as I said, I was still an asshole. Pardon my swearing.

And so, to me, it gives medication a bad name because some people rely on it so heavily and don’t do anything else, and there’s a lot of stigma about psychiatric mediation, and I am not a proponent of it if you don’t need it. If you do need it, I say, and if it helps, use it. It can be a God send.

MARIA PINTO: Thank you, Victoria.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: You’re welcome.

SARI SAIRANEN: And, our last speaker on mic 3.

GORD GRAY: Gord Gray from Local 444. First and foremost, your presentation was just out of the park, fantastic, of the awareness and I thank you for that.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: Thanks.

GORD GRAY: I personally want to take this opportunity to thank all the health care workers out there that day in, day out do somehow, somewhere cross paths with mental health. It’s a crazy, crazy thing that you’re caught up into.

My life thing here is my mother was a manic depressant for 25 years. Nervous breakdowns, in and out. When she had them, it was awful. People in Windsor know that if you went to Hotel-Dieu, it was the 8th floor, and I was afraid to always hit that 8th floor because people said, “He’s going to the crazy floor.” It was the embarrassing part.

As time went on, I realized that that really didn’t matter anymore. It was about my mother. As she got sicker and sicker, and she would lose her language, so she would revert back to her French. So, I would go in and she would tell me things that were just out of this world. It didn’t make sense what she was saying.

And, it came to a point, right after my father, when he passed, she went into a bad depression, and they didn’t know how to treat it. And, back in the days, it wasn’t with pills or psychiatry, the whole thing, my mother was like in the movies in the cuckoo’s nest where people were strapped down on beds, buckles on the wrist and their legs, urinating in the bed.

It’s terrible, but I got over it, and I think what happened was I almost had a nervous breakdown because on the 8th floor, the doctor himself, I asked him, “What’s this all about?” He says, “There’s nothing more we can do for your mother.” She’s already had electric shock treatments over the last 20 years, and if you’re wondering what those are, they put wires on your head, glue it down, turn up the dials, they don’t know what they’re doing, but you become a guinea pig, basically.

So, to talk about bipolar, first time ever, experiences in the workplace, and this gentleman just went off the deep end and nobody really understood it, and I did talk to them later. I took a walk with him because I kind of had an understanding of mental health because I went through it. And, I think the shame that I had to go through because I didn’t want to tell people my mother’s in the nuthouse. I didn’t want to tell people my mother’s crazy, and it’s advertisement, and people will pick on you. Kids don’t know any better, “She’s crazy. She’s in the nuthouse,” whatever; right? But, you always kept that inside.

So, my point is what you’re doing is exposing. Back in my day, you didn’t do that. It was shame. You were just hiding and keeping it inside. So, what you’re doing is heroic, and I think the health care workers that have to work with people with mental disease, you’re heroic because it’s an avenue that we don’t really know that’s there, as such as Alzheimer’s. In the brain, we haven’t decided what’s inside there. We haven’t figured it out.

So, I just wanted to just compliment you. My experience was that, as tragic as it is -- and, you know what? Here’s the strange part. For all those years, after that time I went a little crazy myself and cleared the desk on the 8th floor, they shipped her off to London. At that time, she was taking 32 types of medication in a day. They brought her to London. They detoxed her, it was something like 16 days later, and then they found out from that point forward in her lifetime it was a pill called lithium, I believe. It’s the salt in the lithium pill, and that’s what was always triggering her depression.
So, I thank the sciences to find that, but amazing. I just had to tell you that story but, again, I got to -- the health care workers that have to put up with that stuff, thank you. That’s all I’ve got to say.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: Thanks.

SARI SAIRANEN: Well, Victoria, thank you very much. As you see, the engagement of the delegates here has been deep and immense, and we thank you for sharing and the courage that it has taken you on your journey. And so, I have a small gift for you to remember us by. So, you now know that you have an extended family of friends.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: I know. I’m an only child, so it’s great to have brothers and sisters. Thank you so much.

SARI SAIRANEN: So, just to confirm that Victoria is available within the next half hour. She will be outside. She will have videos or DVDs for sale. If you want to take back some of this to your workplaces, to your locals, it’s available. And then, also, she is available for debriefing if you so desire to have some discussions with her one-on-one. And, of course, her workshop tomorrow is still open for signup, and do we have confirmation of what room it’s going to be held in? Dominion Ballroom. So, Victoria was correct. Thanks, everyone.

DINO CHIODO: So, Victoria, I know you still have your microphone there. Can people still here you through that? Is it still on?

VICTORIA MAXWELL: Yes.

DINO CHIODO: Okay, perfect. And, the reason why is I know there’s a couple of gift certificates here that you have provided us, and I would like to say thank you from the Ontario Regional Council. But, I would just want to explain them first because I want to draw them, because I’ve got everybody’s name here in a box and I want to pull it. So, there’s Raise the Roof, public speaking and creativity coaching session. There’s two of those that you have available. And, there’s Rediscovering Joy and Balance coaching session. So, if you can explain those, and I’ll do a little bit of raffle, and you’ve got two movies as well, or two DVDs. One is “Crazy for Life” and the other one is “That’s Just Crazy Talk”.

VICTORIA MAXWELL: Right, right. The Raise the Roof is for anyone that’s wanting to improve speaking skills, writing skills, creativity. It can be anything. It’s done over Skype. I’m in Vancouver, and it’s about an hour and a half and we do pre and post stuff. And, the Rediscovering Joy and Balance is really about mental health consulting and wellness consulting. So, if you have someone that has a mental illness, you have one yourself or you’re just wanting to improve, sort of, make a good thing already better, it’s for -- I’ll help you design some personal resources and tools, strategies for caregivers, strategies for yourself if you’re blocked in a certain place around where you are in your journey of recovery or journey of wellness. So, yes.

