ONTARIO REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES

DECEMBER 4-5, 2015
SHERATON CENTRE HOTEL
TORONTO, ONTARIO

UNIFOR
Ontario Council
Conseil de l’Ontario
Upon commencing at 9:10 a.m.

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

**DINO CHIODO:** Way to go. Thank you for that video. And, again, I just want to welcome everybody. I have spoken to a lot of people over the last couple of days, and it’s exciting to be here. They are excited to be here to see the direction for the Ontario Regional Council. So, welcome to all the delegates, all our friends, the individuals that are here for our 3rd Ontario Regional Council here at the Toronto Sheraton Centre.

Before we do get started, I would like to ask everybody to please stand for a moment of silence. I would like you to keep those in mind that have suffered through occupational disease, those that have passed away since the last time we have met.

Also, we know that November is Violence against Women month. Please, keep in your mind those that have been abused, killed and suffered at the hands of another.

--- Moment of Silence

**DINO CHIODO:** Okay. Thank you very much. So, just before I do get started today, I would like to make a couple of quick announcements. Peter Kennedy, unfortunately, is going to be late. His plane flight was delayed, but he will be here. He has a report to do this afternoon.

Jerry Dias won’t be here. He’s at the B.C. Council. So, he will be here tomorrow.

**CREDENTIALS REPORT**

**DINO CHIODO:** And, in saying that, I want to go now through the Credentials Report. The National Secretary-Treasurer’s office sent out 745 credentials to 264 local unions. In addition, the office sent credentials to National Executive Board members and National Council of Retired Workers Executive members.

As of November 21, 2014, the National Secretary-Treasurer received 529 credentials, representing 168 local unions, the National Executive Board and the National Council of Retired Workers.

As of 8:59 a.m. today, representing 111 local unions, the National Executive Board and National Council of Retired Workers, there are 83 national representatives and 18 special delegates with voice and no vote. There are also 29 alternates, 6 special guests, 40 observers and 14 other staff with no media in attendance, for a total attendance of 551 persons.

In saying that, I just want to make a quick announcement with regards to Make a Green Choice. And, everybody probably gets asked this. When you get checked in, you basically can put this on your door. At the same time, you get 500 Starwood points or you get a $5.00 voucher in one of their food places. And, all this does is eliminate jobs. This is a unionized hotel. We want to stand to protect jobs. So, please, say no to this.

Yes, let’s work together to make things right for these workers here, because they do have challenges. And, from that, this goes a long way in supporting and protecting their jobs.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**DINO CHIODO:** What I would like to do is I would like to pass the minutes. In saying that, in your kit, you have the minutes. You have staff reports. I would like to get a mover on the minutes, if I can.

So, moved. Seconded. Any discussion?

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down.

Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown, if any)

Carried. CARRIED.

And, again, throughout the course of the entire meeting, you will be able to raise the minutes, the staff reports. You will be able to speak on some of the concerns you may have. If there are any additions or omissions that have to take place, please make sure you raise it. Bring it up, so we can take a look at it and make the necessary changes that have to take part and happen.
INTRODUCTION OF RETIRED WORKERS, GUESTS, NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ONTARIO REGIONAL EXECUTIVE

DINO CHIODO: I would like to recognize some retirees in the room and the retired Executive Board who are here with us today. So, we would like to ask all the retirees and the Retirees Executive Board if you can please stand up and be recognized?

Some of these individuals are the ones that helped us pave the way. These individuals have been on strike, hard-fought battles, and they have done a lot to make sure that our pay is where it is, and maintaining our benefits, and put a lot of the political fights forward for us to make sure that we can enjoy a good standard of living.

So, I just want to say thank you to each and every one of you, for your continued support and participation, and even participating here at this Ontario Regional Council and keeping up that fight.

I would like to recognize some special guests here in the room. Buzz Hargrove. Longest-serving president of the CAW. Buzz Hargrove.

I believe Fred Hahn is in the room, CUPE Ontario President. I was told he was here. Sorry, Fred, we’re still clapping for you. But, he is not in the room yet, but we’ll make sure we do recognize him when he comes in here. I apologize for that.

And, I would like to recognize John Cartwright. John Cartwright who is the President of the Toronto District Labour Council. John Cartwright.

I have a few more people to recognize as special guests. But, unfortunately, they won’t be here until a little bit later on. So, I’ll make sure I do that at the appropriate time.

Out of respect for their hard work and dedication, I would like to also recognize the National Executive Board that are in the room. I don’t know all of the members that are in the room currently, because I haven’t had the time to connect with each and every one of them. But, I would ask that they please stand up and be recognized amongst their peers, for all the hard work and dedication that they put into this union. Could the National Executive Board please stand and be recognized?

At the last two Regional Councils, it really proved successful, going over many recommendations, discussions, some resolutions and talking about the many challenges that we have over the course of the year and what is coming ahead. It takes a creative group, and sometimes it takes a willing partner to be able to take those risks.

In saying that, we have a very creative group, a very smart group that talks about the issues, talks them through very carefully and diligently. And, in saying that, I would just like to recognize the Ontario Regional Council. So, please help me recognize your Ontario Council at this point.

Out of Local 7-O, Candace Lavalley, the vice-chairperson.
Out of Local 2458, Tullio Di Ponti, the secretary-treasurer.
Out of Local 35-O, Maggie Harbert, member-at-large.
Out of Local 229, Kari Jefford, member-at-large.
Out of Local 27, Jim Reid, member-at-large.
Out of Local 87-M, K.H. Wong, (Ka Hung), member-at-large.
Anne-Marie MacInnis, out of Local 598, unfortunately couldn’t be with us today.

She has some challenges she is dealing with a potential death in the family, so she stayed to be with a loved one at this point. But, we recognize her hard work and dedication. Anne-Marie MacInnis.

And, out of Local 4268, Debbie Montgomery, member-at-large.
There, you have your current Ontario Regional Council Executive. But, I would also like to recognize two individuals. Actually, it will be three individuals: two from the Ontario Regional Council that are no longer with us, and one out of the Political Action Group, again, that is no longer with us on our capacity as the Ontario Regional Council.

Mark Mathewson has worked on the Ontario Regional Council and does a tremendous job. He did a tremendous job with regards to providing input, talking about the issues that are important and making the issues relevant as he saw them. And, from that perspective, Mark has been given the opportunity to sit on the National Executive Board as the Energy Council Sector chair.
So, we wish all the best to Mark and thank you very much to Mark for his support.

And, also, I would like to recognize Wayne Gates out of Local 199 who ran as a Member of Provincial Parliament in the Niagara Region, right in the backyard of Tim Hudak, and he won; very, very noticeably won that election. So, I want to congratulate Wayne Gates as well.

And, I would also like to recognize Chris Taylor who was the Chairperson of the Political Action Group and now, has been recognized through the GM, Ford and Chrysler Master Bargaining Committees as the Auto Committee chairperson. And, in saying that, will sit as the Auto Sector chairperson on the NEB. Congratulations to all three of you and thank you for your hard work and dedication.

The reason why I raised those three individuals in particular is because there will be an election held. That election will be held tomorrow after lunchtime. And, in saying that, what we will do is we’ll have to make sure that we get an Election Committee identified. And, we will go through that process at that point tomorrow morning, to make sure that we have people in place to run that election after the lunchtime.

In our inaugural meeting, we discussed having two potential councils a year. And, we actually said that was what we were going to do, because they were already booked. We had a council booked for April at Port Elgin, and we had a council booked for December. In saying that, we walked through those councils and we did what was necessary in order to shape or start to shape what we look like as an Ontario Regional Council.

But, the Constitution makes it very clear that we need to have a minimum of one session for the Ontario Regional Council a year. And, in saying that, through the Chairperson of the Ontario Regional Council, and through the Executive Director, and with the collaboration of the Ontario Regional Council Executive, next year, we are only going to have one council or Ontario Regional Council meeting, which will happen in December.

And, there is a lot of discussion that went into that, that wasn’t taken very lightly.

The reality is, we know that there are a lot of challenges coming towards us. We know that there is going to be an early election with the Conservative majority government that we need to do everything we can in order to facilitate defeating the Harper Conservatives.

We know that we have a challenge in front of us. We know that we are going to have to set up strategy sessions and have a President’s Conference in order to facilitate making sure that we put a strategy in place that works, talking about the issues that are important to us.

And, we know that we were already successful. So, knowing that we were already successful, we want to make sure that we continue in that same direction, and we put our best foot forward in making sure that we do everything we can in our power, in our combined power with all of our locals, making sure that we put our best effort in defeating Harper and the Conservatives.

This is an important perspective from our side, because it was a hard debate deciding whether we have one or two Ontario Regional Councils. We weren’t sure how it was going to be interpreted, but we darn well know we don’t want the government in power currently.

We need to work with partners in the community, to make sure that we can have alternatives, so we continue not to get beat down through legislation, the so-called Transparency Act to Bill 377, or 525 attacking federal workers and suggesting that they could be decertified with regards to not being able to have the full vote of the members that are actually voting for certification or not. And, counting even the people that don’t show up.

Those are unfair practices that this government imposes upon us, and prorogues parliament whenever they feel the heat, so they can put a lag in between there, so there is no pressure on when they come back to make certain decisions that make things the way they want it, against us as working-class people.

So, in essence, that is why the Ontario Regional Council has made that decision. And, from that perspective, there will be call letters that have come out with regards to those President’s Conferences, those strategic meetings that have to happen in order to facilitate letting you have the resources from your locals to support the candidates; the best candidates that are going to be able to defeat that Conservative person in your riding.
UNIFOR HARASSMENT POLICY FOR UNION EVENTS

DINO CHIODO: I want to also remind everybody that this is a harassment-free environment, and there is a policy in your documentation and kit, or it should be in front of you currently. And, through that, if you would like to read the statement, I please invite you and encourage you to do so. A copy has been provided for every one of the delegates. Again, I ask you to read that, because it is very important.

We did read through the entire document at the inaugural meeting. It’s in our intent to make sure that this meeting is harassment-free, and any incidents of harassment will be dealt with quickly and confidentially.

There will be two ombudspersons that you can reach out to, to make sure that the issues are dealt with as they arise, that requires response under our policy. Those two individuals and ombudspersons are Sister Barb Dolan, from the Women’s Department. Barb, can you please stand up and be recognized? So, if there are any concerns, which we trust there will be none, please see Barb Dolan.

And, I would also like to recognize Vinay Sharma, from the Human Rights Department. Vinay, if you could please stand up and be recognized as well, up at the front?

Again, if they are not in the room at the time that you need to speak to somebody, please talk to a staff member and from that, they will make sure they will get you in contact with either Barb or Vinay to make sure that we get a quick and diligent resolve to the issue that has arisen and going on.

OPENING REMARKS

DINO CHIODO: So, getting into our Regional Council, we will be hearing some great presentations and we will be hearing some excellent speakers. There will be great discussion that takes part, and we will be hearing some recommendations and resolutions to debate on. No question about that. We will be providing meaningful information and it’s a great resource.

The last Ontario Regional Council that we had, we basically had a lot of information that was left behind. There was a lot of documentation that was left on the tables. This is the Ontario Provincial Government for the Ontario Regional Council. This is where we get the tools and the information that we need in order to go back to our locals and explain to our membership what our direction is going to be over the next 6, 8, 10, 12 months, so until we meet at the next Ontario Regional Council.

So, in saying that, what we encourage you to do is when we pass the recommendations, bring that to your local. Present it to your members. Talk to them about the importance of that and work towards achieving those tasks and recommendations that are put forward.

And, again, the reason why I bring that up is because people seem to feel like they’re going in 100 different directions. They’re not sure what they are supposed to be focusing on. So, I wanted to be clear about saying this is the governing body. You have the input on what we look like and how we shape ourselves.

And, through that prospect, we want to make sure that we’re giving that information to our members, our activists, the individuals that want to participate in building our union, giving them the latitude to be able to do so through the recommendations and resolutions that are put forward right here at this council session.

So, in saying that, we are going to go through some recommendations today. And, I want to give those recommendations ahead of time, so people have an idea, and they can read through some of them and get some of their thoughts put together, so they can go to the microphones, whether they’re for a recommendation or against a recommendation.

We will be going through Recommendation Number 3, and that will be heard at approximately 2:00 p.m. today. That will be after the National Secretary-Treasurer, Peter Kennedy, does his report.

And, also, Recommendation Number 4. That will go to the floor after the presentation, Ontario Labour Law - From Defence to Offence. And, that will be at approximately 4:00 p.m. this afternoon, give or take a few minutes.
But, also, there will be some resolutions that will be brought forward today, depending on how time works out, because we will have to fit some of these items in throughout the course of the meeting. And, we won’t always be able to give you a heads up. But, please recognize that any one of those recommendations could also come up at other times, when we have available space to do so.

But, at 10:30, approximately, there will be resolutions. The Resolutions Committee will talk. And, from that perspective, they will put the resolutions forward, give concurrence or non-concurrence, and then there will be discussions. So, we’re anticipating out of the four that we’ve received, we will hopefully debate at least one on a go-forward premise at that time.

Now, getting to a few last announcements. There is a rally that is going to be going on today. We are going to be basically adjourning for lunch -- well, not lunch -- for the rally, at 11:30. And, that is going to happen today, to participate in the Ontario Healthcare Coalition Rally to save local community hospitals.

It seems one of the most aggressive plans is to dismantle community hospitals of services, and cut or privatize those services; outpatient services like physiotherapy, labs. Pain clinics are already being closed. And, it’s a challenge to each and every one of us in Ontario. Making cuts to chronic and complex care beds.

We need to stop the private clinics and make governments understand that we don’t want to privatize fragmented and poor-quality healthcare. That is not an option for us. What we need to do is come together like Unifor was meant to do and make sure we’re at that rally for 12:00 noon, so they can hear our voice loud and clear, bringing our full delegation to Queen’s Park for 12:00 for that rally.

And, I think that is an important initiative, because this is going to be one of the most important rallies that you might be participating in, in your future. I just ask you to think of what you think we would look like without a healthcare program in Ontario. It would be devastating. And, if you think people are falling through the cracks now, if you don’t have a credit card, if you can’t mortgage your house, you will surely be in trouble in the future.

So, we are asking that everybody please participate. At 11:30 when we break off, walk over or take a cab to Queen’s Park. And, we will make sure that there is a rally that is facilitated. And, again, it will be in good attendance, and we would like to have everybody there.

Also, in saying that, if people need to get their coat, you might want to try and do that throughout the meeting. Again, I don’t want 500 people to leave all at once. But, I’m just being told that when we have a rush and if we’re trying to get there for 12:00, it might be a little complicated. If we all get up at 11:30, run to our rooms to get our coats to make it there, we might miss part of the rally.

So, if through some of the meeting, if some of you are going up to your room, have to go to the facilities and make a detour to your room to get your jacket, that would probably be appreciated, because it will make a lot of sense, so everybody is not rushing at the last minute.

ABORIGINAL GREETING

DINO CHIODO: And, now, to kick off the third Ontario Regional Council meeting, what I would like to do is I would like to please help welcome Candace Lavalley up. Candace Lavalley is the President of Aboriginal Composite Local 7-O at the Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and Anishinaabe Muskhiki, both located in Thunder Bay. She has been president since Local 7-O came into existence in 2006. The agencies both have an elderly council incorporated as part of their grievance procedure in their collective agreements.

Candace is a First Nations person who is committed to building a strong local for both female-dominated agencies. Her experience working in Human Resources for 11 years has certainly helped her to become a passionate and committed union activist.

So, please help me in welcoming Candace to give Aboriginal greetings. Candace Lavalley.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Migwetch, Creator. As Dino said, my name is Candace Lavalley. I’m a First Nations woman, originally from Manitoba. And, I am president of an Aboriginal composite local in Thunder Bay.
I am honoured to have been invited here today to open our council with a traditional smudge ceremony and prayer. I want to acknowledge that we are here on Mississaugi First Nation land, and we thank them for letting us meet here.

I am going to do a, giving thanks Ojibwe Morning Prayer.

“Thank you, Creator, for all you have created. Thank you, Grandfather’s son, for shining light on us today. Thank you, Grandmother Moon, for shining light on us at Night. Thank you, Mother Earth, for giving us life, for giving us food, for giving us water, for giving us the animals and for giving us breath. I offer my tobacco to the north, to the east, to the west and to the south. Help me to stand strong and have a strong heart here today with my brothers and sisters of Unifor. Thank you, Creator.”

I am going to do a smudge ceremony, so give me a couple of moments.

“I cleanse my eyes, so I can see good things. I cleanse my ears, so I am open to hearing good things. I cleanse my mouth, so I say good things. I cleanse my mind, so I can believe good things. I cleanse my heart, so I am open to receiving good things. And, I cleanse my body, so I may feel good things. Migwetch.”

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Candace, for blessing this Ontario Council, and thank you for your greetings, your Aboriginal greetings. It is much appreciated.

Now, we’re moving on to the next order of business, which I believe is a video.

The First Year: Success Stories from Unifor Members.

Oh, I’m sorry. Point at microphone. I apologize.

GWEN CAMPBELL: Dino, thanks. Point of privilege. Gwen Campbell, 1285. I would just like to remind everybody to collect their toiletries from the rooms. We have got boxes set up at the entrance when you come through. If you could get those before you go up to get your coats and then we get two days’ worth of toiletries and we’ll donate them to women’s shelters. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Very good. Great idea. If everybody can do that, if you’re going up to get your jacket, very much appreciated. Thank you for bringing that up.

So, we’ll have boxes at the doors and we’ll have boxes at the end of the stairs. So, when you come down, you can make sure you put your toiletries in there, so we can make sure they do get to women’s shelters. So, thank you very much for that.

And, now, cue up the video, please.

--- Whereupon a video was played - The First Year: Success Stories from Unifor Members

DINO CHIODO: Well, if that doesn’t make you feel good about what we do in Unifor, then I don’t know what does, providing the support that is needed for organizations to get good collective agreements. And, that is a testament to all the hard work that you all provide, because it is about reaching out to individuals, improving their standard of life.

And, each of you deserves a round of applause for the hard work and dedication that you put into the work that you give each and every day. So, thank you to each and every one of you for doing that.

Going forward in our agenda, and I just want to make sure, because I wanted to recognize Katha earlier on but, at the same time, I wanted to give her the proper respect that she reserves.

The reality is, Katha Fortier, our Executive Director, is a very hard-working person. She does an amazing job. She goes far and beyond what her duties tell her she has to do. She works hard, does a lot with healthcare she connects with people in the communities. She travels across the province, making sure that people know what is going on around them. And, she has done an amazing job, keeping the Ontario Regional Council looking in a focused direction, talking about the issues that are important and what is coming forward to us.

And, I want to just say thank you very much to Katha Fortier. She keeps us in the loop. She talks to us about what is important. And, from that, we come together, making decisions that are important to the Ontario Regional Council on a go-forward basis.
And, in saying that, I want to say thanks and I want to recognize Katha for that. And, I present to you, Katha Fortier, our Executive Director.

**ONTARIO DIRECTOR’S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**KATHA FORTIER:** Thank you, Dino. And, welcome, sisters and brothers, and thank you for coming. To those of you who came from outside of Toronto, welcome back to a city that you might recognize again, a city not run by Rob Ford or his brother. And, to everyone from Toronto, thanks for making this happen.

I am just going to take a point of privilege. I’m going to give it to myself. I know that you are my union family that are here. But, I do want to introduce you to my other family. My son is here, Dustin Fortier. If you could please stand? He has been raised by a mother in the labour movement, so essentially by himself. It’s a miracle.

I do want to make a confession before I start my report. I wrote my report last weekend. I finished Sunday night. And, the Unifor team of Stanford and Wilson offered to proofread for me. And, it came back, I’m certain, at least 1,000 words longer than I sent it to them. So, if my report goes on a little bit longer, Wilson and Stanford are completely to blame for that.

But, we have asked a lot of you this year. And, I know that many of you were at the April Ontario Regional Council, the Canadian Labour Congress Convention in May, Canada Council in September, and back again for the Good Job Summit in October. And, all that, and you still came back.

And, on top of that, you were out in full force to defeat Hudak and his regressive agenda for Ontario. This was an election that was watched around the world. Could Canada follow in the footsteps of our neighbours to the south? Could we elect a government that took labour laws back decades? Collectively, we said absolutely not.

It was particularly gratifying that as the Conservatives went down back in June, they blamed us, not just Unifor, but 19 unions that came together in a great campaign to expose what Hudak and his Conservatives stood for.

This election was so crucial to our future that even our media local, Local 87-M, under the leadership of their president, Paul Morose, broke their traditional silence and asked their members not to vote Conservative. Even though they knew they would take some heat, they did it anyway. They did it publicly and they did it well, because too much was at stake.

**Tea Party** politics hurts every worker without exemption. And, it didn’t hurt that our own economist, Jim Stanford, gleefully debunked the Hudak method of creating 1 million new jobs. 

We were strategic, but I suggest to you, brothers and sisters, that strategy isn’t a bad word. Political parties of every stripe act strategically. In ridings where they have little opportunity to win, where they place a knob or a name on the ballot, you’ll find very little resources invested. They use their resources wisely.

That is exactly what we did. Our resources went into supporting incumbent NDP MPP’s. They went into ridings where a Conservative could reasonably be defeated because, ultimately, beating Hudak and his agenda was the crucial priority.

Not everyone was comfortable with this approach, but the vast majority of Ontario unions worked collaboratively around this strategy, coordinated by the Ontario Federation of Labour. So, for all of you who played a role in the outcome of this election, thank you.

And, democracy is also a winner. In our June provincial election, voter turnout was up 4 percent, pretty significant after decades of decline.

I want to acknowledge all of our Unifor activists who were engaged in the Ontario Municipal elections in October. And, a big shout-out to Unifor members, elected or re-elected: Paul Pugh in Thunder Bay; Mike Devine elected in Cambridge; Hazel Pratt elected in Hanover. 1106 is here. Also, congratulations to former CEP Director of Human Rights. Gisèle Pageau is now a counsellor in French River near Sudbury. And, what about in London, where 11 of 14 labour-endorsed candidates won and the so-called Fontana 8 were all defeated?

In Toronto, our choice for mayor, Olivia Chow, was not the choice to get rid of the Fords. But, her campaign had a huge impact. And, the new mayor has already committed that declaring child poverty and youth unemployment must be key issues for the city.
All of Toronto’s progressive councillors were re-elected by solid margins, including Paula Fletcher who comes from Local 112, Bombardier, and Marie Augimeri, who represents the ward where the Bombardier plant is located, and who has been a strong supporter and friend of Unifor for many years.

After difficult years, Toronto has a chance again to be an inclusive city where everyone counts, but we should not miss the warning signs that were evident in these elections, the racism and sexism that were directed towards Olivia Chow, the continuing appeal of the Fords to a significant section of marginalized and racialized communities, and the lowest turnout ever in Ontario municipal elections for the first time dropping below 50 percent.

One positive message to take away is that those municipalities where citizens were voting for change, like Toronto and London, voter turnout increased. And, that is what we need, politics that gives people hope, courage and motivation to make change.

Those are the issues we talked about with NDP leader, Andrea Horwath, earlier this month, before last weekend’s Ontario NDP Convention. Myself, Jerry, Jenny Ahn and Rolly Kiehne had a frank but necessary discussion with her.

As you know, Andrea was supported by a margin of 77 percent to remain leader of the NDP. But, this didn’t happen without her commitment to do a better job by reaching out to unions, and to uphold the social democratic values of the NDP, something that didn’t happen at all in the months leading up to the last election.

The Ontario NDP said that they have learned from that experience, and that they want to rebuild our trust. For our part, Unifor worked hard to re-elect incumbent NDP’s in the last election, and we want to work with the party and take every opportunity we can to enhance the rights and living standards of Ontario workers.

But, we should have no regrets about our role in the Ontario election. By defeating Harper and supporting Premier Wynne’s progressive budget, we are in a much better place today. That budget included an investment fund, wage increases for low-income personal support workers and childcare workers.

And, in addition, there was a commitment to an Ontario Pension Plan, modelled on the CPP. The province has now adopted Bill 18, which indexes minimum wage, expands protections for precarious workers, and makes primary employers partly responsible for the conduct of temp agencies.

The latest job numbers show that for the first time in a long time, Ontario actually leads the way in job creation; 100,000 more jobs last year. Not just a lower employment rate, but an increase in the employment rate. More people working overall. And, with the lower dollar, there may be better news coming for forestry and manufacturing.

But, in spite of all these brighter signs, we continue to face austerity in Ontario. We have lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs in this province and have dug ourselves a deep hole. Even after the recent job creation, unemployment is 6.5 percent, and 40 percent of Southern Ontario workers don’t have stable, full-time work.

In the face of this, Ontario continues to make deficit reduction a primary goal in the 2014/2015 program spending. Program spending will be 5 percent less than it would have been, had it kept up with inflation and population growth. And, that is really a loss of $6 billion to the Ontario economy.

This continuing austerity is a contradiction to the progressive vision that Ontario voted for in June. The Deputy Premier and former Minister of Health, Deb Matthews, has two portfolios: the Minister responsible for poverty reduction, and the President of the Treasury Board.

I would suggest that those two titles may turn out to be fundamentally at odds with each other. Let me give you an example. The Liberals have a plan to move hospital services into private clinics. While it sounds harmless, we need to consider the repercussions.

First and foremost, we have to remember when a service is moved from a hospital, it is no longer covered under the protection of the Canada Health Act. That almost always translates to user fees, and those who have the most will be at the front of the line.
While no one loves a trip to the hospital, the reality is a trip to the clinic could cost you more. Recent news stories have exposed clinic practices that include not informing patients of outbreaks, resulting in debilitating disease, faulty sterilization of equipment, and a 13 percent rate of incomplete colonoscopies.

And, finally, you can be assured that the staff that care for you at a clinic make far less than they would at a public hospital. By far, the easiest way to create savings is to do it on the wages and benefits of workers.

A pension plan at a private clinic is unheard of. Public hospitals, community hospitals, are the centrepiece of our healthcare system. They care for us based on need. This is a value fundamental to Canadians. Moving hospital services to clinics puts that at risk.

I would also like to offer my thanks and appreciation to those of you who came to the Unifor healthcare rallies in London, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay on November 6th. About 15,000 healthcare members in Unifor haven’t seen their wages increase since 2011.

Our healthcare workers were overwhelmed to see so many sectors of our union and so many of our retirees standing in solidarity with them against austerity. Today, we continue this fight, and we’re asking our delegates, guests, observers and staff to participate in a rally at Queen’s Park with our partners from the Ontario Health Coalition. At lunchtime, we’ll march together to join with thousands of allies who believe in protecting public healthcare.

And, I do want to take a moment. I know she is in the room. Candace Rennick, Secretary-Treasurer of CUPE is here. If we could welcome Candace? They also have an event at the hotel, and Candace has graciously offered. We will be marching together. We have marshals arranged and the streets blocked up.

But, they do have their bus that will start making trips at 11:30. So, if there is anybody that has mobility issues, they’re more than welcome to join the CUPE buses today. So, thank you very much for that, Candace.

So, let’s put on our coats and marching shoes and send a message to the Ontario government together. We intend to keep up the fight against austerity and to keep pressing Premier Wynne to deliver on her promise of a progressive Ontario.

A very important window towards the progress we want may now be opening with the possibility of a labour law reform process, commencing in the coming months. The Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn, has been given a public mandate from the Premier to openly engage in considerations that support labour and employment laws and protect workers, to consider reforms that reflect the realities of the modern economy, including non-standard or, should we say, precarious employment and the reduction in the prevalence of employers’ benefits and training.

The Premier also instructed the Minister of Labour to protect vulnerable workers, develop a wage-gap strategy, promote occupational health and safety, support mental health in the workplace and uphold and respect collective bargaining. That is quite an agenda and we must be very focused to make sure it results in real change that makes a difference.

Bill 18 was a positive step for Ontario workers, but it could have and should have been better. Deena Ladd of the Ontario Workers Action Centre -- the Toronto Workers Action Centre, will be with us later today to speak to us and explain why and how it should have been better.

And, we would like to see action from the government to pass Bill 2 that would see first responders, like our members who work in emergency medical services, covered for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

It’s time now for the Ontario government to deliver a bold and progressive labour law reform. The last time we had an attempt at an overhaul of our Labour Relations Act was 20 years ago, during the Rae government. And, that was late in the mandate of that government. And, the progressive reforms were soon undone, mostly by the Harris Conservatives.

We need to think about the big picture, because if trade union density continues to decline, there will always be another Hudak ready to crawl out from under a rock and exploit that weakness. If hundreds of thousands of Ontario workers continue to be excluded from the benefits of free collective bargaining, there will be less public support for unions.
So, it’s time to modernize labour rights in Ontario, not by further eliminating those rights, like Hudak wanted, but to strengthen collective bargaining rights and the rights of all workers, especially young workers. When we talk about jobs, it’s not just about the number of jobs. It’s about the quality of work.

At our April council, Alistair Woods, Chair of the Ontario Federation of Students, said this to us,

“I have a lot of friends who have degrees. They are very talented, creative, imaginative people. But, they are in jobs that are in retail. They’re baristas, wait staff. They’re bartenders. And, many of them have said, ‘You know what? There is dignity in this work. And, I wouldn’t mind if this job paid me well, if I had security, if I could make a living out of it and support a family’.”

Alistair’s comments are bang-on and we owe this generation of millennials more.

The Toronto Star reported last week that the average age of a first-time home buyer in the GTA is 37. I was stunned. How many people in this room, besides me, purchased a home before we were 30? Anybody?

This was a reality, and this is such a different reality for kids today. It is a shocking reality for young people, young workers. Imagine your mortgage starting at 37 years of age. When do you raise a family? When do you plan for your retirement?

Unifor’s Good Jobs Summit last month brought together students, employers, government and social partners and labour partners to begin the discussion. Van Jones gave us some important advice. “What we’re against has come to define us,” Jones said, of the challenges facing progressive forces. “We must do a better job of articulating what we’re for. That’s how we lead.”

So, I look forward to your debate on our priorities for labour law reform in Ontario, when Recommendation No. 4 hits the floor this afternoon. This recommendation is also calling on you to send me examples from your experiences of how workers’ rights, job security and safety and fairness are not being achieved, because of Ontario’s economic realities and labour legislation.

For those of you who attended our Canada Council, you heard a report on our Rights at Work campaign. And if, by chance, you have not been part of that discussion on this crucial campaign for our union, I am hoping you’re listening now.

Early in 2014, Jerry and Peter, along with the regional directors and support from our Research and Communications Department, toured major cities across the country, eleven of them in Ontario. These meetings had a few goals: first, to talk to our leadership in every part of the country; to talk about our new union and introduce a plan to speak to all 305,000 members about the importance of our rights at work.

In the following months, we brought in some coordinators to follow up with every local union about outreach. We produced thousands of these little cards, with a screen cleaner and our logo, and an URL that would lead you to our Rights at Work website.

Local unions were asked to provide membership lists. We would ship you the material, including a sheet for feedback from every member, because when we formed our new union 15 months ago, one of our goals was to make sure our members knew what we were doing. And, that has not always been the case.

Just a few months ago, I was leaving a picket line -- I believe it was Emerald -- that I was walking down a side street with my Unifor flag. And, somebody stopped me.

They pulled up beside me and they said, “Hey, what is going on? What is that strike about?” And, I told him what it was about. And, he said, “What union is that?” And, I said, “It’s Unifor.” And, he said, “Hey, I’m in a union, too, a really good one. I’m in CAW.” So, we’re lacking a little bit in getting the message across.

So, I am asking today, if you haven’t complete the Rights at Work campaign, please do it now. If you need material or advice, we’ll provide it to you. Our union will be stronger when every Unifor member knows what we stand for and knows what they are a part of.

Sisters and brothers, I want to speak to you now about what we stand for in the labour movement. Eight months into our new union this past May, our union came together at the Canadian Labour Congress. With the federal election on the horizon and a stalled labour movement
across the country, we knew something had to change.

Our good friend and proud Unifor member, Hassan Yussuff -- I don’t know if he is in the room, but he will be with us at some point today -- ran for the president of the CLC, with the full backing of our National Executive Board.

Now, this wasn’t about personalities or having a Unifor member as president. It was about trade union solidarity and militancy. It was about halting the decline and our influence. It was about social unionism and standing with our social partners. It was about activism and leadership by example from those who we elect.

Those of you who were there will remember the intense elation at overcoming what should have been insurmountable odds. The work that was done on the ground during the campaign by all of you was instrumental, a victory of a 41-vote margin that was claimed by so many of us, every busload that came from as far away as Windsor, the Paper Sector Negotiating Committee who stalled their bargaining a couple of days extra so that they could stay in Montreal and vote, and the convoy of taxis that drove in from Ottawa. The truth is we all won.

Hassan and his team of Barb Byers, Marie Clark Walker and Donald Lafleur are committed to reinvigorating the Canadian Labour Movement and electing a progressive federal government in 2015. But, the debate in our movement over the direction of the Canadian Labour Congress, our federations and Labour Councils, didn’t end with that election.

In Ontario, there has been continuing divisions within the Ontario Federation of Labour, and some affiliates have carried on this fight by withholding their per capita payments and weakening the OFL. No one can deny that there has been a bit of controversy at the OFL in recent years. There has been some discord among the top officers and maybe some cash-flow issues.

But, at the end of the day, our union supported Sid Ryan for President of the OFL a year ago, because as Jerry said, “We wanted somebody at the head of our provincial labour organization with a pulse”, and no one could ever accuse Sid Ryan of not having a pulse.

We saw that at the CLC convention where he angered some by his strong support for Hassan Yussuff. We saw it again with the coordinated campaign led by the OFL during the election. We saw a successful OFL cross-country province tour with hundreds of activists in every single location. We saw Hudak trending on social media, and labour affiliates meeting weekly to review polling and discuss strategy. And, some did not like Sid Ryan’s leadership on that either.

But, despite the internal politics, the OFL has been effective. But, any central labour body requires the support of affiliates to succeed. In Ontario, only about two-thirds of Unifor members are affiliated to the OFL. And, that is why Recommendation No. 3 before you this weekend asks local unions who are not affiliated to the OFL to do so now, and those who may be partially affiliated to increase those numbers.

If Unifor steps up now, we can stabilize the OFL and make sure it does not retreat into obscurity at a time when we need a strong vocal and activist voice for Ontario workers.

Sisters and brothers, in two weeks, we will mark the 25th anniversary of the murder of 14 women in École Polytechnique. It is a fitting tribute to their memory that this year, women all over the world decided to speak out.

On October 31st, Toronto Star columnist and Unifor member, Antonia Zerbisias, tweeted in support of Lucy DeCoutere, one of the nine women who accused former CBC host, Jian Ghomeshi, of sexual violence. She tweeted, “I believe Lucy. I believe women. And, yes, I have been raped more than once and never reported it.”

It wasn’t long before “rape never reported” became a movement, a movement of women and men, too, tweeting their stories and their shame. Let me read some of them to you.

“I had already lost my childhood, my virginity and my self-worth. I was afraid and I didn’t want to lose my virginity and my self-worth. I was afraid and I didn’t want to lose any more.”

“It was 1969 when if you found you were the only girl in the room and no parents were home, it was your fault.”

This is harder than I thought.
“Stop crying. You’re my wife. I own you. You can’t rape what is yours.”

“Hard to admit this hash tag relates to me. Was so close to getting away. Still see my hand on the door knob sometimes.”

“He was my grandfather. I was three to nine years old. Cops wanted to know why I waited so long to report it.”

“Black women rarely report rape, because this nation has been taught that we are unrapeable.”

“He pushed me on the couch and said, ‘You can’t say no. You are my girlfriend.’ I cried all that night, many after.”

“I was attacked and reported it. My attacker went to prison.”

“I know what it takes to speak out and I salute you.”

“Reading the ‘Been raped, never reported’ hash tag is hard reading. Makes me slightly ashamed to be human and much more ashamed to be male.

“If all the women who have been raped stepped out of the shame and shared, we would make the stigma go away.”

“If you’re too nervous to post ‘Been raped, never report’, yes, it’s terrifying, but equally liberating and powerful. Set the shame free.”

“This is one of the most powerful hash tags I have ever read, ‘Been raped, never reported’. Please read and so all you can to prevent this in the future.”

“If this hash tag has you wondering what you can do to help, it’s simple. You can stop saying, ‘She asked for it’.”

And, finally, “To anyone sharing a story, I’m in awe of your bravery. You each deserved better. You each deserved better.”

I couldn’t agree more, sisters and brothers. These are just a handful of the millions of tweets posted from Canada and around the world, and this is an example of how the power of one can affect so many.

And, then there is the story of Rinelle Harper, a 16-year-old Aboriginal young woman who last week was sexually assaulted, beaten and left for dead in the freezing water of the Assiniboine River. Rinelle survived, perhaps to remind us how much we still need to do to stop the violence and vulnerability of Aboriginal women.

This is our call of action to force our federal government to call an inquiry. And, we can all be incredibly proud of our president, Jerry Dias, who with his son walked for the fourth year in Hope in High Heels. To date, they have raised $185,000.00 to help women in difficult violent situations.

Tomorrow, we hear from Alexa Conradi, President of the Quebec Women’s Federation, and spokeswoman for the World March of Women in Quebec in 2015. And, we will then have an opportunity to discuss issues of violence against women, and issues around the violence against Aboriginal women and girls when we debate Recommendation No. 5.

And, delegates, tomorrow you are also in for a treat, because you have an early Christmas present. And, you will get to hear from the author of this best-selling new book. I think everybody has got their copy. It’s a crime novel, a mystery, a history, a biography and a call to arms.

Michael Harris’ book, Party of One, should be mandatory reading for all Canadians. It’s about how Stephen Harper has used and abused his power to manipulate and intimidate his opponents, and when necessary, to devastate our democratic institutions in order to carry out his extreme agenda.

Get your reading done over Christmas, organize a book club and discuss the issues, because we could be in a federal election before the winter is over, and at the very latest, we will be voting next year on October 19th.