DINO CHIODO: Absolutely great. So, that being said, what we’re going to do is we’re going to do a little bit of a raffle here, and there’s going to be a total of eight different raffles. You’ll be able to come up and pick what you want. The first four raffles we’re going to do is Raise the Roof and the Rediscovering Joy and Balance coaching sessions.

So, why don’t we pick out four names with reference to that? We’ve put everybody’s name in here, and we’ll do that first. Lucas Nupponen from Local 598. Lucas Nupponen. So, that’s the first one. You have to be here to get it. Lucas, are you here? Going once. Going twice. There he is. All right. Good job.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It’s not me, but he is here.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. We’ll wait. We’ll get through these next three, and then we’ll pick his name if he doesn’t come back. Go ahead. Mike Day, Local 27; John Binns, Local 444; Marv Smith, Local 42. Is Lucas back in yet because we’re going to be pulling another one if Lucas isn’t back in the room. Okay, Lucas is going back in. Well, what do you guys want me to do here? We’re either going to pull him or -- okay, let’s go through all of them.

So, for the videos. We’ve got four videos, “Crazy for Life” and we also have “That’s Just Crazy Talk”. We’ve got Donald Sparks, Local 414; Bob Hoffman, Local 39; Dean Lima, Local 1701.

NAUREEN RIZVI: Can I pick and choose now so we can get some women? Mark Brownridge, 1285.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. That’s the eight that we have, so we’re going to have everybody come up and grab whatever their preference is from the different packages that we have. There’s a total of eight of them, but at the same time, I really did appreciate and respect what Victoria had presented to us, and she did an absolutely magnificent job. Actually, it was taxing. It was tiring to see it and just to try and understand what you go through on a daily basis is just amazing, and it really helped me understand a little bit better some of the challenges that individuals are faced with everyday getting up just going to work and how complicated that could be for them.

So, what I would like to do is I would like to put a motion on the floor, or at least have a motion supported with reference to providing every local in Ontario with one of Victoria’s videos. And, that being said, what we’re going to do -- so, the thought process here is we would send a letter out to every local in Ontario. The local would have the choice
to select one, and if you would like to purchase the other video or as much as you want to purchase for your local, you can do that as an extra. But, you will be entitled to one for sure. So, if I can have a mover for that motion? Moved. Any discussion?

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


SHAWN ROUSE: Thank you very much. Shawn Rouse here again from the Health Care Council. I rise with a point of interest for informing the delegates here today, again, of my thanks for your support of the 50/50 draw for the Ontario Health Coalition. Natalie Mehra, as I’m told, is doing cartwheels for the support that she’s receiving today. I’ve given her a warning, “No hurting yourself because we need you on the campaign to defend health care.”

But, other than that, and secondary is the Health Care Council has as part of our action plan taken on the issue of violence at work. Violence happens in health care and, actually, at a monumental rate that is mind boggling once you start looking at the statistics, and it’s resident on staff, client on staff, patient on staff is the forefront of what we’re dealing with.

And, what we’ve done is to maintain a communication or the education on that. So, we’ve come up with some magnets, and the magnets are out at the Health Coalition table and they are available to any delegate here who wishes to take some back to their local; okay? So, these are free on behalf of the Health Care Council for all the delegates here.

They also have an order form. If you would like to order either French or English versions of these magnets and have larger quantities made available, we’re going to collect all the orders and create an order that lowers the price per magnet. So, even smaller locals or distant locals can then take part in having these magnets available.

They are very much just a start of the conversation. They are a reminder for folks that violence is not acceptable in our workplaces. Stopping the violence is where we want to be, and we hope that everyone takes these magnets to heart, take magnets back to your locals, increase the conversation, work at stopping violence in all sectors that we have, but health care is what’s putting this forward today and I would definitely encourage everyone to take advantage of the magnets that are available. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: No, no. Thank you very much. I still have another point of privilege at mic 6. Just before I take that point of privilege, I would like to ask if D.J. Lacey is here in the audience. There’s a committee report that we still have to do for the Young Workers. If you can come up to the stage? Point of privilege at mic 6.

BILL ZILIO: Thank you, Brother Dino. Bill Zilio, Retired Staff in Chatham. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported our 50/50 draw for the United Way of Chatham-Kent. Last year’s winner was a single mother and she won $1,250.00. This year, as soon as somebody picks the winning ticket up there, the winner will get $1,700.00. So, thanks everyone for supporting the United Way of Chatham-Kent. And, I also want to thank my good friend, Murray Straus, who has been sitting outside in the corridor for the last couple of days selling tickets for us. So, thank you all very much.

DINO CHIODO: Bill, thank you very much for you guys staying out there and selling those tickets. I do have the ticket here. The total prize amount is $1,700.00, and the number is -- sorry. I think the name is Paul McKee or McGee from Local 4268. Sorry, I couldn’t read it that’s why I was reading the ticket number. Good job. Paul, just go outside the door. They’ll meet you right out there, that way you can take the money and run. Good job.

So, listen, I’ve got two committee reports that I would like to get through. I would like to ask D.J. Lacey to come up and do his committee report with reference to the Young Workers.

YOUNG WORKERS COMMITTEE REPORT

D.J. LACEY: All right. Obviously, we’re the last here, so I’m going to make this Coles Notes for you folks. The young workers this year have been very busy. We’ve been attending rallies. We’ve been having conferences. Actually, this year, the young workers were able to get 140 young workers at the Port Elgin Centre which has been our biggest to date, so I do want to give a round of applause for all the young workers that have put a lot of work into not only building our Unifor Young Workers, but we’ve also been working a lot with different affiliates.
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The CLC had a conference this year as well in the summer and we were there in full force to support that. We’ve also been doing a lot of work on the $15.00 and Fairness, and we do want to thank everybody that took some time out of their lunch today and came down there and showed some support for them. It really did help. I know sometimes it doesn’t seem like it does, but we really appreciate you doing that.