There are 106 federal ridings in Ontario. That means there’s 106 opportunities for us in this room to stop Harper.
Let’s remember what happened in 2011 and how Harper did this. He increased his popular vote from the previous election by only 2 percent, but went from a minority to a majority. How did he do it? By being strategic, by using wedge politics and, winning 23 new seats. Twenty-two of those new seats to make that majority were in Ontario. Many of these Conservative wins were heartbreakingly narrow. And, the Conservatives love splitting the vote. They have now taken that principle to a new level, splitting family incomes in order to benefit wealthy families that tend to support the Conservatives.

So, let’s take a look at the income-splitting plan. On a very simple level, this is what it looks like. A single parent earning $100,000.00 a year will receive nothing. A two-parent family who earns $50,000.00 a year each for a total of $100,000.00 will still get nothing. But, a traditional two-parent family where one, normally the woman, stays home will get an extra $2,000.00. Now, this plan does actually nothing to increase this woman’s autonomy in that relationship. She doesn’t get the $2,000.00. But, the plan does reinforce dominance of men in relationships. And, it is certainly a step towards a flat tax system that the wealthy would prefer. Some families will benefit. The other 87 percent of families will not.

To quote my good friend, Lana Payne, apparently in Harper land, 87 percent of Canadian families with kids under 18 just aren’t hard-working enough, nor does that move us any closer to our commitment made in Parliament 25 years ago, endorsed by all parties, to eliminate child poverty by the year, 2000. Shamefully, 546,000 Canadian children live in poverty, and under this plan they’ll stay there. With a total price tag of $26 billion, rich traditional families will do well and inequality will prosper.

And, there really is so much more that could be done with this tax surplus; properly fund and force Harper to expand the Health Accord. Every Canadian benefits from healthcare based on need, not greed. And, all Canadians take immense pride in the fact that judge or janitor you’re equally accessed to care that you need.

A National Childcare Program I don’t need to convince anyone in this room how important our children are every single one of them.

Support and enhance CPP for the 12 million workers in Canada with no workplace pension, so that people can retire with dignity, not poverty. Two-thirds of the work force 12 million working Canadians, don’t have workplace pensions. We need to return the Old Age Security to the age of 65.

And, I would remind the delegates in this room to visit our Pension table outside, because there’s some really important information. Our Pension and Benefits Department works very hard with the CLC campaign, and we need to make this an election issue.

Harper could also reopen the Veterans Offices that have been closed across the country, and provide them with the services and the respect that they deserve.

Harper could also call an inquiry into the more than 1,100 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

Our priority is to defeat Harper. But, we’re not just against Harper. We are for all of this and so much more. We can’t say when an election will be called, late winter, spring or fall. Harper holds those cards, but we intend to be ready.

Resolution No. 2 on our election plan for Ontario will be debated after a presentation tomorrow from our director of Member Mobilization and Political Action, Rolly Kiehne. He will lay out an organizational plan, including priority ridings, workshops, working groups and more. So, please, let’s be ready to take back our country.

We also need to talk about trade deals. At our Canada Council in September, we ran out of time and didn’t get to the discussion on trade. It was decided that since this discussion is critical to Ontario’s economy that we should have it here. So, if you work in transportation, resources, healthcare, manufacturing or communications, trade deals will affect you directly.

Since 2006, Harper has doubled the number of trade agreements from five to ten, with another 14 in the works. Every one of these agreements are designed to protect the rights of private investors, to the detriment of citizens. They threaten democratic decision-making. They have been used to overturn environmental conservation, undermine workers’ rights, and restrict the role of
government to set rules and public interest.

Free trade is sold to Canadians as a necessary tool for economic growth and prosperity. But, for many Canadians, it has been just the opposite. Mineral exports, oil and gas have increased by 176 percent since 2002. Forestry, fish and agriculture more than 100 percent. But, at the same time high-value-added manufactured goods has declined by 4 percent.

Canada has developed close trading ties with other nations with or without the aid of free trade agreements. Trade does not require us to put the fate of our economic prosperity in the unelected World Trade Organization.

It is time for Unifor to act. There is a booklet for you today, Imagining a Fair Trade Future. And, tomorrow, we will have a presentation by Angelo Di Caro from our Research Department. And, a debate will follow that outlines what we can do to enact principles for fair trade.

You will also have on your table today, the staff reports. Ontario has over 300 local unions and more than 1,000 distinct bargaining units. In this book, you will find a report from staff representatives serving each assignment. And, also included is a report from the department directors and the sector directors.

I want to remind the delegates here that everything in the staff book is up for discussion. You will have opportunities throughout this council to speak to any one of these reports, including my comments to you today.

Our staff work incredibly hard, and the reports before you are really just a summary of what they do for the union. And, supporting our sectors takes incredible dedication.

We have fabulous support staff in our union, and we have great area directors, department directors, sector directors and, the six assistants to Jerry and Peter. They make an incredible team for our union that enhances the work that you all do.

So, please join me. Take a moment to show the staff some love and appreciation for the work that they do. I rely on the staff reports as much as you do. I could never cover all the detail they provide in my report.

But, I do want to mention a few highlights, since we have met last. Currently, we are very fortunate. We don’t have any ongoing strikes in the province, but we have settled four this year with incredible results.

On May 5th, Unifor Local 252 members at Nestle went on strike, because of employer demands that the defined benefit pension plan be reduced for 25 percent of the current employees and all new hires. After a week, they returned with the defined benefit plan intact, wage increases and the conversion of 44 temp jobs to permanent positions. And, we can still enjoy Kit Kats and Aero bars, because that is what they make, so a great product.

Emerald Waste, 38 members of Local 252, also went on strike, July 3rd. They were resisting concessions to benefit and pensions that after they were sold to U-Pak, an employer that had only non-unionized workers, was insisting upon. Their strike settled in September with absolutely no concessions.

In Thunder Bay, Bombardier workers, members of Local 1075 -- and I have seen their President here, Dom Pasqualino, today -- struck on July 14th for nearly 9 weeks to resist employer’s demands for concession. After a forced vote that was resoundingly rejected by the membership, they returned to work with a pension plan in place for the next generation. Very proud of 1075.

I feel the pride every time I get on a subway. In fact, sometimes I tell perfect strangers where they’re built. In Hannon, Ontario, 30 members of Local 504, President Dave Reston went on strike September 29th. The strike was resolved on October 16th with an agreement that significantly addressed an unfair wage structure.

Unifor’s first major bargaining in any sector was completed this last May in the forestry sector, as we saw in the video, with an agreement for 2,000 members in Ontario and Quebec at Resolute.

Along with significant economic increases, the agreement negotiated their first-time PEL or Paid Education Leave. In fact, according to our Education Department, the first time PEL has been negotiated in more than 50 collective agreements this year.

Courses are held in Port Elgin, but they’ll be travelling even to remote areas, to
ensure that members can have education as close to their home as possible. There is an Education table outside, so please ask them if you have any questions whatsoever.

We have had a bit of a recent setback in the forestry sector, a lost opportunity to open a closed mill in Fort Frances that would have created 200 direct jobs and 800 indirect jobs.

I know firsthand the experience of a town that loses a mill. I may live in Toronto, but I am from Nipigon. And, my dad was a papermaker who worked in Red Rock at the mill 12 miles away.

In addition to the hundreds of jobs lost in Red Rock, Nipigon saw the closure of its sawmill where, among other things, they proudly made shafts for hockey sticks. The hospital where I worked is now the largest employer.

These towns, like so many others, struggle to redefine themselves. And, I can only imagine the disappointment of the entire Fort Frances community at this news. But, that fight is not over yet. The trees just keep on going and forestry is the ultimate renewable industry. We just need a plan.

Windsor has also suffered a tremendous blow when they found out recently that the Ford Engine Plant will not be getting the expansion and the 1,000 jobs that go with it. Having lived in Windsor for 8 years, I know personally what that would have meant to that city, too. But, both of these instances reinforce the need for a national industry plan for auto and for resources and for all manufacturing. We can and should make better choices.

And, we have our successes, too, like Johnson Controls. This Whitby plant was slated for closure until our President, Jerry Dias, made some radical statements about what our union might do if it closed at the UAW Convention last spring.

This forced some discussions with our union, our Local 222, and General Motors. And, those members recently overwhelmingly ratified a 3-year collective agreement that will keep 300 workers in the jobs for three more years.

I talked earlier about our healthcare sector. But, other service industries, like retail and hospitality, are incredibly frustrated. Like many low-wage workers around the globe, frustration is mounting. And, these employers make an incredible profit, yet refuse in most cases to even offer a living wage to their workers.

Next Friday, November 28th, the U.S. will be thrown into the shopping frenzy known as Black Friday. Workers will risk life and limb as shoppers fight for the best deals. Many of these workers are going to resist. We see Walmart workers, fast-food workers, saying, “Enough is enough.” We need to support them.

But, more importantly, we need to organize them. In any case, we can’t leave the important job of organizing up to the few organizers on staff. Each and every one of us needs to be an organizer. We believe in the union and have the ability, like no one else, to reach out to our friends and family who desperately need power in their workplace.

Your Executive Board of the Ontario Regional Council has been busy since we have last met. We have had lots of phone calls, including weekly calls during the Ontario election. We met last month in person to talk about priorities for this council, and we met, again, this week.

Yesterday, we sat down with all of our committees for a good discussion on roles and responsibilities. And, you will be very pleased to know that our Financial Secretary, Tullio Di Ponti, will be able to deliver a full written one-year financial statement this weekend.

You will also see a recommendation on an annual donation to food banks and women’s shelters across the province. I would like to just explain a bit. This was a tradition of one of our former unions, a shared donation made from our Social Justice Fund and the CAW Council Fund.

Now, the Social Justice Fund and the Humanity Fund are just in the process of merging. But, you will notice from our financial statements, we as a council did receive a significant start-up fund from the former CAW Council.

So, the National Union has asked all of the regional councils if we would continue this cost-shared donation. And, I think what we have been given from the CAW Councils, it is certainly a reasonable request. The amount this year for our share would be $29,000.00 for women’s shelters and $32,500.00 for food banks. And, again, this would be an ongoing donation that we would do,
subject to the approval of your Executive Board.

We have had four resolutions submitted to this council, which is fantastic, because it shows there is real interest in making things happen in our region. I will leave the report to the Resolutions Committee.

But, I do want to mention a resolution concerning the School Bus campaign. These workers really do an amazing job of transporting our kids safely. I attended at Labour Council here in Toronto last month, a meeting with them, and all I could think about was my long-time bus driver, Mrs. Dampier, and the overwhelming urge I had to write her a letter of apology.

But, the reality is their job is tougher than ever now and their compensation is less than ever. You will hear more tomorrow when this resolution hits the floor. But, I think it’s important that you know they requested for that resolution to go on the floor tomorrow, so more Unifor bus drivers, school-bus drivers, can join us as observers to participate in and listen to the debate. So, this was easily a request we could do.

We have elections tomorrow. We have two vacancies on the Ontario Regional Executive Board. Dino went through those earlier. And, we also have a vacancy on the Political Action Committee. For the three vacancies, we are asking for your support for the Unity team, and a Unity caucus will be held today on adjournment in this room.

Let me explain again why we have a Unity team and a caucus. Our National Constitution requires Regional Councils and all elected boards to reflect the diversity of our union. That means gender. It means race. It even means geography and sector. And, though it would be impossible to represent every sector in Ontario on our board, we want to make sure that it is not dominated by anyone.

But, to really make us build one union, we must also consider where we come from. Of our 158,000 members in Ontario, 80 percent were from former CAW. But, we certainly don’t see this as a well-functioning union, using that mix.

So, together with the leadership, we consider who might help us find the right balance, who has expressed an interest. This is done with the endorsement of the Ontario Regional Council Executive Board and the National Executive Board.

Then, we ask you, the delegates, alternate staff and guests to join us in the Unity caucus in support of these individuals. As is always the case, and I think it’s a good thing, there is always way more qualified candidates than there are positions.

For this Unity caucus, we are asking for your support for two Executive Board members, Tim McKinnon, Chair of the GM St. Catharines Local 199 and Vice-Chair of the GM Bargaining Committee for GM; Ken Cole is from the paper industry and President of amalgamated Local 333; and for the Political Action Committee, we are asking for your support for Jodi Nesbitt, Chair of Green Shield Canada, and Recording Secretary of Local 240 in Windsor.

You are all invited to the Unity caucus that will take place upon adjournment today in this room, chaired by our National Secretary-Treasurer, Peter Kennedy. Attendance is by no means mandatory, but you are all welcome.

Any elected delegate is free to run for election tomorrow. Again, I can’t say it enough. There are many of you in this room who would make excellent contributions to our organization. Every activist is a source of strength for our union, every argument and every point of view. Every one of you is a leader. That is why you are here.

So, this is your council. I know you have had to listen to me for what probably seems like an excessively long period of time. But, now, I look forward to listening to you. Remember to tweet. Our hash tag is #UniforORC.

And, finally, I do want to say what a pleasure it has been for me working with you for this first year of Unifor. And, I want to thank you for your support, and thank you especially for all you do each and every day for your union, for your members and your communities. Solidarity, sisters and brothers.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks very much to Katha Fortier for her report. And, again, you will be able to get up and speak throughout the course of the next two days on any of the points that she raised.
I would like to get to the next point on the agenda, which is bringing up the Resolutions Committee who is made up between Jim Reid, Candace Lavalley and Anne-Marie MacInnis. And, again, Anne-Marie is not here today, but I will give the mic to Jim Reid who is the Chair of that Committee.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

JIM REID: Thanks, Dino. Now, we are at the really exciting part of the agenda, so I will try to liven this up. And, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the locals that did put forward resolutions.

And, I will start with Resolution No. 1 that was submitted by Local 554. And, the Committee recommends concurrence with the resolution as amended.

RESOLUTION NO. 1: UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - DECEMBER 3RD

W HEREA S Unifor recognizes that union members and members of their families can be touched by a wide range of visible and invisible disabilities, including but not limited to; physical, mental health, cognitive, vision, hearing, learning, medical, psychiatric, speech and language disabilities; and

W HEREA S Disabilities are statistically estimated to affect 1 in 5 people in Canada and many of these people are facing higher rates of mortality, addiction or substance dependency, unemployment, isolation, harassment and other barriers to being full and effective participants in our workplaces; and

W HEREA S Disabilities affect workers and people in every walk of life; Unifor recognizes that every person should be valued as a participating member of society; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Commit to support and recognize United Nations (UN) International Day of Persons with Disabilities that occurs on December 3, 2014 and aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

There is a “FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED” that may not show up on the sheets on your table that was missed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ontario Regional Council Persons with Disabilities Committee prepare a statement for distribution to local unions to mark December 3rd.

And, again, the Committee moves concurrence.

RESOLUTION NO. 2 EXECUTIVE RESOLUTIONS

BROTHER JIM REID: The second resolution, submitted by Local 8833, and the Committee recommends non-concurrence with this.

W HEREA S Unifor leads by example; and

W HEREA S Every voice counts; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED no longer use Executive Recommendations, but only Executive Resolutions to be voted on at the conference as all resolutions are.

And, again, the Committee recommends non-concurrence. I’ll turn it over to Candace.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Resolution No. 3, Locals 4268 and 4266. The Committee recommends concurrence with amended resolution.

DINO CHIODO: No, no, no.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Oh, that’s right. Sorry. Pay equity?

DINO CHIODO: Pay equity, yes.

RESOLUTION NO. 4 LOCALS 200 and 240

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Okay. Resolution No. 4. Sorry about that. Locals 200
and 240. Committee recommends concurrence with amended resolution. Pay equity.

WHEREAS Pay equity has been recognized as a fundamental human right for many decades at the international level. In 1951, the United Nation’s International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted Convention No. 100, the Convention Concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value; and

WHEREAS In 1972, as part of the response to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Canada ratified the ILO’s Convention No. 100; and

WHEREAS In 1987, the Ontario government passed the Pay Equity Act. The Act describes the minimum requirements for ensuring that an employer’s compensation practices provide pay equity for all employees in female job classes; and

WHEREAS 4.(1) The purpose of this Act is to redress systemic gender discrimination in compensation for work performed by employees in female job classes; and

WHEREAS Regardless of these measures, the wage gap between men and women in Canada has increased by 5 percent and now sits at a 34 percent differential; and

WHEREAS As a union, we negotiate representation on all areas of worker’s rights, including but not limited to WSIB and Health and Safety; and

WHEREAS It is the moral obligation of trade unions to advance the rights of all workers and to end this form of discrimination; and

WHEREAS Women’s economic independence aids women in leaving a violent relationship; and

WHEREAS Women should be joining unions in larger numbers than presently; and

WHEREAS Unifor has developed Education programs for workers and representation on negotiating pay equity; and

WHEREAS Where pay equity has been achieved, we must ensure the gap does not increase due to our failure to maintain; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That Unifor local unions make compliance with Pay Equity law a priority. That a complete and thorough analysis of all workplaces shall be undertaken by the union and that Unifor monitor pay equity compliance and maintenance in our bargaining units and workplaces, through research, local union and staff reports to the ORC on an ongoing basis. Where a workplace is not in compliance, the local union with the assistance of the National should file a complaint; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That Unifor publicize its pay equity successes in organizing and campaign materials where appropriate to use as a tool to encourage women to join our union; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That appropriate Unifor Industry Councils be provided educational material on their legal and social obligation of local unions to complete pay equity and that Unifor Local Unions commit to educating workplace leadership on pay equity through the PEL course; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED That the ORC Executive work in conjunction with the local, national union and appropriate departments to ensure pay equity is used as a tool for rooting out discriminatory pay structures on an ongoing basis.

Again, the Committee recommends concurrence with amended resolution.

DINO CHIODO: So, in saying that, we have read the four resolutions out. It has been notified with regards to concurrence and non-concurrence. So, what we are going to do now is leave that with you, so you can read them over. We will determine when we can fit it into the schedule.
But, right now for 11:00, I want to call up Maggie Harbert. And, she can introduce Sid Ryan as the next guest speaker to the Ontario Regional Council.

MAGGIE HARBERT: Good morning, sisters and brothers. It is my great pleasure to introduce our next speaker. Born in Dublin, Republic of Ireland, he told me does know Bono of U2.

Sid Ryan is in his second term as President of the Ontario Federation of Labour. The OFL is Canada’s largest provincial labour federation. There, he represents 54 unions and over 1 million workers.

Prior to that, Sid headed up CUPE Ontario for 17 years and became one of labour movement’s most recognized voices, a voice you don’t forget as he speaks up for public healthcare, education and public services.

His firebrand militancy and unwavering principles have earned him an international reputation as a champion of equity, social justice and human rights, all causes that are near and dear to all our hearts.

Since becoming President of the OFL, Sid has reinvigorated a progressive fighting spirit in the labour movement and mobilized incredible strike support for thousands of workers throughout the province. He has also built new and strong ties with over 90 community groups, environmentalists, ethnic and faith-based organizations, and students, all under the banner of Ontario Common Front.

Brothers and sisters, please welcome Brother Sid Ryan.

ADDRESS: SID RYAN, OFL PRESIDENT

SID RYAN: Well, good morning, sisters and brothers. And, Maggie, thank you very much for that warm introduction. Actually, I used to go watch Bono play in a flea market in Dublin, long before he became the superstar he is today.