Also, too, we attended the rally for decent work along with several other groups. And, we’re also a big advocate to get rid of the TPP for young workers. That’s going to be a huge issue in the future, so we need your voices and we need the older generation to have our backs, and we love what you guys are doing; right? We’ve taken the fight and, as a young worker, that’s really important to us.

Also, too, the ORC Board for the last three years have been very supportive for making these things happen. If we want to attend rallies, if we want to make sure that we can get to conferences, they have given us the resources and they have given us their knowledge, so we would like to thank them on behalf of the Young Workers.

Also, on a personal note, this is my last Ontario Regional Council as the Young Workers’ Chair. Next year I’ll be aged out and I’ll have to grow up at some point, but it’s been a real privilege to work with all the young workers. We’ve built a pretty damn good base, if you ask me. We have so many young workers that are coming forward, and I’m hoping that next year we hear that there was 240 young workers at the conference. So, again, thank you very much on behalf of the Young Workers, and I would like to congratulate Samia, Corey and Carly. They were elected unanimously, so thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Good job, D.J. Thank you very much. That being said, we’re not going to take any questions like we’ve suggested before, but Roxanne Dubois is the staff rep responsible for the Young Workers. So, if there are any questions with reference to Young Workers and some of the projects and programs that they’re working on over the course of the next year, please feel free to reach out to her.

With that being said, I would ask that you get your recommendation booklet out, and what we’re going to do is Recommendation number 3 with reference to the Psychological Wellness, and I will try and read through that.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS

DINO CHIODO: Protecting the psychological health and safety of workers is just as important as protecting workers from physical injury and illness. Bullying, harassment and abuse in the workplace can result in physical illness and lasting mental illness. According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, more than 500,000 Canadians will not go to work because of mental illness each week; more than 30 percent of disability claims and 70 percent of disability costs are attributed to mental illness; and approximately $51 billion each year are lost to the Canadian economy because of mental illness. In 2013, Canada became the first country in the world to establish a National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) worked with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to develop the standard with input from labour unions. The standard establishes criteria for a psychologically safe system of work; it is time that our workplace protections evolve from physical safety to include the promotion of psychological health and prevention of psychological harm.

I therefore recommend:

1. That the National Health and Safety Department with the Ontario local unions work together to lobby the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) to accept the CSA Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Standard as a code of practice under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and that the MOL allocate sufficient resources to enforce the code of practice.

2. That Unifor leadership negotiate the standard into their collective agreements.

And, what we’ll do is we’ll go to the mics. Seeing speakers on the mic, I’ll start off with mic 1.

KARI JEFFORD: Kari Jefford, Local 229, President. I just want to speak as a mom, not as a union rep today. My daughter who is now 17 has been working through the medical system for years and years and years since, actually, before she was born, she was a little preemie fighter and she’s not giving up.

She had a recent stay in the hospital for about three weeks just over the winter. I couldn’t provide for her as a mom anymore. I couldn’t keep her safe, and she had to enter the system, which was very difficult. The first day we called the ambulance and a couple of my members picked her up, headed to the hospital and she was released a few hours later because she said to me, “I told them whatever they wanted to hear, mom.”

And, about three days later, was admitted into the hospital where she spent three full days as a 16-year-old girl in a full psychotic break in the Emergency Department hallway, which is not a very good place for a 16-year-old
person who’s in a full psychotic break. She then was moved up to the psychiatric ward for emergent care where on the very first night on the unit she finally got a bed and -- when she was very young, she was sexually assaulted by a family member, and the time she spent on many, many years in treatment and getting better, and doing what we needed to do to support her in her recovery -- on the very first night in the psychiatric ward was screaming for help to the nurses, and the nurses' station in a specialized unit saying, “Help me, help me, help me,” and screaming, and they yelled back to her from the nurse’s desk, “If you don’t stop screaming, we’re not going to help you.” But, what they neglected to see or get up and look to make sure she was safe was an 89-year-old man who was suffering from dementia -- needless to say, she suffered another assault, not physical, but emotional and psychological.

And so, in a hospital ward where we’re sending our most -- most people are so much at risk and need the help the most, they’re going into a unit where there’s not enough staff and too many people that require emergent care. She wasn’t safe on that unit, I swear to God. I wasn’t sleeping at night. And, as a parent, I was allowed in there one time a day. I couldn’t speak with her. I didn’t know if she was safe.

So, the very first night set her back years in treatment, and she was there just to make sure she stayed alive, and those co-workers and all of the nurses, who are so overwhelmed without the supports as workers to provide the care that we need in crisis, are very much at risk.

And so, we need, as a health care worker and as a mom, everybody that’s left in the room, and it’s unfortunate so many people have left, for you to stand beside our health care workers and beside our communities and fight like hell to maintain our public, public, not-for-profit health care. So, I ask that you support us in that fight which is coming. Thank you.

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

BRENT IMHOFF: Brent Imhoff, Local 229. I’m a paramedic, and I spoke to this Thursday, which seems about a hundred years from now, first time delegate and I’ve learned a lot. Thank you. First thing, when I wrote this speech, I wrote it like I was fighting my employer, and I realized I don’t need to fight anybody here. Second thing, I spoke to my losses of my brothers and sisters from my local and from my workplaces, and they’re not just my losses, they’re all of our losses. So, I stand in support of this recommendation. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, brother. Speaker at mic 3.

LINA MOORE: Hi. My name is Lina Moore. I’m from Local 229 from Thunder Bay, and I’m a chairperson at the facility. I would like to speak on the health care sector. I would like to begin how proud and honoured I am to be part of the Unifor organization, and how I get support, and the strength, and the leadership I get from Local 229. I call it my other family.

We attended the Health Care Council meeting. It opened up all our eyes on how this sector is so broken. Ken Lewenza got up and spoke for 5 minutes with so much passion about all the fights he had and the gains. We all need that same fire and passion. That is why we are all here today to fight the fight, and I know there is hope.

A little bit of history. I work in long-term care as a PSW, and I bring my voice here and hopefully get to the Parliament. My voice is for the residents, the patients and families in long-term care. Last year, Thunder Bay merged three long-term care homes in a 7-storey building with 544 beds, so we have over 500 to 600 members.

This long-term care is (indiscernible) driven. They have a mission statement which they all want us to go by, respect, commitment and compassion and, as members, we follow these values. I would like to share with all of you today what happened a few days ago when the Ministry of Long-term Care stopped all admissions. There were issues that needed immediate attention to ensure the wellbeing and the safety of these residents. The CEO basically put all the members under the bus.

The reality is that the staff do not have enough time and resources to provide the adequate care. If they had the time and the support, they could have done more. The residents deserve way more. As caregivers, we made a commitment. That’s who we are. We need the minimum staffing requirements and minimum standard of care. It’s time for the provincial government to be accountable. Thank you.

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

DAVE MCCORMICK: Dave McCormick, Local 414. I, too, rise in support of this motion. I’m doubting the need for both standards and enforcement, but when the employers in this province fail to protect our health and fail to protect our mental health, they should not be given the option of not getting off and not paying.

Currently, under the Workplace Safety Insurance Act, the legislation only allows for mental stress claims if the issue is traumatically objective. That has been struck down by the tribunal in three consecutive decisions where they
have now turned around and indicated that limiting stress claims to “traumatically objective” violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I would ask that when we are looking for enforcement, we also turn around and say to the board, “Follow what the tribunal has now ruled and make sure that workers are compensated for all forms of stress claims,” which is often the result of the mental injuries that we’re now suffering in the workplace.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. Speaker at mic 5.

JAMIE WRIGHT: Good afternoon, sisters and brothers. Jamie Wright, Local 88, health and safety rep there. I stand up in full support of this recommendation. If we look in the workplaces today how the employers deal with mental health and somebody is suffering, we heard from Victoria, and sometimes when they’re in their phases or whatever, they don’t act very appropriately in the workplace.

So, the way the employers tend to deal with them is they fast track them on a disciplinary stream, force them out of the workplace, and then say, “You can come back to work once your doctor says you’re okay.” In my mind, I think that’s absolutely ludicrous, putting somebody out on the street, and then putting that more stress on them.

So, if you look at the recommendation in front of us looking at the Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, it talks about prevention, promotion, guidance and how to implement that. And, you read that standard, I think that’s exactly what we’re looking for. We’re looking for a solution in the workplace. How do we deal with our sisters and brothers that will go through this? Because that could be me one day. Next day, it could be you. It could be anybody else. It could be your son, daughter, somebody else, and it’s absolutely true, when we’re faced with an unsafe workplace due to mental health, that spills over into our communities, spills over into our families, our sons and daughters, et cetera.

So, absolutely, I stand in full support of this and I think it should be included in every bargaining going forward, and we need to get this into our workplaces. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Speaker at mic 6.

JIM BEAUDRY: Jim Beaudry, national coordinator. I stand in support of this recommendation. To put the severity of this issue into perspective, I want to share a few statistics from the Canadian Mental Health Association and CAMH, the Centre of Addictions and Mental Health.

Mental illness is the leading cause of disability in Canada. Mental illness can cut 10 to 20 years from a person’s life expectancy. The disease burden of mental illness and addictions in Ontario is one and a half times higher than all cancers put together, and more than seven times that of infectious diseases. One in five adults, as Victoria talked about, are Canadians who will suffer a mental disorder or mental health challenge in their lives. This figure translates to 4.5 million people. In Ontario, the ratio is now 1 in 3 and costs the Ontario economy $40 billion a year, approximately.

Brothers and sisters, there’s an epidemic upon us and we need to react. In 2009, the Ontario government introduced a 10-year action plan on mental health and addiction strategy called Every Door is the Right Door. And, in 2011, the government introduced a new initiative called Open Minds, Healthy Minds which merged with their existing programs. The problem is neither initiative included workplace intervention.

CSA-Z1003, Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Standard is an excellent guidance document. By getting this document recognized as a code of practice and inclusion under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as well as our collective agreements, this will provide us with the tools and baseline that we need to establish a comprehensive workplace protection program for our members that will make a real difference. I urge all delegates to support this recommendation. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker at mic 1.

LINDSAY GOODHEART: Good afternoon. My name is Lindsay Goodheart. I’m with Local 229 of Thunder Bay. I’ve been a PSW for over six years and truly believe this is my calling. I have worked in many homes across B.C. and Ontario, different experiences from private home care, assisted living and long-term care.

Over the years, I have seen a big change in the way we care for our residents. Time spent with them is getting shorter and shorter. I once heard a co-worker call it “fast food care”, another referred to bass as a tea dunk, and it’s not even a strong tea.

Residents are woken up anywhere between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. lucky to have their faces washed or even a shave. A brief is put on and you’re privileged if you get sat on a toilet. Better have dentures or your teeth aren’t getting brushed. Skin breakdown is huge because there’s no time to turn. Once you’ve been rushed getting up, it’s time to eat.
If you feed yourself, you’re ahead of the game. If you need help, better wait your turn. As it’s time to eat, your food has turned cold. And, before your last bite or your last sip is sipped, you’re rushed back to the floor to sit, sit, sit.