Brothers and sisters, let me just first off -- because I never had, really, an opportunity to commend the two unions, CEP and CAW, for coming together and putting together this magnificent union that has actually electrified the labour movement. It has put a new sense of energy and purpose into the labour movement.

So, let me commend both the leadership of those previous unions for coming together and having this vision, and for the membership in voting for it and putting your faith in the possibilities of energizing Canada’s labour movement. So, kudos to the new Unifor and all those folks who put the energy into -- you know, giving us this opportunity.

And, I want to commend and congratulate Peter Kennedy and Jerry Dias that I have known for many, many years and, now in the leadership of your movement.

And, how could I not thank Katha Fortier, your new regional director? Katha, thank you very much for your leadership on the OFL Executive Board. And, I just listened to your speech here today, and everything you have laid out, in fact, is almost like a manifesto for the Ontario labour movement. I cannot say I could disagree with any component of what Katha talked about in terms of globalization.

And, I would be remiss if I didn’t recognize Jenny Ahn. I did see Jenny Ahn over here. Jenny sits on the OFL Executive Board as well. And, as you know, she is an EA to the National President, Jerry.

Also, you have got Dino. Dino Chiodo is the Chair of your Regional Council. Candace Lavalley is the President.

And, I don’t know the joke about Tullio, by the way, but I do know he is somebody who came in with a little hard time about finance. And, who knows -- you know, we need a lot of advice in finance. So, Tullio, let’s hope that you can share some of this advice this afternoon.

So, anyways, sisters and brothers, I just want to get into where we’re at in the Ontario labour movement. And, I mean, I guess I would have to start with what we just accomplished in this last provincial election.

And, I want to set the table a little bit for you, because all of you who were at the OFL Convention will remember that we actually got a unanimous mandate from the membership at that convention, the delegates to that convention, to basically say we want the Ontario Federation of
Labour to work with the Canadian Labour Congress, to work with all of the affiliates, to work with the labour councils, and go out there, basically, and mobilize the membership, and let them know exactly what Tim Hudak has in store for the labour movement, if he ever becomes the Premier of this province. And, you know, we weren’t misleading the membership when we went out there. We actually had a White Paper that he had introduced into -- well, he released it publicly, and introduced a private member’s bill, based on his White Paper. And, inside of that White Paper, he basically told us what he was going to do.

So, this was not conjecture. This was not people fabricating what he might do to us if he gets elected. He told us what he was going to do, chapter and verse. And, he telegraphed to us that he had been speaking to the Tea Party in Wisconsin and other parts of the United States to see how they went about implementing their anti-worker, anti-union agenda. So, we took this very seriously. We were not messing around when we said, “If this guy gets elected, we are going to see the destruction of the labour movement in this province, everything from our collective bargaining rights to negotiating health and safety issues at the bargaining table.” Pensions would be a thing of the past. Certainly, defined benefit pension plans would be a thing of the past.

But, he also said he is going to go after the Rand Formula. Now, he couched that he went to the Board of Trade just before the election, because he knew it wasn’t a winner with the public, but he still had other plans to essentially undermine the Rand Formula. And, I remind the autoworkers that are in here in this room that it was 70 years ago down in Windsor, Ontario that the Ford workers actually went out on strike and they were beaten up on a picket line for months on end, trying to fight for the ability for workers to be able to join a union and be able to raise their standards of living. And, they got a judge named Rand who essentially came in with the Rand Formula, which basically says, “You cannot have freeloaders in the workplace not in the labour movement. If you happen to be part of the labour movement, you need to be able to pay for the benefits that that union negotiates in the workplace.” It’s a very simple formula. It makes perfect sense. But, we had Hudak telling us that this was a barrier to grow the economy, that unions are a scourge on society and that he was going to change all of this. And, actually, he tried to convince people that we would grow jobs as a consequence of killing the labour movement. And, those of you from Local 27 in London will know full well what I am talking about, because when Caterpillar came in and said to those workers, “Cut your wages in half by 50 percent, and your benefits,” they rightfully gave the corporation the finger and they said, “We’re going out on strike.” And, they went out on picket lines to fight for their rights, and for the rights of future generations of workers as well who would be asked to work for $15.00 an hour, instead of the $30.00 an hour that they were earning.

And, Hudak actually came out and said, “This is what is wrong with the labour movement. These are the jobs of the future. Rather than fighting jobs going to Indiana, they should be saying, ‘Yes, we’re willing to moderate our demands at the bargaining table and cut our benefits in half and cut our wages in half, in order to keep jobs here.’” And, I am so delighted that the CAW 27 at the time turned around and said, “To heck with you. We’re not going to go down that road. We will never go down that road.” And, thank you very much, sisters and brothers, for drawing that line in the sand.

But, that is what Hudak had in store for us. This is the economy. This is the division he saw for this province. And, as a labour movement, we have an obligation as a labour movement to go out and mobilize our membership and talk to people and talk to other unions, and make certain that they were doing the mobilization within their unions as well. And, I am proud to say that your union was one of the first unions to step up to the plate. I went to Jerry Dias and I said, “Jerry, we have to put together a campaign and I need some resources.” He said, “How many do you want? Tell me what you want.” And, actually at that time, he turned around and gave us Mike Shields -- Mike is probably in the room here -- to work on a full-time basis. And, he said, “I don’t care if takes from now
Mike Shiel  And, if you need any other help from our union, you let us know what you actually need
to help to go out and mobilize.”        
And, at the same time, your union was mobilizing across the province, holding all of your meetings and educating your members. And then we came in behind and did the same thing. But, before we were finished, we actually had 10,000 activists trained in about roughly 20 meetings across the province that we held; 60 in regional sections, but also speaking to CUPE Ontario’s spring school at the time, and speaking to many other unions that I got a chance to speak to. We trained up activists whose job it was to go back into the workplace.

And, the whole strategy was simple. We wanted to drive down the Tory vote, because we knew that our members knew who the Tories were inside of our workplaces. And, we looked at the principle of what happened, and Katha referred to it. Harper increased his vote by 2 percent and he ends up with a majority government.

So, we knew that if we could drive down the Tory vote -- and, by the way, that 2 percent represented about 6,000 people across the country. It gave the Tories an extra 23 seats. So, we knew that if we could drive the Tory vote down in those key areas, those key ridings across the province, that we could stop him from becoming the Premier.

And, you know what happened? There was an extra half-a-million votes that were voted on in that last election, and the Tories didn’t get one of them. And, as a matter of fact, their vote was driven down by 34,000 in that last election, resulting in Hudak getting buried. And, as a matter of fact, he has been run out of politics at Queen’s Park.

But, let me say this much. Unifor has taken some criticism, the OFL has taken some criticism because, somehow, we didn’t put all our eggs into one basket and decide that all we’re going to do is we’re going to support the NDP.

Well, I’m sorry, my friends. And, I have said this to the party, and I said it this weekend in a speech, “We make no apologies in the labour movement to anybody for defending the rights of the labour movement. We are first and foremost trade unionists before we are anything else. And, we make no apologies to anybody.”

And, I actually told the party on the weekend that if you wanted to scoop up some of those votes that we drove away from the Tories, then you need to be a little more progressive. You need to be talking about the minimum wage being $14.00 an hour, and not tying it into a decrease in taxes for small businesses. You need to be able to say you are not going to speak about this ministry of waste. You need to be more progressive and speak about issues around labour.

For example, we just wasted -- wasted 3½ years of minority government and not one piece of labour law reform came forward in that 3½ years. I said, “That’s not good enough. If we’re allies and partners of the party, then you’ve got to start listening to some of the demands that we’ve got, because we want to make it easier for everybody to join a trade union, because that is the best way out of poverty is to allow people to join, freely join trade union movements.”

So, you can see, my friends, we had some challenges. But, I think we came through and we made the right decisions, because we are not faced today with Hudak. There is no question about it.

And, when I take a look at this recommendation -- I’m not going into your politics here today, but there’s four or five recommendations in here. And, you know what? This could be a manifesto for the next year, for the entire labour movement, not just here in Ontario, but across the country, because it deals with issues of free trade. It deals with the next election, which I want to talk about in a moment. It deals with labour law reforms, which we have been trying to get for 20 years, as Katha indicated in her speech. We have not had any labour law reforms in 20 years. And, we’re at the stage now where we’re saying even to the NDP, when they were in a minority government situation, we were going after the low-hanging fruit.

And, I’m saying, you know, this is kind of ridiculous. We’ve got folks at Queen’s Park that we should be able to use to champion our issues, where in the course of negotiating budgets they should be able to do a little bit of horse-trading and say, maybe if we had some successor rights, maybe if we made it easier to join a union, maybe if we had off-site voting; simple little changes that
would make life a lot easier. Maybe if they gave us early disclosure of membership lists when we’re trying an organizing drive.

You wouldn’t go into a situation that you guys had down in Toyota where you think you’ve got all the members lined up, and then you find out that, whoops, you’ve got an extra 2,000 people back here you never told us about. That’s the kind of stuff we’ve got to get away from.

Why is it when you go into a provincial election and you’re running as a candidate, you get full disclosure of all of the electors? You have access to everybody in that community that is going to vote. You know who they are, and you go knock on the door, and you try and win their support.

Why can’t that same principal apply to trade unions? When we decide to organize in a workplace, why can’t we get access to membership lists so that we can go and reasonably go speak to people, instead of sneaking around corners and, you know, surreptitiously trying to convince folks? Why can’t we just do it in an open and democratic way?

That is the kind of reforms that we need, sisters and brothers. There is nothing wrong with joining a trade union movement. It should be open and freely accessible to everybody in the movement.

I want to tell you a little story. Keep your eye on the Toronto Star on Monday morning, because we’re going to break a story around Workers’ Compensation issues. Seven years ago, the OFL broke a story that essentially said that the WSIB were giving massive rebates to corporations that killed workers. They got these rebates in the same year that they killed workers and, in other cases, maimed workers. So, we broke that story seven years ago. It was front-page news in the Toronto Star.

And, the government of the day, McGuinty said, “This is an embarrassment to the government. We’re going to fix this.” And, the chair at the time of WSIB said the same thing.

And, here we are seven years later, and we just conducted a study, and we’re finding scores of corporations receiving millions of dollars in rebates at a time in the same year that they killed a worker, or the following year when they were convicted and pled guilty in the courts to killing workers. They got massive rebates allegedly, because of the good safety behaviour in the workplace.

So, there is something seriously wrong with our health and safety systems, our prevention systems, when we are shovelling millions of dollars of premiums into corporations that are actually violating the laws and killing workers in the process, and they’re still getting rewarded for having done that.

And, at the same time, we have got injured workers who, it breaks my heart, every December are outside 400 University Avenue, the Ministry of Labour. And, these workers who, through no fault of their own, have been seriously injured and maimed are on a pittance in terms of benefits, living way below the poverty line.

And, they’re angry and I don’t blame them. They’re angry as ever, because they feel they have been really hard done by. And, every single year, they get a marginal, marginal increase if they’re lucky. For years and years under Harris, they were frozen.

And, yet, we’re shovelling millions of dollars, tens of millions, hundreds of millions of dollars into these incentive programs for corporations to allegedly do what they should be doing anyway, abiding by the law of this province and abiding by the Occupation Health and Safety Act.

And, when a worker goes to work in the morning, there’s a right for that worker to come home in the evening safe to their families. And, these corporations should not be getting rewarded. As a matter of fact, I think some of them should be taken out of those buildings in handcuffs as a result of killing workers on the job.

So, listen, I’m going to finish off here, because we’re going into another place. So, these are issues that we will be working on. Labour law reform is at the top of our agenda. Pension reform is at the top of the agenda at the OFL, working exclusively and very closely with the Canadian Labour Congress, because they have a brilliant campaign about the expansion of CPP.

And, the challenge for us in Ontario is when this Ontario Pension Plan comes to the fore, we need to be absolutely certain and put the pressure on this government that: (a) it’s a defined benefit plan; and (b) that it’s universal; and (c) that we can actually roll it into the CPP when we get rid of this guy, Harper. That has to be the three principles that we fight for.
So, that is going to be a big issue. There’s going to be public hearings on it. And, just like Katha asked you to come out to those public hearings around labour law reform, we also need your voices to be added to the campaign around the expansion of the CPP and this new pension plan in Ontario.

And, it is not a given. There’s a huge pushback right now from the right wing, from the insurance companies, from the banks who are basically out there selling glorified savings plans, pretending that somehow these are pension plans.

And, they want into it, because it’s extremely lucrative, as we know. When you start putting in money into mutual funds, 40 percent of it is eaten up over your lifetime; 40 percent. So, if you have got $100,000.00 invested, you’re looking at $40,000.00 disappearing into management fees. It’s no wonder that they love these kinds of glorified savings plans.

And, that is going to be a massive pushback. So, we’re coming into the mother of all fights between the labour movement and progressives and corporations and banks and the insurance industry, over the future of this pension plan that is going to be negotiated in Ontario. So, that is a major battle that we have to gear up for.

But, the biggest of all battles has got to be the fight to get rid of Stephen Harper. We cannot afford, my friends, not to win that fight this time around.

I will just pick one example. Besides the fact that he has effectively taken the right to strike away from all federally regulated employees, and they have done it by essentially trying to pass legislation before they even get out the door. So, effectively, even all of the biggest unions in the country, four of them, had gone to the bargaining table in the last year-and-a-half. And, each one of them were faced with potential legislation to put them back to work before they even got out the door. So, effectively, they have taken away the right to strike.

But, the most egregious part of any piece of legislation, I think, is buried in a bill called Bill C-525. And, just so you’ll know, the main components of that is that if you’re in a workplace that is already unionized, and they can get a disaffiliation drive taking place within the local union, when they add up the votes, all those people that sit on the side lines and are just not interested and don’t want to vote for whatever reason, they get counted as a vote against the union.

So, it’s not only are you fighting against those who vote and you have to win the majority of that vote, they’ll add in all of the ones who decided just to sit on the side lines as well.

And then the reverse happens if you’re trying to organize. If you go into a new workplace, all those that don’t vote in that workplace are counted as a vote against the union as well.

So, it will be almost impossible to organize new growth, new local unions. And, it will be very simple to get out of the local union that you are already in. I mean, that is just one piece of legislation.

They talk about -- you know, there’s a multitude of issues that we could deal with. He has really upset the veterans. He has upset the environmentalists. He has upset the scientists. I don’t think there’s a group of people out there that he does not upset, and all for good reason.

Each and every one of them have a serious impact upon their lives, whether it be through the environment, whether it be through our unions, whether it be our healthcare system.

I mean, he is completely decimating the healthcare system in terms of transfer payments to the provinces. Billions, $30-odd billion over a 10-year period has been taken out of healthcare. There was a time when the federal government put in 50 percent of the funding of healthcare in this country. Today, it’s down around 9 percent. And, that all has to be picked up by the provinces.

And, today, we’re going to a demonstration at Queen’s Park, because why? They closing six hospitals in Ontario. Well, why do you think they’re closing six hospitals in Ontario? The provincial government is passing on those cuts onto the healthcare system.

And, who in the healthcare system gets the money? Ninety percent of every cent spent in health care goes to front-line services, goes to workers, delivering the services that we want. So, you can see we have got a multitude of reasons why we have got to stop Stephen Harper in
the next election. And, we intend to work very closely in the OFL with Unifor and with all those other progressive unions that want to work with us, and with the CLC. The CLC are actually running this campaign. We are going to be working with them. We are going to mobilize, just the way we did in Ontario.

We are going to set Ontario on fire, when it comes to getting people fired up about this election, and make it absolutely certain that we’re going to go in and zero in on those ridings where we can drive down the Tory vote and drive Harper out of office. My friends, that is the challenge for the labour movement coming up in the next year.

And, it may not be the next year. There’s a strong possibility that it is going to be a spring election, a strong possibility. I can’t say that for certain, but we have to get ready there for it. So, in other words, we need to speed up all this mobilization, all these meetings that Katha talked about a few moments ago.

But, I will say this much. And, I said this to the NDP Convention, so they’re under no illusion about where we’re coming from and the issues that we’re going to champion. I talked about Unifor to the NDP Convention. Some folks didn’t like it, because they like to criticize and demonize and, somehow, you’re not great progressive supporters of the electoral process, just because you don’t maybe support 100 percent the NDP.

And, I told them. I said, “If you want to build your base,” and they talked about building their base. I said, “You’ve got some serious questions to answer here.” There’s 54 unions affiliated to the CLC and there’s 54 unions affiliated to the Ontario Federation of Labour.

But out of that 54, there’s only 3 or 4 unions that say “We exclusively support the NDP.” And, the rest are somewhere in between. There are some people who support the NDP, incumbents, and they’ll support some Liberals. And, there are some who don’t support anybody, because they’re not partisan. And, there are some who only support the Liberals.

That’s the makeup. That’s what I inherited. That has been in existence for 25, 30 years. And, what we are trying to do is to bring those people together to maximize the potential of the labour movement.

And, I said, “Well, you’re criticizing Unifor and booting the Unifor representative off the executive of the NDP in Ontario,” as they booted off the OFL. Tried to punish us for taking a progressive position.

I said, “Think about it. In the next election, I have heard Jerry Dias say that we’re going to support all of the incumbents of the NDP in the next election, and any of those folks that you can convince us have a really good shot at winning.” I said, “Do you know, that’s probably more support coming from that one union than what is coming from the entire labour movement, in terms of actually getting in behind NDP candidates? There’s over 100 that we can speak of, and Lord knows how many others they can convince, so that’s another 20 or 30 across the country.”

“Think about that,” I said. “Think about 130 Members of Parliament or 106 Members of Parliament and the rest getting support from one union. And, somehow, you think -- you’re being critical about it. Maybe you’re looking at the glass as being half empty instead of the glass being three-quarters full. That’s what you need to be looking at and embracing that, and saying that’s how we bring workers and their representatives and unions, if they’re supporting a party.”

Now, mind you, it’s easier to support Mulcair and I’ll tell you why. Because I went to meet him there a week-and-a-half ago, 2 weeks ago. And, he is talking about increasing corporate taxes. He even talked about anti-scab legislation, a universal childcare program -- you know, a great position on the war in Iraq. He has got some really good progressive policies that he is talking about.

And, I said, “Gees, if the NDP in Ontario had half of those policies on the plate, we would probably have a majority government today. Don’t be afraid of standing with the labour movement and speaking on our issues.”

And, I’ll finish on this one, my friends, because it burns me up to no end to think about this. There is not one political party anywhere in this country that is actually talking about free university tuition.
I don’t understand why it is that in this country, with all the wealth that we have, and all the money we’re spending on F-35 fighter jets and who in the name of God is going to be attacking Canada in the near future, but we can spend all those billions of dollars on those weaponries and on wars and sending people over, bombing others, the people in Iraq and so on, but we don’t have enough to send our kids to university, to give working-class families an opportunity to send their kids, so that they can be doctors and lawyers and architects as well? Why can’t our kids have those opportunities?

So, my friends, that’s what we need to see political parties doing, putting those issues that are near and dear to the hearts of the working class in this country. That’s what we need to say. And, that is what Unifor is doing every day of the week. And, I appreciate it.