There may be a program running that day to keep your hands and mind busy. If not, you sit and you wait till lunch, supper. If everything runs smoothly, you’re changed and put to rest, but chances are we are short and still have a long list to do. So, now supper has ended and you sit for a quick bedtime snack, often not a snack of your preference. Then you’re rushed to bed, as if you had a choice, then up and away you’re lifted to bed soaked up to your head.

This is not always the case, but sadly this is happening more often than not. I strive to give the best care I possibly can, and some days it’s just impossible to meet even the basic needs of our residents. We are supposed to leave work feeling like we’ve made a difference and feel like we have done our best, and the days I go home having anxiety because I wish it were better and I wish we had enough time.

These residents are people, and people deserve the best. By raising the minimum standard of staffing ratio, it ensures every resident has proper care given to them, that they can sleep in, be laid down in the afternoons, have proper washings in the mornings, a soak in the tub for their tired aging bodies, more enjoyed meals and input on what they eat, more programs to help give them the quality of life in their last living years.

These are people who have lived their lives and now are relying on us to give them the best quality of life that they can no longer give themselves. Workers will have the support they need so that the burnout is less, we have less injuries and the mental stress is reduced. This just isn’t our residents, this is our families, our grandparents, our parents, our brothers, our sisters, it’s you and it’s me.

Let’s remind our government and the decision makers that they too are people and this will be them in the upcoming years. This needs to change before it gets any worse. The time was yesterday to make a change. Let’s stand in solidarity to make this a health revolution.

DINO CHIODO: Great job, sister. Speaker at mic 2.

KRISTAL CARLSON: Hi, my name is Kristal Carlson. I am the Vice-President of Local 7-O. I have recently been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder by not one, but two psychiatrists, yet that still does not give me any standing with the Workers Compensation Board and my claim was denied.

Then, they got me to have another assessment by a neutral third party, and my claim was still denied because I didn’t have one death threat, but I had two. So, too much bad stuff had happened, so I didn’t meet the acute definition in the WSIB Standards Act.

I was denied for short-term disability because my employer said that, “Kristal, that 50 percent is still better than most of our workers at 100. It will find her work.” My union has stood behind me, 100 percent. It has made sure that -- I work in a field of child protection workers often responding with police and EMS to some of the worst cases of child abuse, death of children, injuries, yet we’re not protected under first responders even though we attend with first responders any time a child is involved.

So, I challenge all of us to get behind this recommendation because psychological injury is happening to our workers, and I would challenge that at least 50 to 75 percent of our workers in health care in front line suffer from post-traumatic stress, burnout or compassion fatigue in one way or another. And, how do you expect those workers to be providing the care, the mental health? The counsellors are burnt out. The counsellors, when we have to look at clients and say, “We can’t service you for 8 to 12 months because of wait lists,” it’s not okay. So, I challenge every one of us to please stand up and recognize this because it is desperately needed. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, sister. Great job. Speaker at mic 3.

SHERRIE FIOLOGRANA: Good day. My name is Sherrie. I’m from Local 229 in Thunder Bay. I work for St. Joseph’s Care Group as an RPN. We’re all faced with change and restructure as the government continues to cut funding. I’ve worked in this facility for 28 years, and I have seen a lot of change in this sector. I struggle daily with ethical dilemmas and moral obligations that not only I face, but my members face.

We struggle continually with the desire to meet the client’s needs, but at what cost to ourselves? We are doing the best that we can to meet the needs. We miss coffee breaks, lunch breaks. We come into work early, we leave late. We meet with resistance when we bring forward concerns or issues from our management.

Our work environment and our staff morale is extremely low. We are faced with violence in our workplace daily and a lack of resources. Caregiver burnout. We work short-staffed daily. We work an environment that restricts us and our ability to be advocates for our clients. We work with a gag order in place not being able to enlighten our clients, families to the lack of the resources as it will affect the public image of our facility.
Our employer continues to boast quality care at our expense. We do the best we can to meet the needs of our clients who deserve quality care with respect and dignity. I challenge our union to be the ones to make the government accountable and ensure our clients and our workers get the care they deserve. Thank you.


ANDY SAVELA: Thank you, Dino. Andy Savela, National Director of Health Care. I just wanted to rise today and thank the health care workers for their inspiring, emotional comments at today’s meeting. I want to let everybody know that we have a real opportunity now with the renegotiation of the Health Accord between the federal and provincial governments to make sure that we deal with issues of long-term care, Pharmacare. This is a huge moment for us to seize this opportunity and I look forward to working with all the different departments in our union and our staff.

And, again, I just felt compelled to get up and say thank you to all our health care workers. I still consider myself as a health care worker, even though I probably require more health care than I used to give. But, I just wanted to say thank you for your inspiring words, and I hope that everybody in this room is inspired because we have a huge job ahead of us, but our union is always up for the fight and we’re going to win justice for health care. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker at mic 1.

EMIL MESIC: Emil Mesic, Local 707. I’m just going to put you back a little bit on what Jim said earlier about the standard, the CSA standard, Z1003. I challenge everyone to go onto your Google and punch in “CSA-Z1003” and you can actually download the standard for free, and share it with your joint health and safety committees and make it a topic of discussion for your meetings that happen with the employer so that this standard isn’t a secret, so that it becomes front and centre in all workplaces in Ontario which will make it that much easier, politically, to move the deal forward. So, I would like to, once again, challenge everyone to download the standard, and share it with your committees, and make it a point of discussion at your regular meetings. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Seeing no more speakers at the mic, I would like to get to the vote on the recommendation on Psychological Wellness.

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down. Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown)

Carried.

Great job. Great speakers at the mic. It was a wonderful presentation. Thank you so much, brothers and sisters.

Now, continuing on with the order of the day, almost coming to the conclusion of the day, I would like to ask Scott McIlmoyle to come up and do the health and safety report.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT

SCOTT MCILMOYLE: Thanks, Dino. I had to do a couple of updates to start with instead of saying good morning, good afternoon and getting close to good evening on my speech here. On behalf of the Health and Safety Committee, and the outgoing committee of Jamie Wright was just there and myself who didn’t seek re-election. Stephanie Brownlee was re-elected, and congrats to Emil and Susan. I think they’re going to do a great job going forward.

Couple things that happened over the last year. We had a No B.S. campaign, different than the one out of Jerry’s office that already had a trademark on it. Ours stood for behavioural-based safety. This was launched at the national conference and has support of all regional councils, and as we talked about seeing Sari and her department for further material. You’re more than welcome. Ban Asbestos campaign is recognized by all our members and we continue to put pressure on not only provincial but the federal governments to finally adopt a complete ban of asbestos. Mental health, we’ve had a lot of awareness and a lot of talks through our Workers’ Comp conferences, through health and safety. It was just talked about, realizing how important this is and that we’ve got to keep that at the forefront.

The Prevent Cancer campaign continues to be a profile of devastation. As we keep talking about it at every conference, it seems it’s getting closer and closer to home. The right to know is more important than ever with the use of endocrine disruptors and engineered nanomaterials in our workplaces.

In Ontario, they conducted a Comprehensive Underground Mining Health and Safety Prevention Review led by Ontario’s Chief Prevention Officer. As part of that review, the MOL held public consultations. Unifor sent Jamie Wright on behalf of the Environment Committee, the Health and Safety Committee to do a submission. In the submission, he
spoke about necessary controls on hazard assessments, processes that needed to be established. Thanks, also, go to many others who helped put all this together. Drew Delagesh (ph), Local 16-O; Stephen Litsch (ph), Local 16-O; Dennis Gerard (ph), Local 598; Bob Parker, Local 1859; Bill Wark (ph), Local 1859; and of course, Sari, pulling it all together.

On the WSIB side of things, the WSIB in Ontario announced rate reductions for employers in 2017. Injured workers, groups and labour not impressed by this as we know how this means. This is a drive to suppress claims. This is a drive to make it pay back by savings through cost of injured workers at the very end.

And, I want to congratulate the delegates here today, and I make special thanks to Gary Parent, the godfather of Workers’ Comp for so many years and speaking out, and thanking the two locals that changed the resolution and adding in Workers’ Comp Committee separate. I know that will be very helpful.

I can’t go by and quickly say Nadia Anton-Collins who was a big part of our committee for many, many years, as she said earlier, she’s retiring come July. I know she’s only a phone call away, but special recognition for her. She’s always been there for a lot of us in the Workers’ Comp world to help out, and she’ll be sadly missed, I know, in her office, but we have her number and we have her address. So, if we need her, we’ll find her.

If by chance you don’t get a chance or you haven’t had the chance or opportunity to stop by the Health and Safety table today, I know it’s at the very end of the conference, if you have a change in your leadership within your local union of health and safety reps, environment, please call the national office, the Health and Safety Department. We’re trying to keep an updated system. We have, I think, upwards of 600 people, but with elections, what have you, we need to keep those updated.

Moving forward to the new committee, we’ve only got a list of about 20 things that we’re going to pass over to you. No, we’ve only got a few. So, some dates that will happen in the upcoming year in Port Elgin, National Environment Conference, June 23rd to 25th; the Ontario WCB Conference will be October 20th to 22nd; and in a couple of weeks, we have our annual demonstration where injured workers, labour and community groups, we meet Monday, December 12th, Ministry of Labour, 400 University, from 11:00 to 12:00 with regards to keep fighting back with the Ministry of Labour and looking after our injured workers out there. And, that’s my express version of the report.

DINO CHIODO: Scott, thank you very much. And, just like we’ve pointed out in the previous reports, Sari Sairanen is the individual responsible. She is the director responsible for health and safety, so if there’s any questions or concerns with regards to the report or any of the projects that they’ll be working on over the course of the next year, please make sure you speak to Sari. She’ll be glad to work with you and talk to you with reference to that.

What I would like to do now, if I could, because there was an excellent, excellent rally that took part at lunch time. I think D.J. spoke well on that with regards to having some excellent attendance. And, in saying the $15.00 and Fairness rally was a success is an understatement. They did a great job, but I would like to have Roxanne Dubois come up and roll a few slides while she’s going through some of the components of the actual rally and what it means.

ROXANNE DUBOIS: Thank you. Hello. So, the rally this morning, or at noon, was a part of the $15.00 and Fairness campaign that has been going on and building momentum over the last few years. What we have to remember the backdrop of what’s going on during this campaign is the Changing Workplaces Review. Here are the pictures.

The Changing Workplaces Review, as we heard earlier, is ongoing. We’re expecting the final report, and all the while that is happening, we have to, essentially, keep the pressure on and show that workers are united, that we’re calling for things that actually have an impact on the lives of working people today, which is increasing the minimum wage to $15.00, paid sick days, flexible scheduling and easier rules to join unions so that everybody can have the protection of a collective agreement.

And so, what happened today is that we gathered at Dundas Square, which is -- as you can imagine, we’re into December, and so it’s getting into a busy period in a shopping centre, to sing some carols, some songs that the lyrics had been modified to talk about decent work and fair wages. And so, folks gathered across the mall. When we got there, there was a fairly big group already, and so we made it an even bigger affair, which was really great that everybody came out.