And, I sincerely commend your organization by having the goods and the gumption to stand up and say, “This is what we stand for. This is what we’re going to fight for. And, this is what we are going to achieve in the election when it is called in the near future. We are going to get rid of Stephen Harper. And, this is the agenda you’re going to see, my friends, implemented in the House of Parliament, so all workers can enjoy the fruits of our labour.”

Thank you very much for the opportunity to say a few words.

DINO CHIODO: Good job, Sid. I just want to say thank you very much for inspiring us, coming to talk to our Ontario Regional Council about the issues that are important to us, especially in defeating Stephen Harper. And, again, I appreciate you recognizing the hard work that we have been putting forward as the Ontario Regional Council and the recommendations that we have in front of us.

But, at the same time, we have to recognize the amount of work that you have done in the Ontario Federation of Labour, trying to keep the labour movement together, and looking at the progressive issues, and making sure that we are making a difference. And, you can always count on Unifor to be there in supporting the progressives, and making things better for all workers in Ontario.

So, thank you very much. On behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, we want to just present a little memento of our appreciation.

SID RYAN: Thank you, folks. I appreciate it.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. So, what I want to do is I just want to make sure that I can make a couple of announcements before we break off, so we can get into the stop private clinics and save our local hospitals demonstration that is going on at Queen’s Park for 12:00 noon today.

So, again, what Katha had suggested earlier is still intact. And, from that, if you have any issues walking, you can get on Bus 966 that is being provided through CUPE. It starts at 11:30. It will be on Richmond, by the smoking area. That is where you will be able to get that bus.

At the same time, if it’s not there, because it could move depending on parking, it will be in front of the City Hall on Queen Street. So, it will only be in those two locations. Again, it is not for everybody. It is for those that are having challenges for walking.

And, for the rally, if you can, we will all be exiting the Queen Street doors. So, for the rally, we will be exiting the Queen Street doors.

So, I’ve got the women’s caucus lunch. It’s at 1:00 p.m. today. I have got it registered in the Grand Ballroom East, but I’m being told that it has been moved. So, again, for all intents and purposes, that is a little bit of a challenge for us, because I am being told right now it has been moved, but I don’t have the actual location -- sorry.

It’s the Civic Ballroom on the second floor. So, there is a women’s caucus luncheon at 1:00 p.m., Civic Ballroom, second floor.

Thank you very much for a great morning. I have a point of privilege on mic 2.

CHRIS TAYLOR: Thanks, Dino. Chris Taylor, president of Local 200, Chair of the Auto Council and National Executive Board member.

Brothers and sisters, Local 200 represents Ford workers in Windsor. And, I’m sure, based on the support that we have received throughout Ontario from all of you, I am sure you have heard of the devastating news on an investment opportunity that Ford Motor Company brought forward to Windsor, which asked -- a large amount of ask -- to the federal and the provincial governments that did not come to fruition.
I had the unfortunate opportunity, I guess, as the President of Local 200, to have to stand in front of our members and tell them that we weren't getting a new investment in a city desperately needing jobs and a workforce that has been devastated for quite some time right now.

So, what I am asking, we have got petitions that are going to be going around. Our members from Local 200 will be putting them out. There is one petition to the Ontario government. There is one to the federal government.

And, what, in essence, it's asking for is an auto strategy. Under CAW, we have been asking for an auto strategy, manufacturing strategy, for I don't know how many years. And, the government fails to listen.

Even today, now, when they're being asked by Unifor, when they're being asked by those out there, so-called auto analysts that used to bash the crap out of us, that are now saying, "We need an auto strategy." We have got the Chamber of Commerce saying, "We need an auto strategy." We've got the Auto Parts Manufacturing Association saying, "We need an auto strategy."

So, brothers and sisters, I ask you to sign the petitions. We're going to get them to both houses. And, we're going to make sure, come hell or high water, there will be an auto strategy and a manufacturing strategy in the province and in the feds, to make sure that this never happens again.

We're dying on the vine in manufacturing and auto, and that can't happen. So, I ask you to support the petitions that will be going around. Thank you.

DINO CHIDOS: Thank you very much, Chris Taylor. To the delegates in the room, I just want to say thank you very much for a fruitful and progressive morning. And, we will look forward to seeing you back here in the hall for 2:00 p.m. for our start-up. Thank you.

---

Whereupon the meeting was in recess from 11:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

DINO CHIDO: Thank you very much. We'll get the show on the road.

Starting the second segment for the afternoon for the Ontario Regional Council.

I just want to thank everybody that participated in the healthcare rally. It was an important rally and we appreciate your support.

But I do want to make a special mention. While we were walking, we noticed that there was a lady that had fallen, she hit her head on the cement. And, we had one of our own, Steve Olsen, he's a paramedic out of Sault Ste. Marie. Is Steve Olsen in the room right now?

Steve, please stand up and be recognized, because you know what? Steve was the first paramedic at the scene. Took care of the lady, helped her out. And, in saying that, gave all the proper information to the paramedics when they showed up.

And, that's just, again, showing a lot of the work that we do, our support for the community. And, in saying that, it is just a great honour to be able to say that one of ours was there to be able to provide some support.

So, thank you, Steve, very much for that, especially when we're walking towards a healthcare rally. Way to go. Congratulations.

So, continuing on with our agenda, I am going to ask Deb Montgomery to come up and introduce the next speaker.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: It is my pleasure today, this afternoon, to introduce Peter Kennedy. Peter Kennedy is the founding Secretary-Treasurer of Unifor, a position he had previously held with the CAW, one of Unifor's founding unions along with the CEP.

Peter played a key role in the development of Unifor, serving as co-chair of the CAW - CEP Proposal Committee, which organized the creation of Unifor. Peter began his career with the labour movement after starting work at 3M Canada in London, Ontario, in 1972, where he was a member of CAW Local 27.

In 1989, he was appointed Director of Unifor's Education Department. And, in 1992, he was appointed assistant to the then National Secretary-Treasurer, Jim O'Neil.

Throughout the early '70s and '80s, Peter was elected to various in-plant and local union executive positions. During this time, he was also very active in the London community as a United Way Board member and a founding Board member of the London Unemployed Health Centre.

In 1989, he was appointed Director of Unifor's Education Department. And, in 1992, he was appointed assistant to the then National Secretary-Treasurer, Jim O'Neil.
Peter also oversaw negotiations with General Motors and CAMI, at GM/Suzuki’s joint venture in Ingersoll, Ontario, as well as the aerospace sector and electrical and electronic sectors. Peter was elected as CAW National Secretary-Treasurer at the union’s Constitutional Convention in 2009 and, again, in 2012. Peter sits on the Executive Board of the International Transport Workers’ Federation, as we know, ITF, an international trade union federation of transport workers, representing more than 4.5 million workers in 154 countries.

Please welcome Brother Peter Kennedy.

ADDRESS: PETER KENNEDY, NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER, UNIFOR

PETER KENNEDY: Thank you very, very much, Deb. And, good afternoon, sisters and brothers. I trust that we are all invigorated after a brisk march in the participation in a very important healthcare rally that Dino referenced in his congratulations to our members from Local 2002 who were the first responders to that situation that occurred on the street.

If it is any consolation, Tullio, I am not here to present a financial report. So, here we are, sisters and brothers, some 14½ months later. And, we have accomplished a lot in that very short period of time. And, we have lots more work to do. This Ontario Regional Council was just one more forum in which we do that work.

And, while our work as trade unionists is never done, we can take some time, I think, to revisit what it is that we have accomplished over the last year and a bit, in terms of the creation of our new union, Unifor.

One of the things that we set out to do at the inaugural Canadian Council which, again, was only a short couple of months ago -- it seems longer than that to me -- was we had intended to review, I think, a score card, if you will, of the first year of Unifor’s history. And, take a look at, critically, a self-analysis of where we are at.

And, those who were in attendance at the Canada Council know that we simply ran out of time. Like many of the things that we have done in the intervening year, we set a very, very lofty agenda and it set a very high standard for ourselves.

We have to look at our successes and we have to look at our failures. And, Year One was about building our new union, about creating our identity, both in terms of our actions, but also in terms of how we see ourselves, how we see each other and, equally important, how others view us.

And, I am always reminded, in terms of looking at what we have done as Unifor over our first year, 14½ months, of an event that occurred before Unifor was actually created. And, that was the Verizon demo, which occurred when our two former organizations were having our respective dissolution conventions, if you will, before we came together as one to create Unifor.

One organization was meeting here in this hotel. Another organization was meeting down at the Convention Centre. And, we came together, all in red with the Unifor T-shirts for the very first time to, again, protest an action by the government to speak up for Canadian values. But, coming together organically, it would seem to me, as two organizations coming to one.

And, I view that as a very important coming together, a very important development in the creation of the new union, even though it occurred before we were actually a single organism. And, I always thought it was kind of ironic, if you will, because of the fact that Unifor wasn’t yet created. We hadn’t yet adopted a constitution. We hadn’t yet elected officers.

And, so often when we have these kinds of demonstrations and events, the local constabulary is always looking to see who is in charge. In this case, nobody was. Just Unifor. It was just us.

So, it is safe to say, I think, sisters and brothers, that in the first 14½ months of Unifor, we have received lots of attention. A lot of people are watching us, our members, other unions, both domestically and internationally, politicians and political parties of all stripes and at all levels, our employers, other employers, social action groups, the general public.

We are being viewed through a number of different lenses. Some folks are watching us for all the right reasons and, regrettably, some folks are watching us for all the wrong reasons. In either case, they’re watching us because as I said at the outset, we have set very lofty goals,
not just because the challenges are great, but because with the challenges we face, there are opportunities.

And, if we are to take advantage of those opportunities, it is important that we set the bar high and challenge ourselves to be the best possible union that Unifor can be, a union for all. Some of those watching us want us to succeed. Others are undecided. They see us perhaps as an experiment in trade union renewal. Others, quite frankly, want us to fall flat on our face. And, sisters and brothers, we are not going to let that happen.

Working together in the future as we have in the last 14½ months, we are going to continue to build on what we have accomplished to this point, to build the best vehicle for working people anywhere in the world.

So, how does that report card look? How have we done with regard to achieving those goals that we established at the outset for the first year of our mandate?

Those of you who were in attendance at the founding convention will remember that we developed six key points that we wanted Unifor to focus on. The first point, building our new union. The second point, organizing new members. The third point, remaining tough in collective bargaining. The fourth point, making our progressive voice heard. The fifth point, defending labour rights. And, the sixth point, building a stronger labour movement.

My personal view, I think it’s fair to say that in five of six of those points, we have done either well or very well. And, I believe in some cases, we have accomplished even more than we might have thought possible at the outset. And, I will go through them in a minute.

But, again, we have to be honest with ourselves. And, if there is any disappointment in the first year of Unifor’s existence, I think it is in organizing. We failed to catch the wave that we all believed was going to be there with the creation of our new union.

Having said that, however, we do have to recognize some very significant recent successes in key sectors, in terms of organizing: in aviation, in gaming, auto parts, healthcare and aerospace. But, the reality is, sisters and brothers, we just haven’t generated the new members that we would have liked.

Again, while the momentum we achieved at Toyota was encouraging, the setback that we experienced when we had to withdraw the application for certification vote to all of us was very disappointing. But, we’re taking action to counteract that, and that is the important thing. We are learning from our mistakes.

Working with John Aman, Duncan Brown, Deb Tveit and the whole organizing team, we have re-launched the Toyota campaign, a new drive with a new plan, a strategic plan with clearly-defined timelines, targets and measurables. And, that, sisters and brothers, is the only way I believe that we will ever be successful with companies like Toyota.

So, we have learned from this setback. And, we are also looking at other strategic targets, gathering information, preparing to initiate organizing plans, organizing plans not organizing hopes, because, sisters and brothers, we can all hope for something, but hope in of itself is not a strategy.

And, that is one of the things that we have done as Unifor is we have struck a Strategic Planning Committee to take a look at the issues in front of us and plan proactively how we are going to tackle them.

But, on the other points, however, I think we have done quite well. In terms of building the new union, that, sisters and brothers, is what the last 14½ months has been all about. It’s about communicate, communicate, communicate; internally and externally.

And, I want to give a shout out, if you will, to our Communications Department because, quite frankly, they have done an amazing job in getting the Unifor name and message out there.

In the lead-up to the creation of Unifor, we had over 60 leadership meetings in a space of 24 calendar months. We have had telephone town halls. We have had the Canada Council meeting, which was the last sort of structural building block of Unifor, based on our Constitution. We have this Ontario Regional Council this weekend. We have a B.C. Regional Council also happening this weekend. So, we’re into our second round of Regional Councils. We will
follow up again with another Canada Council next year, and then the convention in 2016.

We've had our Rights at Work campaign, which paralleled the OFL's Workers Rights campaign. And, together, as Brother Ryan pointed out this morning, those campaigns helped to ensure the defeat of Hudak, to defeat the Tea Party mentality and the notion of Right to Work, to defeat it to the point where even a contender for the Tory leadership here in the province, Monte McNaughton, who was Tim Hudak's hit man on the Right to Work file, on the labour file, is basically saying today to us, “It wasn’t me. It wasn’t me. It wasn’t me,” and vows, if elected, will not bring the Right to Work notion back to the table.

But, the fact of the matter is sisters and brothers, we can’t trust them and we won’t trust them. And, we will continue to fight to make sure that we do not ever find ourselves with politicians of any stripe trying to destroy the labour movement in this province or in this country.

So, that was an important alliance that we forged, and I will come back to that in a minute. The Job 1 now that also has been spoken about this morning, is to have that same result federally, to ensure the defeat of Stephen Harper. And, we’ll hear more about that, or you will hear more about that tomorrow, about the role Unifor will play in the upcoming federal election.

And, you will hear the same from our guest speaker, Michael Harris, not to be confused with another person of the same name, about how Stephen Harper has systematically gone about to destroy many of the basic fundamental institutions of democracy. And, that is why he has us so clearly in his sight, sisters and brothers, because there is no more fundamental institution to a democratic society than a free trade-union movement.

I think it is interesting to note, well, we will focus on defeating Harper as we focused on defeating Hudak. And, as Brother Ryan pointed out this morning in his remarks, there were a few affiliates of both the Canadian Labour Council and the Ontario Federation of Labour who put all their eggs in one basket, who felt, for whatever reason, that the only strategic way to campaign was in blind support of the NDP.

The Quebec Federation of Labour has adopted a similar strategy to the one that we have followed, the one that we followed in the Ontario election; the one we propose to follow in the federal election. And, the Quebec wings of those same unions are solidly behind that campaign, in supporting that notion.

So, maybe as often is the case, Quebec’s sisters and brothers can have some influence within their organizations to get the rest of Canada and their organizations on board with what it is we really need to do.

In terms of collective bargaining, bargaining is ongoing within our organization, with a number of bargaining units that we have. Literally, 365 days a year, 24/7, we have got bargaining going on in some way, shape or form.

We had CAMI, Vancouver Ports, Resolute, Cascade, Bombardier, all significant bargaining victories in one way or another over the course of the last 14½ months. Some was the result of strikes. Others, we just bargain tough to a deadline and got results where, in fact, we made temporary workers full-time workers. We got jobs back into bargaining units that had been lost during bankruptcies.

We got the government in the Province of British Columbia to withdraw on Back to Work legislation, any number of things to preserve the sanctity of our collective agreements and to create permanent lasting jobs for people not yet employed in those enterprises, at the same rates that those are currently working in those enterprises.

In many ways, those challenges that we faced, I think it’s kind of like first collective bargaining, where a unit is newly-certified and the employer takes the position that, “Well, if I’m ever going to set the tone, now is the time to do it, when they’re vulnerable.”

And, I think a lot of employers thought that about Unifor, perhaps, that if we’re ever going to have control, it’s while Unifor is in its infancy. Perhaps they don’t have the wherewithal, the focus on the bargaining that is at hand. And, we can set the stage. We can set the agenda for future negotiations.

Some of you will have heard this story before, but I think it’s worth repeating. Not three weeks after our founding convention, Jerry and I were at a meeting at the Sheraton Gateway
Hotel. And, we broke for lunch, and we went across to Terminal 3 to get something to eat.

And, as we were walking out of the hotel, we ran into three senior labour relations people that we knew from our formal organization in the aerospace industry. So, we asked what they were doing here. They were just kind of reluctant to really say what it was. And, they just said that, “Well, we’re at a meeting.” We didn’t think much of it at the time. Just assumed it was an aerospace meeting.

We had lunch, came back to the hotel we ran into a couple more senior labour relations people that we know, this time from the auto industry.

“What are you doing here?” Again, they were very hesitant and reluctant to really say anything. “We’re at a meeting.” “Is this an auto meeting?” “Well…” “Are you meeting with the aerospace folks?” “Well…” “Well, where are you meeting? “Well…”

So, we decided, led by Jerry, who is no more brash than I am most days, we better check out this meeting. So, we go into this meeting. And, here is not only Ford, General Motors, Bombardier, but CN, CP, Suncor, Resolute, White Birch.

About 50 of the largest employers of Unifor members were gathered in a room at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel strategizing about how they deal with Unifor. So, we have their attention. And, I take that as a badge of honour.

The reality is they all paid $10,000.00 to be there. And, they all contribute now another $5,000.00 a month to continue to be there. And, they continue to talk about Unifor. And, I say to them, “Just give us the money and we’ll tell you anything you want to know anyways.”

Defending labour rights. Well, again, I think back to that Maclean’s article that just came out shortly after that founding convention wherein Brother Dias was named the third most-powerful person in Canada, which is a great honour. It puts Jerry in a very difficult position going forward. He doesn’t have much room to go up.

But, the real question was not so much about Jerry as an individual. It was about the organization that he represents and how we use that power, how we use the influence that we have. And, to his credit, Jerry has done a masterful job of that in the last year, year and a bit.

He has the ear of politicians, all parties federally, provincially, not just here in Ontario, but across the country. He has had impact on the federal scene as well. 377, the video showed Hugh Segal addressing this Ontario Regional Council. Put on the back burner; now resurrected.

And, resurrected because, as I said earlier, sisters and brothers, we’re in Stephen Harper’s sight lines.

What will happen to 377? It’s hard to say. There is much more speculation today than there might have been six months ago that there will be an early election, an election in the spring with the writ being dropped sometime late February.

If that’s the case, 377 will not go anywhere unless Harper is successful in being re-elected when that writ is dropped. You can bet that’s the case; 377 will be enacted, and we will face the consequences of that bill.

So, we need to do in the federal election, whenever it’s called, we have to do everything in our power, sisters and brothers, to defeat Stephen Harper, making our progressive voices heard. Again, on that front, I think we have done quite well. We participated in the Peoples’ Social Forum, the Canada-Quebec Social Forum.

We had Brother Mohamad Alsadi from our Ottawa office assigned to work with the organizers of that event. And, subsequently, because of his efforts there, he has been invited to the International Council of the World’s Social Forum, Human Rights Forum. And, I don’t know if he is in the room.

But, Roger Rashi, who was the convenor of the Canada-Quebec Social Forum, is with us today. So, Roger, if you are here, please stand up. It doesn’t look like it. He is around the building, because he wanted to observe our council.

The Canada-Quebec Social Forum, a number of workshops featuring Unifor participants. And, I would venture to say -- I don’t know this with certainty -- that our organization probably had the largest single contingent of any of the affiliates who participated in that event.