We sang some songs to the best of our ability with very little practice, but it went very well. And, essentially, the group moved into the intersection and had the intersection for a few minutes there where the crowd was big enough to be able to show attention to the issue, to make it clear that this is an important issue for people, and to also raise the awareness of shoppers and a lot of retail workers that work in that area. And then, eventually, we moved out and continued the action.

And so, that’s sort of the pictures that you’re seeing there. I’m sure they will be shared on various social media platforms as well. And, I hope that gives you a little bit of an overview, and I hope that also encourages you to get
engaged with the campaign. It’s a great campaign to use in our workplaces, in our locals to talk to people about some issues that are really important right now, and to make sure that we keep momentum so that we can get these changes in Ontario for all workers.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. So, just moving right along. What I would like to do is just say thank you to Roxanne, obviously, for working with the young workers and all the efforts the young workers have put forward because it’s just been absolutely amazing, and to build our local and national unions, and to have those Young Workers Committees is just paramount to continuing to build on some of the successes we had, especially in the Organizing Department. So, congratulations to everybody and congratulations on that Fight for $15.00 and Fairness.

That being said, I would like to call up Jim Reid. We do have a small presentation that we want to do today for a couple of individuals that have just done an amazing amount of work and been doing a lot of work with our organization for a lot of years. So, in saying that, Jim Reid. Why don’t we have Peter Kennedy and Fred Wilson come on up to the stage.

JIM REID: Anyway, thanks for hanging in. It’s been an absolutely wonderful conference. On behalf of the Ontario Regional Executive and also the delegates, we thought it was appropriate to pay tribute to two brothers that have shaped and built our two former unions into what they were and into what Unifor has become.

The work and contribution that they made to the labour movement, to social justice and political action is considerable. They were -- I remember the word when this whole Unifor project was coming together, they were the Sherpas that guided us along the path towards the establishment of this great and growing movement that we celebrate as Unifor.

On behalf of the ORC Executive and the delegates, we acknowledge and appreciate their contributions, and we want to say thank you, and we wish both Fred Wilson and Peter Kennedy health, peace and solidarity as they begin the next chapter of a union life well-lived. Brothers.

DINO CHIODO: So, Peter and Fred, just a couple of small gifts with reference to you guys doing a tremendous amount of work. Thank you very much on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council. Thank you for all your efforts. Okay. So, what we’re going to do now is ask -- actually, you know what? Why don’t you say a couple of words?

PETER KENNEDY: This is a surprise. Both Fred and I -- Dino actually came to us yesterday afternoon and said, “I was going to do something in recognizing the two of you,” yesterday afternoon, “but we’re running late on time. Do you mind if we do it tomorrow?” And, neither Fred nor I were aware of what was going on but, again, I just want to pick up on something Dino said earlier today after the nominations this morning.

Dino said that there’s no greater honour than having the opportunity to represent working people, and that is true, and our thanks goes to you and what you have done over the course of this weekend, the past two days at this council, if only the world could see the inspiration that is in this room, the leadership that is in this room, the commitment that is in this room, the social conscience, the values that exist in this room, not only would our workplaces be better places, our communities, our country and, indeed, the world, would be a better place. So, thank you, brothers and sisters. I love you.

FRED WILSON: Well, as Peter said, this is a complete surprise, but a very meaningful one for me. I just want to join Peter in thanking the union for the opportunities that we’ve had, that I have had. I just want to tell you that being a part of the new union project and helping to bring about the formation of Unifor and these last three years in trying to take that vision of a new union and make it real has been the most important thing that I have ever done in my life, and it has made my whole career, which is coming to an end in the next couple of weeks in this movement, it’s made it just so much more meaningful for me.

And, you know what I get asked a lot, because being part of the new union project and one of the few that’s still around with Peter from that whole process, “Well, how have we done? How have we done and how does the new union square up to what it was that we wanted to make?” And, I just want to tell all of you, I think we’ve done a hell of a job and, yes, the new union, Unifor, is the new union, the union of change, that we wanted to build.

There’s nothing like it in the Canadian labour movement. We’re no ordinary union. It’s a very different union with a different purpose, and we were born to make change, and I see us making that change every day. So, please, go for it and I know that you’ll keep the struggle alive, and you can be sure that any time that you need a retiree along for the ride, just give me a call. I’ll be there. In fact, you won’t even have to call me; okay? Thanks very much.

DINO CHIODO: Absolutely wonderful. So, I just want to say thanks once again to those two individuals for the great contributions that they’ve done over their lives, especially to the union. So, thank you. And, now, just getting closer to the end of this conference which has just been inspiring and an amazing conference for me right from the
onset, I just would like to show one last slide, if I can, on the screen, and it might be a little tough to read and there might be a lot of errors on there, and it might not be spelled properly.

But, let me just preface it a little bit because over the course of the last couple of days, I have been sitting and writing notes upstairs, and my daughter, because I was away from home for about 90 days in bargaining, has been having a little bit of a rough time not seeing me, calling me, crying on the phone, “When are you coming home?” And, it’s been a little rough.

So, as I’m writing my notes, she’s been wanting to spend time with me and won’t leave me. And, so, she’s sitting next to me trying to write notes, and Donald Trump happens to be on the news when we’re doing our notes. So, we’re talking a little bit, and she had some questions, and she told me she doesn’t like him, and a couple things like that, but it’s kind of amazing because over the course of the last few days, we’ve heard some interesting things with regards to Donald Trump. How does a racist have the opportunity to become the President of a nation like the United States? And, again, a lot of you have read a lot of things with reference to Donald Trump and his method of leading, which I don’t -- I mean, I really see it as a sad state for the United States selecting an individual like him.

But, I want to read it just so we’re on the same page because I think it’s amazing. I think it’s just amazing to have the honesty of a 9-year-old, and at the same time, really recognizing their input with reference to how they see things. This is not us telling her what to write. This was just us sitting down, and she wanted to write something, and at the end of it, when I looked it, I was thinking, “You’ve got to be kidding me.” I said, “Where did you get this?” And, she said, “Well, I’ve been seeing it on the news and I just think some things are wrong,” she says to me.

So, it says, “Insurance of our people we are gathered here to talk and negotiate about Donald Trump. Donald Trump is wanting to build a wall and appears now Donald Trump can text us and we cannot block him, and this is wrong. So, we will defeat Donald Trump and that’s what’s ours. Donald Trump is taking what’s ours, maybe not today, but tomorrow we will beat him.”

And, again, it’s just so honest and true that she believes that Donald Trump is just an individual that’s not there to build walls, but basically stop people from thinking because you’ve got to do what he says, because basically whatever he texts you is the way it is, is how I’m understanding it. And, by extension of that is the walls that he’s going to build, he’s going to divide all of us.

So, we are building soldiers for the future, and union activists and social activists, and she is just an amazing young little woman, and if you’ve met her, you would know that for certain, and I’m so proud of her, again. And, she wanted to make sure that I read it all, so I took advantage of the opportunity as the Chair to be able to do that. So, thank you very much for your indulgence in hearing that, and thank you. She absolutely means the world to me, so I do appreciate that. Thank you very much.

With that being said, I would like to call up our Director for Ontario Regional Council, Naureen Rizvi to give the closing comments for our 5th Ontario Regional Council.

CLOSING REMARKS

NAUREEN RIZVI: All right. Thank you, Dino. You know, it’s funny, because he turns around 2 seconds from now and says, “I told Peter and Fred that we’re going to do this tomorrow,” and I said, “This was a surprise.” He’s like, “It was?” It was a surprise. It was a surprise gift for them for their retirement. You gave them the head’s up yesterday that we’re not going to do it yesterday? Yet another little hiccup that you guys don’t really see that we had along the way, but he did a good job chairing.

So, I want to hear from you. How was the council? I thought it was pretty amazing. I, first, have to recognize my incredible ORC Executive and all of the hard work that they put in to making this council. The thoughts that they put in into the debates, and the recommendations, everything that you saw, all of the work, is entirely their contribution, so please give them a big hand.

So, for me, this weekend was absolutely inspiring and I want to really say thank you for being so generous with sharing your narrative and your stories. They were raw. They were genuine. They were powerful, and they left a profound mark on everyone’s hearts and minds, and certainly they did for me.

But, most importantly, what they did was create a space for somebody else to speak at the mic because you shared your own struggles, you connected with somebody else, you created a relationship with somebody across the room that you probably don’t even know and you got them to come and speak about their struggles. So, thank you so much for that genuineness that you brought to this council.
I think what I’m the most proud of at this council is the recognition that we received from our community allies, our guest speakers, who are champions in their own rights, for the recognition that they gave to us for our caliber of commitment to social justice. Time and time again, we heard from Amanda Dale, we heard from Bonnie Braynton, we heard from Victoria Maxwell, how incredibly impressed they were with our commitment to solidarity, our commitment to social justice, our commitment to progressing workers’ rights. And, this is exactly how you build a movement. This is exactly how you build capacity. But, more than anything, it just validates that everything that we’re doing is absolutely making a difference out there. So, thank you so much for exuding that in everything that you did this weekend.

I want to make sure that everybody absolutely understands, after this time that we’ve spent together, that there should be no doubt how much of a difference your participation makes, how much of a difference your words make, how much of a difference it makes that your standing next to somebody on the mic because it’s their first time and you’re supporting them, and you’re helping to mentor them so that they can come up here and speak. I saw that so many times throughout, and I thought it was absolutely amazing. Leadership over and over again. Thank you so much for doing that. Thank you on behalf of those individuals who needed that so that they would have the courage to come and speak.

On behalf of the ORC Executive, all of the standing committees, Jerry, Bob, the assistants and myself, I want to make sure that you understand that we stand shoulder to shoulder with you in solidarity, in all of your struggles and your victories.

So, I want to welcome all the elected and newly elected members of all of the committees. After we’ve heard from the workers, especially the health care workers, on all of the struggles that we have, we have a lot of work to do and I hope you’re ready.

Dino, you did an amazing job chairing, and for those who couldn’t see it, I sat next to him for a reason. He did an amazing job chairing. It was a very jam packed agenda. He kept it fluid. He kept it moving, and still made sure that all the voices were heard and nobody had an opportunity where they were told to sit down because there was no time. So, thank you so much for doing a tremendous job. I think that the council ran really, really well because of the work that you did.

But, I do leave you with one ask, and I really, really hope that you will consider this for our next Ontario Council. I ask that you consider, at the next council, that the delegation that you bring is 50 percent women. So, if you can stand and show support for that? All right. I would like to see the delegations that are sent to the ORC at 50 percent women. Got to build capacity.

So, thank you so much. I don’t know what else to say except that it’s been a great two days. I’m excited about 2017. I’m excited about our next council and all the work that we’re going to do in between that we can showcase at the next council, and I hope you have a very safe and fun evening tonight because I know that’s exactly what everyone’s going to do, and safe travels back. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Brothers and sisters, I don’t see any points of privilege, so the last announcement is with reference to the workshop that’s going to be held tomorrow. We still have space. If you want to register, you can register upstairs by the registration desk or the VIP room. Please make it safe home. Be safe. Have an enjoyable evening if you’re staying in Toronto, and all the very best.

--- Whereupon the meeting is adjourned at 5:12 p.m.