And, I also think it’s worth noting here but the participation of the CLC in the Peoples’ Social Forum would not have happened under previous administrations.
The Good Jobs Summit, we had 1,300 participants there about changing the narrative, about how we build community. And, it is not going to be a one-off event. We are following up with a roundtable discussion that will continue to talk about how we build good jobs, how we create good jobs, how we build community.

Because it seems to all of us, you don't have to be an economist to understand and appreciate in order to build community, you have to have good-paying jobs in that community. We cannot sustain communities on the race to the bottom.

And, you contrast what we're doing as a union, really taking over the role of government in terms of the discussion about good jobs. You listen to the remarks, recent remarks of Stephen Poloz, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, again, telling young people to go out and work for free, not talking about raising the minimum wages we talked about this morning and things of that nature, but go out and work as unpaid interns, whereas we're espousing something much greater than that.

We built a very, very important alliance as a result of that Good Jobs Summit with the Canadian Federation of Students. And, we had a letter that was printed in various media across the country that was co-authored by Jessica McCormick, the president of that organization.

And, Brother Dias really took Stephen Poloz to task for his remarks that were not only offensive, but completely outdated. And, there were a number of tweets that were going around at that time.

And, I don't know if Jim Stanford is in the room, but Jimbo tweeted something to the effect that he would be prepared to take an unpaid internship at the Bank of Canada, so that he could show how the Bank of Canada could actually use monetary policy to create jobs in the country that would, in turn, be paid.

Building a stronger labour movement. Well, this is singularly, sisters and brothers, what Unifor is all about. I said often during the lead-up to the creation of Unifor that although the labour movement was born out of challenging the status quo, we were very reluctant to challenge our own internal status quo.

And, after 30 years of fight-back, 30 years of fighting the neo-Liberal, neo-Conservative agenda, it was time, as Brother Dias said in his inaugural speech, to go from playing defence to playing offence.

And, we started with a document called A Moment of Truth for Canadian Labour.

And, it was a challenge not only to ourselves, but to the rest of the labour movement, including central labour bodies.

And, again, I have always felt and believed that central labour bodies can only be as effective as the affiliates want them to be. And, again, unfortunately, I suggest that in some cases, some affiliates don't want either the CLC or the OFL, or any particular affiliation of labour for that matter, to be particularly effective.

So, we went into the CLC Convention in May after Brother Georgetti had announced his retirement, and was convinced not to retire. A lot of speculation as to why that was the case. And, I am not going to comment on speculation. But, I will say that we put our efforts behind the candidacy of Brother Hassan Yussuff. I will say that, in my view, the counter-campaign was about stopping Hassan, but it was also about stopping Unifor. And, our position was, quite frankly, if the price of harmony was acquiescence without any input, then Unifor was simply not in.

And so, we elected Brother Yussuff with support from a lot of other affiliates and, in some cases, affiliates that were not our most recent traditional allies, but affiliates who knew instinctively that while the Fairness Works Campaign was a good campaign, we need more than public relations campaigns. We need to mobilize from the grassroots. We need to reinvigorate the labour movement in this country. And, that is what we set out to do.

So, the result, as everybody knows, was a very narrow 44-vote victory. But, the change, sisters and brothers, was monumental. And, when I viewed the proceedings of that convention on the Wednesday, I felt if the vote was held at that point in time, Brother Yussuff would have been elected handily.

But, on the Thursday, when the buses arrived, including our own, that was not so clear. But, at the end of the day, I think those who supported other candidates won the bus war, but we
won the convention floor.

So, there’s still some fallout from that. We see situations being played out both here in Ontario, at the Ontario Federation of Labour, and in British Columbia, from those who weren’t victorious in their efforts to elect their candidates to the executive of the CLC.

And, as Brother Ryan pointed out, there is the threat of others opting out of the Ontario Federation of Labour over an ongoing misinformation campaign about the OFL finances. The only problem with the OFL finances is that there’s not enough affiliates who are in and contributing. And, if you withdraw, you’re only going to exacerbate that problem. It’s like a lot of sort of government strategies create a crisis. Where one doesn’t exist, create a crisis and then that gives you all the rationale you need to pull out.

So, sisters and brothers, as much as I believe we have set the foundation to build the union that we all intend Unifor to be, we simply can’t go it alone. We must reach out. We must support our allies, both within the community and the labour movement.

You have a recommendation that you will be dealing with sometime this weekend with respect to our increased affiliation to the Ontario Federation of Labour. And, I believe, sisters and brothers, because of the similarities, because of the jointness in our approach to political questions that really do challenge us and challenge the future of our organizations that now is the time to be in 100 percent.

We have an important role to play, both within the Canadian Labour Council and within the provincial Federations of Labour. We play that same role internationally. In IndustriALL, which is a global union federation that brought together the former International Metal Workers’ Federation, the former International Chemical Energy and Mine Workers, the former International Leather, Garment and Textile Workers’ global union federations into one. They are going into a world congress next year.

And, the current general secretary who has done an incredible job of bringing those disparate groups together has announced that he is stepping down. So, there’s some politics that are going on within that global union federation that we are a part of, in terms of what we believe and view as the progressive unions in Australia, Brazil, South Africa, Europe and others, to make sure that IndustriALL carries on in the same tradition and value that we had set for that organization, from our respective organizations, one of which was more closely aligned with the International Metal Workers’ Federation, the other more closely aligned with the International Chemical Energy and Mine Association.

In our opening remarks or introductory remarks, Deb talked about the ITF that I sit on the executive. And, we play an incredible role there. We’re very, very well respected there. We have a long history of Executive Board participation at the ITF.

My predecessor, Jim O’Neil, sat on the ITF Executive Board for 17 years. And, prior to him, Jim Hunter who was the President of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway and Transport Workers, who joined with us many, many years ago, was the only Canadian ever to lead as president of an international trade union secretariat.

So, Unifor, wearing the mantles of our former organizations, is very well regarded in the international global union movement. And, they’re watching us as well. They see what we have done and there is a lot of discussion about the kind of role that those progressive unions that I have talked about in other countries can do to model themselves after Unifor and to reinvigorate, as we hope we will do, the labour movement in their respective countries, because we have all been facing it, sisters and brothers. We have all been facing that 30 years of neo-Liberalism.

But, all of this happens in the context of incredible change within Unifor, not just the change of try to integrate the two organizations together, but as we build and do that in the space of just over a year, we have seen five new National Executive Board members.

We have another National Executive Board member about to retire. So, within 16 months or so, we’re going to have 6 people on the National Executive Board of Unifor, roughly 25 percent, who weren’t there when Unifor was established just a year-and-a-bit ago.

So, I think we have done well. I think we need to be honest with our shortcomings, but we need to learn from our mistakes, as I said, and make sure that we continue to
forge the path that we set out to forge, and continue to build the union that we set out to build. And, we’re not there yet. The journey will continue. And, working together as we have done, we will get there.

And, I look around this room. All of the forums that we have had, those Regional Councils, the Canada Council, time after time after time, you have seen the change. It was initially when we went to the Proposal Committee leadership groups, there would be one former organization on one side of the room, another former organization on the other side of the room, and eventually over time, over time, it started to intersperse a little bit. But, when I look around this room, I don’t see either of our former organizations; I see Unifor.

I want to thank each and every one of you for the role that you play in your workplaces on a day-to-day basis, the role you play here at this Regional Council. I mean, these are the parliaments of Unifor. And, I want to thank you all for what you have done to this point in time and for everything that you will do when we leave here this weekend to further that goal, to further that vision, to further that initiative.

In closing, I just want to acknowledge that we are coming up to the 25th anniversary of December 6th. November 25th is the United Nations Day to end violence against women. And, those of you, those brothers who were in attendance at the Canada Council will remember that we all took an oath to recommit, to stand up, to speak out against violence to our sisters and to women elsewhere.

I mean, we just all have seen all of the examples in the last few weeks of ongoing harassment, systemic harassment, harassment that has gone on for decades. Sisters and brothers, it’s up to us to make it come to an end. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Peter, for those wonderful words. And, actually, we’re supposed to go to Recommendation No. 3. But, what I want to do, before we get into Recommendation No. 3, we spoke with Hassan, and I wanted to make sure that we could have Hassan address the audience with regards to the tremendous amount of work that has gone into the pension campaigns, especially it being spearheaded through the Canadian Labour Congress.

But, Hassan has been connected to improvements and trying to get improvements on Canadian Pension Plan, on Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, and he still is spearheading that campaign, trying to talk to as many people as he can, especially Members of Provincial Parliament, Members of Parliament, to make the necessary changes for people to retire in dignity.

And, I wanted to give Hassan an opportunity to come up and address the audience for a few minutes on the important work that is going into the Canadian Pension Plan. Hassan Yussuff.

ADDRESS: HASSAN YUSSUFF, PRESIDENT, CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

HASSAN YUSSUFF: Thanks, Dino. Good afternoon, sisters and brothers. For those of you as brave as me, or not as brave as me that was out in the cold, I really want to start and commend Katha’s leadership and, the entire union for coming out and participating in a rally at Queen’s Park. I really want to say to all of you that this fight to stem the turn of privatization in this province, we must win this fight, sisters and brothers.

You know, in 1962, when Tommy Douglas took on the fight to create Medicare in this country, it was about private health care, because he understood fundamentally that working people in this country can’t afford to get the healthcare they need simply by how much money they had in their pocket. We truly had to create a system where working people who get sick, they will be taken care of.

We succeeded in 1966 in creating Medicare across this country for all Canadians. And, we brought it from Saskatchewan, that all Canadians can have the same value.

In 1984, we created the Canada Health Act. And, despite all of the things we have done in previous generations by workers to build Medicare, we’re seeing a creeping privatization not only in Ontario, but right across this country. And, fundamentally, I think we have got to take on this fight, because we understand what it means for working people when they get sick, if you don’t have the money.
But, we can’t allow any politician, whether it’s a politician in this province, Kathleen Wynne, or any other politician across this country, to tell us we can’t afford Medicare in this country. Well, we’ve got to put on the fight. We’ve got to take it to the street, whoever is in that street, to ensure if you can find the money to give tax cuts to corporations across this land who don’t need it, by God, we can find it for the Medicare system across this province.

We simply can’t fight to defend the status quo, brothers and sisters. You know that. As I speak to you today, there are millions of Canadians in this country who get sick who don’t have the opportunity to get the medications they need. As I speak to you, we’re dealing with an aging population. People need homecare who can’t find the ability to get into homecare, because there’s not enough beds for them at the end of the day. We have got to expand our Medicare system.

And, this is going to be the fight of our lives, because so long as the government in Ottawa remains in power, we have no ability to win this fight, because for everything that we’re fighting here in Ontario, the federal government is step by step undermining across this country.

And, we have got to ensure, when the election comes next year, we get rid of that rotten government and put a government that is committed to maintaining and supporting the province to grow a healthcare system across this country for working people.

So, let me take a look at the time. I want to take, again, the opportunity to say a few words. I would also want to say our friends, because it has been a moment to the National Council meeting, to say to the brothers and sisters from Local 1075 who through their courageous struggle decided to take on the Bombardier Corporation against their austerity program, to roll back the gains we have made. I can’t tell you what that means.

But, also in other fights, we have been reaching across this country. We have got to confront the austerity agenda in the private sector and the public sector across this country. We did not create the crisis of 2008. We should say enough is enough. We’re not going to pay for this.

A rich corporation like Bombardier should not have to privatize our jobs or move our jobs someplace else, because the taxpayers of this province and across this country buy their damned product. It’s about time they create the employment for working people in this province and pay them a decent wage. They can afford to do that.

I also want to take some time to talk about the re-launch of the Retirement Security campaign that was just talked about. I said at the CLC Convention this is an important fight we must win. It has been five years this September since we launched this campaign. And, there are some fundamental pieces of this campaign.

We said right then and there, we need to double, the CPP, to increase the benefits to at least twice as much as it is today. When the benefits was set, when CPP was created, it was set at 25 percent of the average industrial wage. As I speak to you, the average payout from CPP that many Canadians receive across this country and in this province is a little over $500.00 per month. None of us can live on $500.00 a month.

Recognizing the attack on private pensions across this country and in this province, fundamentally, you’ve got an opportunity. In the five years since we have launched this campaign, sisters and brothers, I can’t tell you the tremendous opportunity that we have brought to Canadians to say we can do this.

In this summer, the Kathleen Wynne government will release a poll and it will confirm what the CLC poll has always said. Seventy-five percent of Ontarians and Canadians across this country said they support an increase in the CPP and they want to see it happen now. They don’t want to wait until the government can do that somewhere down the road.

That shows the commitment in the work that you have done, this union has done, activists have done, and the retirees have done across this province, but also right across this country.

Last week, here in Toronto, we launched a campaign, because I recognize we’re going to have an opportunity, to bring this back in focus for Canadians. Why are we doing this? Because since we launched this campaign five years ago, the challenges have been even greater. As I speak to you, less and less workers today are covered by private pensions in this province and right across the country.
I don’t need to tell the bargaining committees that are in this room the challenge every time they go to the bargaining table, and the union reps in this room, about the attack from employers that are coming at us. If you work in the public sector, equally so. Governments are looking for ways to diminish their responsibility and their obligation to workers who are going to retire.

As I speak to you today, if you have a young daughter or a young son, or a niece or a nephew, I can’t tell you what their future is going to look like when they get to retirement age. And, fundamentally, this is a fight not only for us here today, this is a fight for the future generation of Canadians who are yet to get to retirement.

We must win this campaign, sisters and brothers, because if we don’t, all of us as working people in this country will live, really, really poor. I have said these statistics and I’ll repeat them. Eleven million Canadians today don’t have a pension other than CPP or QPP across this country. Eleven million.

I know if I ask this audience, the majority of you will stand up and put your hand up, to say yes, you belong to a pension plan. That is not the reality for most people who work in this country. As a matter of fact, you can point to probably your partner, or somebody who lives in your household, or a friend, or a family member who you know at a personal level who doesn’t have a private pension plan.

That 11 million Canadians are not a statistic. They’re friends. They’re neighbours. They’re family members. And, fundamentally, we have created something called the Canada Pension Plan that is the envy of the world.

As I speak to you today, during the last recession of 2008, it’s one of the four pension plans around the world that did an enormous job to withstand the recession and the financial crisis. And, it still is in good place.

The most recent solvency that they did on the Canada Pension Plan is it’s solvent for the next 75 years. Here are some of the other benefits of the Canada Pension Plan; it’s indexed to inflation. When you start collecting your benefit, that benefit will never be diminished, no matter how long you live. As a matter of fact, the day you die, your family will even get a death benefit at the end of the day. But, fundamentally, the benefit level had been set too low when they established it.

And, we have got to win this fight. We will re-launch this campaign in Toronto and we’re starting to get national attention. We have got 17 locations across the country. We’ll be going to every province across this country and communities until to re-launch this campaign.

Why? Because we fundamentally believe this has to be a ballot-box issue in the 2015 election, when the Harper government calls an election, because we have to get Canadians to connect. When we go cast the ballot, they’re going to vote for a government who are going to support expansion of the CPP.

You heard Tom Mulcair speak at our Unifor conference in Vancouver. He said if he becomes Prime Minister, he will double CPP. He will roll back OAS and GIS to 65. We have to win those fights.

But, as I speak to you today, for the first time since the 2008 financial crisis, the upcoming federal budget, they’re going to have surplus money. And, every one of you in this audience either knows someone or has a family member who is a senior, who will retire, who are currently getting GIS and OAS right now. But, I can’t think of a better group of Canadians that we need to give a raise for the upcoming surplus in the federal government budget.

Seniors in this country are living in poverty. They need to be eliminated from poverty, and all we need to do is to increase the GIS payment, and we need to put the Conservatives’ feet to the fire and hold it there, because they should use that money, not to do income splitting.

The last time I checked, by the way, there was not a single poll that said income splitting is the Number 1 issue in this country. Every time they have done a national poll, Canadians have confirmed healthcare is the Number 1 issue in this country. And, by God, we’ve got to put the money where it belongs.

So, this campaign is really about taking it back to the communities, to the activists and the seniors and the retirees, to say we must fight this fight and we must win this fight. At the same time we need to recognize that if we don’t get there by now, the next election, we’ve got to
ensure this becomes a ballot-box issue.

And, I intend to do exactly what I said at the convention. We are going to re-launch this campaign from coast to coast, to ensure that every Canadian understands this is an issue we must win.

You see, every generation in this country has always had to fight the fight, to help ensure the next generation has it much better. For all of you who have kids and grandkids in this audience, this fight is about them. This fight is about when my daughter becomes an adult and she gets to retirement age. Have we built a better system, a public system, that ensures that that generation is going to have a better pension?

This fight is also to ensure that the 11 million Canadians that I just talked about, whether or not they’re going to have a retirement to live in dignity when they get there in their golden age.

Sisters and brothers, I can tell you, everywhere we have been across this country, 11 provinces still support this campaign. Municipalities have passed a resolution to support this campaign.

As a matter of fact, right here in this room, when the Canadian Federation of Municipalities met back in 2010, they passed a resolution right here at the international conference to support the expansion of CPP.

I know we will win this campaign. We can’t give up. And, I need each and every one of you to be part of this effort. We are going to be going right across this province to re-launch this campaign. I need you to be part of this. I need you to talk to your members about this. I need you to talk to your family members about this, because this is about the future.

You see, more importantly, as working people, you’ve got a couple of options. We can put a lot of money in our trunks when we get to old age and we’ll have enough money to take care of us, or we can keep negotiating pensions, defending our pensions in the workplace and, more importantly, we can grow the public pension system.

I think we need to grow the public pension system, but in addition to that, we need to also ensure we can defend the pensions we negotiate at the bargaining table.

I know that we also have to build a system in this country where all Canadians, regardless of whether you’re a union member or not, when you retire from a lifetime of work, you will have dignity in retirement. You should not have to live in poverty. That is what this campaign is about. So, it’s critical. It’s critical that we win this fight. And, this fight is about us, because we put this on the table. And, we have to ensure the provinces get on side and support us.

The only government that stands in the way today in reaching an agreement to expand CPP is our federal government. And, that is Stephen Harper, because he is ideologically opposed to working people having decency in their retirement.

Look at what he did when he went to Davos. He went to Davos and said, “We’re going to roll back the age for collecting OAS and GIS to 67.” To 67. Who does that affect? It affects everybody in this room who is under the age of 55. It’s working people. By the way, millionaires don’t need to worry about OAS and GIS. It is working people who collect OAS and GIS across this country.

That shows how mean-spirited this government has been. And, more importantly, this same government is attacking private pension plans right across this country, and opposed to expanding the Canada Pension Plan.

So, let me conclude this. An important campaign is a fundamental campaign on behalf of working people and a campaign we must win.

I also want to echo one of the recommendations that I see in your recommendations, regarding many of the locals here that are not yet affiliated to the OFL. You know the labour movement as a whole is not a perfect family. There are always some challenges and difficulties in the labour movement. But, if we all love each other, we’ll be that much stronger. But, as you know, at the end of the day, that is not the reality. There are some serious challenges.

The Ontario Federation of Labour is an important organization. As it has been said before, there are some challenges in the federation. I met with some of the senior leadership last Sunday to talk about how we’re going to resolve and strengthen the federation in Ontario.
And, by God, we need a strong Ontario Federation of Labour, because without it, we’re not going to have the voice of working people across this province to speak up on behalf of working people.

We are about to launch a major campaign for labour reform in this province. We need every union to support that campaign, to work to ensure if working people sign a union card and they want to join a union, by God, why should the employer interfere in the democratic decision of working people where they want to join a union across this province? We must win that campaign. If we can’t grow our movement, we are going to die a natural death.

So, I want to say to all of you, as your leadership will ask you if you’re not affiliated to the federation, I can’t tell you the importance of that. But, more importantly, that is a decision you have to make and take it back to your membership.

So, let me conclude to say to all of you, you gave me an opportunity to become your President in May. May seems like a distant past for me, because the last six months, I have criss-crossed this country more times than I care to remember. I want to give you some understanding of my schedule.

This Sunday, I will start the week in Newfoundland, speaking at a federation midterm conference for the importance of retirement security, but also the importance of the next federal election.

I will then go out Monday morning. I get on a flight to go to Edmonton. I will meet with the Premier’s office, to talk about this new Premier in Alberta. I want to talk to him about retirement security and the importance of that. And, that same evening, we are going to re-launch the Retirement Security campaign in Edmonton.

On Tuesday morning, I will fly to British Columbia to speak to the British Columbia Federation of Labour Convention. And, on Wednesday morning, I fly back here to Ontario to meet with the senior leadership to try and see how we can resolve and fix the problems in the OFL.

I do this on your behalf, because I recognize fundamentally, you didn’t expect me to sit on my behind in Ottawa and tell you what a great job it is to be the President of the Canadian Labour Congress.

This is a moment in our history we can’t allow ourselves to be complacent about. Next year, we will have the most important election in the history of working people in this country. And, the decisions we make both in our union, in our families, and in our communities is going to be fundamental about what kind of Canada we want to live in.

Do we want to live in a country that is taking care of all its citizens, or simply rewards the rich and the wealthy and the powerful in our country?

Do we want to live in a Canada where when we get sick, we have a national healthcare system with a federal government that has been a partner, funding it and supporting it and growing that healthcare system, so all Canadians can have healthcare when they get old or when they get sick in this country?

Do we want a Canada where only the privileged few can retire in dignity in this country? Or, do we want a Canada where all working people who have given a lifetime of commitment to work can retire with security and dignity in their golden years?

Do we want to live in a Canada where the young people who get a decent education are told by our Bank of Canada governor they need to work for free, so they can get something on their CV?

Or, do we want to live in a Canada where jobs are plentiful and young people can graduate from university and get a decent job, to make a decent living, and start a family and buy a home, like some of us have been privileged to do? Or, do we want to live in a Canada where we’re all poor, a Canada who doesn’t care?

This is the Canada that Stephen Harper would like to take us down. So, next year, for all of us in this room, we’re going to have to roll up our sleeves like we have never done. This work is not going to be done by somebody else. It will be done by each and every one of you in this audience. We have a responsibility when that election is called. It may come in the spring or it may
come in October.

But, I want to tell every one of you in this room. It is not simply Peter and Jerry and your national leadership who is going to take on this fight. This is a fight for the kind of Canada we have been building for the 100-and-something years in this country. This is the kind of Canada that we want to live in. This is the kind of Canada we want to create.

And, if we allow this government to get another mandate, we are not going to recognize this country. For many of us right now, we don’t recognize the Canada we live in today; an uncaring country, a country that has isolated itself internationally. All we can talk about is militarism, rather than how we held other countries in their challenges, in their darkest moments.

Sisters and brothers, you want to live in a Canada where the things that you are debating here are fundamental to the national agenda. For murdered and missing Aboriginal women, you can expect that international governments will do what is necessary by calling an inquiry to understand. How is it that our justice system has failed First Nations people so many times in our country?

We want to live in a Canada where our young people can say, if I get a decent education, I can have a future, as opposed to they’re never going to have a decent job. They’re going to work part time, temporary, not even knowing whether they’re going to have a pension.

That moment will come next year. There are going to be many political action conferences in this province. But, this province will be Ground Zero for the war against the next government. And, by God, we are going to have to elect more progressive people in this province, if you want to take back this country.

So, I hope when that moment comes, you will find a CLC conference will be at no cost to your local union, so there is no excuse for you not to come. And, more importantly, there is no reason why you can’t go back to your local union and talk to your members about what this opportunity is going to be for us, to change the direction of this country.

I know we can do this. We represent 3.3 million workers across this country. And, by God, this is our moment to send a message to this rotten government that we have had to endure for the last nine years to say we are going to do something now within this country. We’re going to roll up our sleeves and we’re going to work as hard as we can.

We’re going to convince our fellow brothers and sisters in their workplace, buy I’m going to convince my family. I’m going to convince my neighbour. I’m going to convince my friends and everyone that I know that we need to elect a government that is going to stand up for the interests of working people, because I know we can do better. I know we can do better. That’s the Canada we want to build.

So, sisters and brothers, next year when our conferences come, I want to see all of you there. But, more importantly, I want you to commit and not give me the phony excuse about how busy you are. This is about your future. This is about your kids’ future. And, this is about the future of our country. And, I know we can do better.

So, I thank you so much. Thank you for the opportunity. I look forward to the great work we’re going to do. Thank you so much for building a better country. Thank you so much.

DINO CHIODO: Hassan, it’s always good having you at the microphone. When we chatted, it was going to be about CPP, Old Age Security and GIS. But, it is always informative to have Hassan in the room. He is well-rounded. He knows his issues and, it shows. And, we say thank you very much for all the hard work and dedication that you put into your job. Mic 1.

BRIAN NICHOLL: Point of privilege.

DINO CHIODO: Absolutely.

BRIAN NICHOLL: Brian Nicholl, 199. I just want to recognize a good friend of mine, a brother of our local, Brother Mark Roy. Back in April when we were at Council in Port Elgin, Mark was diagnosed, we found out, with cancer. He has always been part of the fight-back committee. He has been a strong leader for the less fortunate in our community. He has done an amazing job.

It’s just great to see him here. If everybody could give him a big hand? He has just finished his third round of chemo on Wednesday and he has made it down here. So, my brother, Mark Roy.
DINO CHIODO: Way to go, brother. Keep up that fight. I think I have another point of privilege at mic 4; right?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good evening, brothers and sisters. Really, when I hear Brother Hassan, I feel proud to be a member of the union. And, what Brother Hassan said encouraged me to tell you this message I have. A brother of mine asked me to send this message to you from Syria, from a city that is called Douma, which is a small city around Damascus. It has been around two years under sanction from the regime, just because the residents in that city asked for freedom and democracy for the country.

So, this friend told me he was volunteering in the centre to distribute humanitarian aid to the civilians in that city. Then, they heard a baby crying in that centre. So, they went and they found a baby maybe not more than two or three months old.

So, they investigated who is the mother. They found the mother and they asked her, “So, why did you leave your daughter in the Centre and you left?” She said to them, “I have been one week looking for baby milk. I didn’t find. And, I am hopeless to find baby milk for my daughter. So, if I take her now, she will cry two or three days in front of me, and then she will die, and I will die after her. So, I left her in the Centre. I hope somebody is able to feed her and keep her alive. And, I am going to die alone in my home.”

My friend told me, “Please tell your union convention this story. Let your colleagues, your sisters and brothers in the union know they have brothers and sisters in humanity. They are suffering. They are starving. The women leave their kids because they have no food to feed them.”

So, please, brothers and sisters don’t forget my people back home. They are starving. Thank you so much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Thank you very much, brother. Is there a point at mic 2? No?

Okay. So, going to the recommendation. The recommendation is No. 3 on your sheets. I will read the recommendation. It’s for the Ontario Federation of Labour.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3

BROTHER DINO CHIODO: I recommend that Unifor’s Ontario local unions who have not affiliated to the Ontario Federation of Labour do so, and that locals send full delegations to the OFL Convention in 2015. I further recommend that local unions that are partially affiliated increase to full affiliation.

Can I have a mover? Seconder? We’ll open the mics. Mic 1.

KARI JEFFORD: Kari Jefford, Local 229. Just very quickly, I stand in full support of this recommendation. I just want to give folks the top ten reasons to re-affiliate or fully affiliate to the OFL, starting from ten all the way down to one. So, No. 10 being Sid Ryan; No. 9 being Health and Safety; No. 8, WSIB; No. 7, Good Jobs; No. 6, Pensions; No. 5, Education; No. 4, Healthcare; No. 3, Ford; No. 2, Hudak and, of course, No. 1, Harper.

So, 63 cents per member per month equals solidarity, and defeating Harper is priceless. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Good job. Speaker, mic 2.

MAGGIE HARBERT: Maggie Harbert, Local 35-O. That was a tough one to follow, David Letterman there. I rise in support of this recommendation also. Although it is in our Constitution, a good number of our locals are not affiliated. I encourage all locals who are not to step up and join.

We need to put the negativity that both Katha, Sid and Hassan touched on behind us. And, regardless of the reason why you have not affiliated, put it in the past. You can’t change things from the outside.

As we head towards the federal election, we, as the House of Labour in Ontario, have to become strong and have a strong common front. And, one way to do this is for all of our locals to step up and be part of the OFL. Thank you.

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

CHRIS TAYLOR: Thanks, Dino. Chris Taylor, NEB. I rise in support of the
Brothers and sisters, we heard Sid talk this morning. And, Sid really reached out. This is about labour. This is about setting an agenda.

Unifor was created to change the movement, to change the directive, to make sure that our voice was being heard. We can’t do that without allies like the OFL.

Regardless of the situation, regardless of the noise that we’re hearing out there, because of our direction as a union, it is incumbent on us as Unifor to make sure that the OFL is a sustainable functioning organization, because they’re part of us; we’re part of them. We can’t do what we need to do, if we don’t have a functioning OFL.

So, when you get back to your locals, talk to your members. Talk to your executive. Make sure they’re paying their affiliation fees. And, by the way, make sure they’re paying their full affiliation fees.

A speaker just said 63 cents per member. And, understandably, there’s a lot of local unions out there, small local unions that struggle with fees. Imagine what it is going to be like if we don’t have an OFL and if we don’t have a strong labour movement? The 63 cents won’t matter, brothers and sisters, because we won’t have unions to be able to fight the agenda. So, please, go back into your locals and make sure it happens. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker at mic 1.

JIM REID: Thanks, Dino. Jim Reid, President of Local 27, and proud to say that we are fully affiliated to the OFL. And, the reason why we are fully affiliated to the OFL is -- I mean, Sister Jefford wrapped it quite succinctly in her top ten list.

But, also, we have recognized, and we historically in our union have recognized that we need a strong progressive labour movement in this province. And, the message of labour -- and it’s not just the message of one particular affiliate or one particular union. The message of the movement has to come through loud and clear from the federation.

And, when we have a progressive voice at the head of the labour federation, our message gets out. We need leaders like Sid Ryan and Irwin Nanda, who share the values of our union. We need leaders who believe that political action is more than just writing a cheque to the NDP.

We need to continue our support from leaders who understand that if the labour movement is to grow, we need to reach out. We need to reach out to the unorganized and yet to the organized. We need to reach out to the marginalized and racialized communities.

And, also, we have an opportunity that is ahead of us. We have an opportunity with what the provincial government is proposing as far as our labour reform. Hopefully, it is going to be progressive reform.

And, if we have a strong House of Labour, we can make the changes that we have been fighting for, for the last 20 or 30 years. And, that is why it is absolutely essential that we who belong to Unifor, are privileged to belong to Unifor, fully affiliate to the OFL.

And, just to wrap up, that when we support the OFL and when we participate in the OFL, we are participating in building a stronger, more inclusive, more progressive, more activist and more militant labour movement. And, that is going to serve the needs of not only our members, but our communities. Thank you.

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


So, we as a union are not islands unto ourselves. It takes working together with other unions and labour organizations, community partners and our membership, to be progressive in protecting our rights and benefits that we have come to expect as Canadians, such as healthcare and pensions.

Affiliation dues to the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Federation of Labour, and our Labour Councils is important to fund education to members and our communities, lobbying and campaigning for justice in the workplace, community and around the world.

The Grey-Bruce Labour Council this year has only half of our affiliate support that we did last year, so that really affects what we can do in our communities. So, please consider having
the discussion at your local to ensure that affiliation of your membership or to increase your per capita to full membership is done, because working together and fighting back does make a difference, and we have to do it together. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic -- six.

**DOUG DUTTON:** Doug Dutton, Local 52, President. I come from a fairly small local, 86 members. And, we affiliate to OFL, to Labour Council. And, I urge everyone to keep up your affiliations, because as a small local, you still need the help of the House of Labour. And, what better way to get that help than to join the OFL and Labour Councils? Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you. Going to mic 4, recognizing Len Hope from the Retirees Executive.

**LEN HOPE:** Thanks very much, Dino. The point that I want to make today is, we have to work together. Corporations can look at some of the ways that we are destroying ourselves, because labour is not fighting the way they should. But, we have to fight to get it. And, it is not because you want something personal out of it.

When you take a look at all of the things we talk about, you’re talking about employment, you’re talking about benefits, you’re talking about pensions, you’re talking about a number of things that don’t affect you right away, but they affect your kids. And, all of you have kids and grandkids. And, if we don’t fight today, our kids are going to suffer tomorrow.

It is bad enough that we’ve got the Canada Pension put off until 67. But, there’s other things that are there, that are very important. You have things that -- around the world. They’re trying to force young people to work in Canada. They’re saying we should have our kids work for experience, for nothing.

Now, if you can imagine that, where are they going to live? What are they learning about? What are they doing for themselves? What are they doing for you? We have to fight together.

So, please, those of you who aren’t affiliating in full dollars, please do that. Let’s make this Ontario Federation of Labour strong. And, tell your other unions and your friends next door that their union should be doing the same thing. We have got to strengthen the labour movement, so that we can move ahead for our kids. Thanks.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you. I see no other speakers on the mics.

All those in favour? *(favouring votes shown)*

Down.

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

Carried. **CARRIED.**

Thank you very much. And, if I can, now that the recommendation has been passed, I think it is also important to recognize the labour councils as well. And, I know that the Ontario Federation of Labour is an important component, and we need to support that initiative to our fullest extent.

But, it is the labour councils that also work with the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress. And, from that perspective, we should be working in unison with them as well. I think that is just an important statement that has to be made that wasn’t touched on.

Okay. Going on to the next order of business, I would like to call up John Aman, the Director of Organizing, for an Organizing Report. John Aman.

**ORGANIZING REPORT**

**JOHN AMAN:** Thank you very much, brothers and sisters. Thank you to Katha, Dino and the Executive. And, thanks to Peter for doing half my report, so that will certainly cut down my time. I’m just seeing if the PowerPoint is cued up yet, folks in the back? Okay, there we go.

And, for the benefit of the delegates, the Organizing Report is found at pages 48 to 55 in the books that were handed to you, in the reports.

So, from the outset, I think it is important that we understand the mandate of Unifor. And, I think it can be found in the first line of the organizing policy that was adopted at the
foundating convention, where it identifies why workers need unions. “They're to help equalize the inherent balance and bargaining power between workers and employers that exist in any workplace and society as a whole.”

We know that individually we can never hope to achieve fairness and true prosperity. Only with a strong union and proper representation can workers obtain the working conditions and living standards they need and deserve.

We simply cannot maintain our existing standards if our influence continues to decline, especially in the face of the challenges we are confronted with today, and they are many. You have heard from Hassan, you have heard from many speakers, and you will continue to hear from many speakers of all the various challenges and issues and concerns that working people face today in their daily lives, not only in the workplace but, more importantly, in society as a whole.

And, as we organize new members, growing our membership in density, it increases our power and influence with our employers, our communities in the political area. New members bring new idea, energy, diversity, and revitalizes our union. It truly changes our union.

And, as we organize new members, growing our membership in density, it increases our power and influence with our employers, our communities in the political area. New members bring new idea, energy, diversity, and revitalizes our union. It truly changes our union.

For most of us when we entered the union movement, the movement did not look like the movement it does today. I think it’s a testament to all the new folks that have joined our organization, bringing about, again, the ideas, challenging us in the way we do things and, ultimately, helping make us a much, much better organization. And, new members validate the importance of unions in creating a just and civil society.

And, like I alluded to earlier, from the outset, a key mandate of Unifor in all steps of the early discussions, both from the Proposal Committee meeting, the working groups, was Unifor had to be an organizing union.

We know that both of our previous organizations have adopted progressive and ambitious organizing policies, but the implementation of those policies was incomplete and inconsistent, if we have to be honest with each other. And, there was a number of factors why this was, but I think key was the failure of the union to really integrate organizing as a core priority for the whole union, the culture.

And, I think moving forward, we recognize that organizing needs to be a key ingredient in everything we do, and everything we do needs to be looked at through an organizing lens as we move forward. And, there is a reason why.

I think if the current trends continue, and we have heard about what has been happening in our society, the values and standards of life that we have come to enjoy will cease to exist. And, there isn’t a more stark example than south of the border, United States, where the unions have been brought to their knees and equality is more prevalent than ever.

Ironically, I was very fortunate last night to be a part of a small group that attended the Ed Broadbent dinner, and the keynote speaker was Robert Reich, who was the former Secretary of Labour for Bill Clinton. A very progressive man and very well-spoken.

But, clearly, he identified that one of the key, key problems facing United States today is the union density that exists. He said, “You cannot have equity in any society if the density is where it’s at in United States.” And, that is very true.

I mean, the median wage -- not only the growing gap, because I don’t think the growing gap tells the full story. But, if you look at median wages and where they’re at, you will see that a trend has been happening across the globe. And, that is the challenge we face today.

And, like Katha properly alluded to -- and I think is a very, very important point. If organizing is left to the responsibility for a small group, and we have great organizers, a great member organizers and locals, we will never reach our goals, no matter how hard we work.

I mean, it is everybody’s job to grow the union, and it is everybody’s job to play a role in our organizing efforts. And, everybody needs to recognize that you play a very important role in our organizing activities.

The reality is, Peter and Jerry are not the face of the union in your communities. It is the rank-and-file folks. It is the leadership. It is the local unions who play such an important and tremendous role in the communities that you live in, that you work in.
Yes, you have some tough days. There’s no doubt about it. Certain days are very hard. But, we still wake up every morning knowing that it is incumbent upon us that we are going to make a difference. And, we need to ensure that we don’t get discouraged in the work that we do.

So, not only through our collective bargaining and implementing positive policies and introducing organizing language through to our collective bargaining, but in the work of the local and the meetings and our education and everything we do, we need to ensure that we try and integrate our organizing and those activities.

And, there is a number of organizing policies, as most of you are aware of: the local union organizing program, the organizing liaisons. There’s a 50/50 cost-sharing program that the locals can participate in with the support of the National union, to help ensure that we try and meet our goals and objectives.

So, there has been a lot accomplished in the short term. But, we know that there’s a lot more work that needs to be done. And, our work will not nor should it be measured in years, but rather in decades. We need to set the bar high and we need to challenge ourselves.

And, Hassan talked about this point, the second point on the slide. We have to ask ourselves what our workplaces and society and country is going to look like for the next generation. In fact, I think we all read the recent data that the next generation, for the first time ever, is going to be worse off than us. And, that is shameful. I mean, that is shameful. And, that is something that I think with proper planning and the work of progressive organizations like Unifor, we can reverse that trend.

And, we also know that we are not under the illusion that we are going to reverse or change the decline overnight. The art is simply there’s no shortcuts. There’s no magic bullets and there’s no gimmicks.

I think through proper planning and strategic planning with the support, again, of the locals, the leadership and the membership, we can reach the high threshold we set for ourselves and fulfil our dreams.

So, I’ll talk a little bit about the highlights. And, I know that the Toyota campaign has been front and centre and generated a lot of attention, not only in our union and not only in the labour movement across Canada, but worldwide. And, I think it continues to be a key litmus test for our union.

It can be lost on us, by the way, that in 2014 when we applied, over 3,000 Toyota workers had individually committed to Unifor. And, as a testament not only to their conviction and their passion, but to the reputation of the labour movement.

And, as much as it was disappointing for our union it was much more disappointing for some of those workers, some of whom for over 25 years had been working with our predecessor unions, trying to introduce a union in that workplace. So, we are committed to them. It may not be tomorrow, but we certainly know that the workers in Toyota will be represented by Unifor in the very near future.

And, we have organized -- and I’ll get to this in a second. We continue to organize workers from coast to coast. And, I know Peter talked a little bit about some of the key areas. And, we identified the northernmost inhabited workplace in the world, Ellesmere Island in Nunavut, where the workers are on a four week shift.

I mean, you think about a continental shift. They’re in 4 weeks; out 4 weeks. They have to fly from Trenton to Greenland to Nunavut. There’s one flight a week that goes in there. It’s a secure military base.

And, the workers look after the base. They’re the kitchen cleaners, the cooks. They look after the grounds. Ironically, this is where the Government of Canada monitors all of our cell-phone conversations. And, it’s a very high-tech workplace.

So, we organized a hotel with transportation workers in B.C., energy workers in Alberta. We continue working with miners in Saskatchewan, and aerospace workers in Manitoba. We have organized healthcare. Peter talked about Ontario. We had some recent success with some courier workers in PEI, in New Brunswick. And, we’re working with some offshore workers in Newfoundland. And, Unifor is playing a very important role in their lives, not only in trying to support
them in their struggles, but moving forward.

So, today the numbers have changed. And, again, I think it’s a testament to the work that we have been doing. There’s a lot of work that has been going on. And, this is listed in your books. The numbers have gone up since we have actually prepared a report. In 2014, we have added 40 new workplaces certified for a total of 2,372 members.

In fact, I see Ross Gerrie in the room. Just before I got up to speak, Ross, I just got your certificate. We just had a vote for about 120 clerical workers at Woodstock Hospital. And, they’re not officially certified and part of Unifor. So, congratulations to Ross and his team.

And, as an additional, four other workplaces, we’ve had either a successful vote or it’s an automatic certification. And, we anticipate being certified very shortly.

And, we have also had some major successes working with Local 27, in major PSLRTA votes between unions. We have had some Section 18 votes, CLC justification votes, because the work of the Organizing Department extends just beyond the traditional organizing the unorganized. But, there’s a lot of other votes that occur. And, there’s a full listing of these in the report under the activity report.

And, on page 51, if I can have the indulgence of the delegates? There’s a full listing of the active drives that are currently going on in the workplace. I strongly urge our delegates to look at those lists, to take them back to your community and see if some of these are in your community.

If you know anybody that works there, or you know of anybody that knows of anybody that works there, please, by all means, pass that information along to the Organizing Department. Every little bit helps us in the work that we do.

And, the other major initiative -- and, the healthcare members in the room will be glad to hear this. The other major initiative that we have taken on is CLAC. CLAC is a -- I’m not going to call them a union, but they’re an association that undermines legitimate unions. And, they’re predominantly found in southwestern Ontario.

And so, we are engaged in a major campaign to displace CLAC. They represent about 10,000 healthcare members. In healthcare, a lot of our members work in multiple facilities. So, if there is anybody that you know or are aware of, by all means, this is the kind of information that you can play a small role -- actually, it’s a big role, in helping us reach our goals and hopefully assist those workers to belong to a legitimate organization.

The other highlight -- and, you can put this down in your calendar. Our very first Unifor’s first ever Organizing Conference will be held July 3rd to the 5th, 2015, in Port Elgin. And, we have a number of local unions participating in our cost-sharing programs in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

And, our MO Program is in place. We have very good activists lending some valuable support in our organizing campaigns and in various workplace votes across the country.

Another key component, and a piece that Peter talked about, to touch upon a little bit, is our strategic organizing. We are being a lot more strategic in our reaching out to the various council sectors, working with regional directors and key staff, and mapping the lay of the land, where our members work, where our sectors are at, and working with the Research Department identifying true targets. And, again, establishing, identifying and prioritizing what those targets are going to look like in our future organizing efforts.

And, we are developing policies that -- I touched upon this a little bit earlier, in regards to our collective bargaining policy and bargaining neutrality. We have to use our leverage that we have. And, we have some very good leverage with some of our employers to ensure that when we have an organizing campaign at another facility that they run, that they can’t behave in a manner that is counter-productive to the current relations that we have.

It’s uncanny. On one hand, they will sit down and work with us, negotiate collective agreements, deal with workplace problems, but when there are non-union workers want to join a union in another facility, they behave as bad as any other employer. And, that can’t happen. It can’t happen.

If they want to respect our union, they have to respect our union everywhere we
Looking at various political framework agreements where companies have signed on to labour standards, so we have to make sure that they’re enforced. And, working with the Political Mobilization Department, Rolly Kiehne and Jenny Ahn, looking at labour law reform.

I think a lot has been written about Toyota and the campaign. And, clearly, all the evidence, all the research we had done, showed a certain threshold of where the number of employees were at. And, it is a guessing game. It is very easy to identify the smaller workplace. But, if you can imagine a facility -- three. Toyota runs three major plants with -- we know now today the lists were accurate. They had about 7,500 employees. About 300 of them were off on some sort of illness, military leave, and so on and so forth.

So, I know in some jurisdictions there’s things like early disclosure. If a union can prove that it has reached a certain threshold, the employer is then mandated to give the union -- maybe not even the address of the people, but at least give the union an idea of how many employees work there. So, at least, the union gets -- it’s a fair fight.

And, there’s other components to the labour law reform. But, that’s the one aspect, working with the various organizations, CLC, OFL, and trying to establish a fair and balanced approach to labour relations moving forward.

And, coming soon, we’ve got multiple organizing and training awareness programs that are going to be coming to a town near you, working with our regional directors. And, we have developed some programs for all levels of membership, activists and workplaces across the country to help, change the culture of the union, to give people the tools and the confidence, so that when you’re talking to a non-union worker, whether it’s at a coffee store or a grocery store, that at least you feel that you have a little bit of the tools to do so, and do so in an effective matter and not bring harm in any way to an individual.

So, that is something that most of you have talked to us about. It is something that is going to be rolling out very shortly.

And, the key piece to all of this is organizing front and centre of all the union’s key discussions, whether it’s at the National Executive Board, the Strategic Planning Committee or the newly formed Strategic Organizing Working Group, comprised of all the assistants, and the regional directors, and some of the key departments looking at how we all can play a role in supporting our organizing efforts, recognizing that it just can’t be left to one department, to one group of people. Our true success will only come when the whole organization is firmly committed and standing firmly behind our organizing efforts.

And, lastly, I want to touch a little bit about the one initiative that generated a lot of good press for good reasons, which is our Community Chapter Program, which is a work in progress. It is an innovative way of extending the union to folks who may never, ever be able to join the union through traditional means, because they either don’t have an employer; they’re freelancers; they’re retired from the job; they’re not able to work.

And, how do we engage folks that have the same philosophy as us, have the same dreams and aspirations, and want to see the same type of country? And, the Community Chapter program is a process to open up our tent and our umbrella to bring more folks into our team, into our corner.

So, there is ongoing outreach and development with the various potential groups across the country. We’re establishing support for where we’re supporting the first two established Community Chapters. And, we’re working with local unions that want to set up a Community Chapter. And, we have had some discussions with some key local unions in key areas.

We have a Green Shield benefit plan for members of the Community Chapter. So, for unemployed or under-employed, or somebody who is an independent contractor who may not be able to negotiate with an individual employer, today they can sign up as a Community Chapter member, and get basic benefits, not only for themselves, but for their families, with a new dues-collecting process to ensure that people can access the union in a much easier way, as opposed to collecting individually from people.
And, some model bylaw language has been developed. Promotional materials and organizing guides are available. And, most of the stuff you can also find on our website. Roxanne Dubois is also here today. If you have any questions or any potential Community Chapter, please just -- Roxanne will stand up and wave, so most of you know who she is there. Please speak to Roxanne directly. I know she will be glad to help you in establishing some chapters.

So, in conclusion, again, I want to quote a couple of key sentences from our organizing policy.

“Our success in organizing will be an important indicator of whether Unifor is living up to the hopes and expectations that we’ve raised. But, we need to collectively and passionately commit to implementing this ambitious organizing strategy and turning around the decline in union power that is so threatening to economic, social and political well-being of everyone in Canada.”

Most of us are here not because we want a free trip to Toronto, we’re going to get a T-shirt or a pen. We are here because we think we can fundamentally play a very important role, unselfishly by the way, taking on a lot more work than we have to. And, I think that is a true test of progressive and of trade unionism.

So, in closing, we need everybody’s support. I think people sometimes say -- and I have seen Kenny running around here as he usually does. Kenny always says, “I can never have been an organizer,” and I have always disagreed with him.

Everybody can play a role in organizing. It may not be, maybe, in front of a room talking to a group of workers about their labour laws and their legal rights, but it is about recognizing that we can all play a role, no matter how small it is, to our future success.

So, I thank you for your time. And, I am around. I’m not sure -- no, there’s no questions. But, if you have any questions, by all means, please grab me, and I will be glad to talk to you about any of the initiatives that were presented. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, John. It is much appreciated. It is always informative, especially with the amount of work that you guys are doing in the Organizing Department. So, thanks for all your efforts and keep up the good work.

Getting on to the next business of the day, I’d like to ask Kari Jefford to come up to introduce our next guest speaker.

Point of order on mic 1

CHERYL ROBINSON: Cheryl Robinson, President of Local 2002, the second largest local union of Unifor. Also, a National Executive Board member.

Just on the Organizing Report, I did want to introduce folks today at our Ontario Regional Council to one of Unifor’s newest members, with thanks to the Organizing Department for all the great work that they have done in adding new units to the Unifor Local 2002 group, including the members, which are about 500 kilometres from the North Pole, which is exciting.

But, we have got today with us Courtney Chick who is from Porter, which is one of the newest airline units. Courtney’s group approached the Unifor Organizing Department quite some time ago about joining a union. And, I met with them just most recently as a few weeks ago and got to know them a little bit. A good group of folks. I’m really glad that they have changed the Unifor family.

The Porter workers that Courtney works with right now come from the Island Airport here at Toronto. So, they do the below-the-wing work for Porter Airlines at Billy Bishop Airport.

So, we are very excited to have these folks join us. We think it’s the beginning of what we hope to be many more organizing opportunities for Porter members across the country. And, those folks in the room probably know about Porter Airlines. I’m sure. Especially in Ontario, you have read lots about what goes on with Porter Airlines.

So, it was an exciting opportunity to meet with the folks down there. And, we have got some fingers crossed. Hopefully, next week, we’ll have the above-the-wing. There’s 75 workers 76 including Courtney. And, Courtney was instrumental in bringing those members into Unifor. A big huge round of applause to Courtney and all his efforts. And, welcome to all the members at Porter. We hope to have many more soon. Thanks.
DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Cheryl. And, Courtney, welcome to the Unifor
family. Thank you very much. We look forward to seeing you more at the Ontario Regional Councils.

KARI JEFFORD: Thanks, Dino. It’s my pleasure to introduce Deena Ladd. She is
a co-ordinator for the Workers' Action Centre, rebuilding labour protection for Ontario workers.
Deena Ladd has been working to improve wages and working conditions,
primarily for workers of colour, low-wage workers and immigrant workers for over 20 years in Canada.
She was a union organizer in the '90s, working with garment workers, home-based workers, social
service, retail and manufacturing workers.

Deena is one of the founders and is the co-ordinator of the Workers’ Action Centre here in Toronto, working with mainly non-union workers in temp, contract and precarious jobs
that face low wages and violations of rights. Welcome to Deena.

ADDRESS: REBUILDING LABOUR PROTECTION FOR ONTARIO WORKERS, DEENA LADD.

WORKERS’ ACTION CENTRE COORDINATOR

DEENA LADD: Hello, everyone. How are you doing? Are you good? It’s a
Friday afternoon. Are you ready for this? Yes, you’ve got your coffee in hand?

Because I want to have a good conversation with you about an amazing
organizing opportunity that is ahead of us, in terms of union members working with folks like me, who
work in worker centres and with workers who are non-unionized, who are in contract and temp jobs,
who are in minimum-wage jobs, and who are wanting to really fight to make some decent changes in
this province. So, that is the conversation I want to have with you today.

The Ontario government, through a lot of pressure by many of us, have agreed to
basically announce before the holidays, hopefully, that they’re going to be doing a full review about
basic labour standards.

So, that includes the Employment Standards Act, which is the law that governs
about 6 million workers in this province who don’t have a union, and the Ontario Labour Relations Act,
which is the law that governs how you unionize and governs unions.

So, for us who have been organizing around precarious employment and around
absolutely crappy conditions out there, this is a really good opportunity for us to be doing the mobilizing
that we need to across the province, and to try and rebuild our protection of labour laws.

So, that is what I am here to talk to you about, because we are going to need
every single person in this room to work with us, to make sure that this review is not some showy piece
that the government does, to make it look like it is doing something, but where we actually win some
decent protections and really make a difference in people’s lives. So, I hope that you can work with us
to do that.

So, why is this so critical? Well, I’m sure I don’t really need to explain to you.
But, I do think it is important to talk about some of the context; right? Like, the kind of stuff that we’re
dealing with, in terms of organizing, whether it’s for unionized workers or for organizations like mine,
which is working with workers who do not have any union protection and who probably can’t get union
protection under the current system.

Since the last global recession of 2008 and the kind of systematic restructuring
that we have been seeing in our labour market for the past 30 years, combined with a total
deterioration of working conditions, a stagnation of wages, pushing down on wages, getting rid of our
benefits, and really trying to deal with this massive violation of basic labour standards, I mean, that is
what the labour market is right now.

And, this is a big challenge, I think, for a lot of us, in terms of how to challenge
this, whether it’s from trying to form a union or trying to ensure that people even have basic access.

I don’t know if many of you have heard about the report that was produced by
the United Way last year where they looked at some of the working conditions in Hamilton, in Whitby,
in Durham, Halton, Peel, York and Toronto.

And, it showed that half of those working, half only had permanent full-time
positions that included benefits and some degree of employment security. So, that is like 50 percent.
That is a huge number of people who are in unstable, insecure jobs.
And, I think it is really important to know that precarious employment, so work that is unstable, that is insecure, that people don’t know if they’re going to have a job next week or a job tomorrow, has increased by 50 percent just in the last 20 years. Part-time work has increased by 150 percent just in the last few years as well.

And so, the restructuring of companies in terms of how they hire, who they hire and how they’re using every loophole to avoid their responsibility for their workforce, whether it’s through temp agencies, subcontracting, labour leases, brokers, franchisees. This is the norm, right, in our communities right now, in terms of how people are hired.

The temp industry in Canada is concentrated in this province. Sixty percent of their wealth is generated in this province. We have thousands of temp agencies in Ontario, and where workers get paid on average 40 percent less, working alongside someone who is doing the same work; right? And, this is completely legal.

We have a huge growth of workers who are misclassified as self-employed or independent contractors, forced to register as a business just to even get a job, or just told that this is what you are.

So, in the world that I am in, in terms of workers voting in on a hotline, workers are even just fighting to be recognized as workers before they can even claim Employment Insurance or file a complaint to the Ministry of Labour. They have to prove that they’re actually a worker, right?

And, there has been a huge growth of owner-operators, independent contract workers who are facing the real brunt of how businesses have downloaded all of their costs onto those workers, so things like recruitment fees, fees to get a job, cleaning equipment, insurance, clothing, vehicles, basic things that you need to do a job; those costs are now being borne by individual workers.

And, for workers who don’t have a union, I mean, the lack of enforcement is insane. There is approximately only 20 inspectors for 350,000 workplaces in this province. And so, the Ministry of Labour has said, “Well, what we do, because we don’t have enough resources, is we give employers a self-audit. So, you tell us if you’re breaking the law.” What do you think the answer is to that? Check, check, check; right?

So, the majority of workers only file a complaint once they have left their job. So, basically, the choice is, if you complain, you lose your job. Well, that is not a choice; is it? It is not a choice about whether or not you put food on the table and pay your bills, or whether you’re going to get paid overtime pay. That is not a choice.

Three years ago, the Workers’ Action Centre did a survey of 500 low-wage workers in precarious jobs. We found at that point, the minimum wage was $10.25. Twenty-two percent of people were being paid less than $10.25. Thirty-three percent of workers reported being owed wages from their employers. Thirty-one percent of workers reported that their pay was late. And 17 reported getting pay cheques that bounced. So, we’re talking about people even just getting their pay cheque at the end of the week; right?

And then if you look at the context and sort of what we’re organizing in, we’re dealing with thousands of migrant workers being brought into Canada, into this province, to do work without any access to permanent residency, any status. So, they can be deported for speaking up, who have no voice.

And so, if employers can hire workers to come in with the threat of deportation hanging over them if they complain, how can you even start to get access to a good job, let alone human rights?

So, workers need to be able to come into Canada and be recognized for their skills as farm workers, as childcare workers, as workers who are taking care of the elderly, and people with disabilities, restaurants, hospitality, tourism, manufacturing, food processing.

I mean, these are all the sectors that workers are coming in, and they need to get access to permanent residency, just as business folks who are coming in with hundreds and thousands of dollars in their pockets or highly-trained professionals.

And then when you look at the types of jobs that are growing, I mean, it is no surprise that the fastest-growing jobs in Ontario are service sector jobs, where the minimum wage rates are the highest.

So, we don’t have a floor of protection for workers in this province. What we
violations of their rights or even trying to get access to basic protection. So, that is what I mean when we have a huge challenge ahead of us. But, I think we can completely do this. In fact, we have already started.

Yesterday, Bill 18 was given royal assent, which basically means it is now law, and this is legislation that Unifor and organizations like us worked hard for. And, what does that do? That means that now workers can file complaints and have two years to file an Employment Standards complaint. Before, it used to be six months. And, now, workers can claim up to two years of unpaid wages, whereas before it was only six months.

And, now, temp-agency workers now have joint and several liability, which means that the client company now will be recognized as responsible with the temp agency for any unpaid wages, overtime and public holiday pay. That is huge, because now what we need to do is put the responsibility back where it belongs, which is on the client companies for hiring temp agency workers and using temp agencies in the first place. So, we need to reduce the incentive there. So, that was passed yesterday.

And, we also got indexation of the minimum wage. We didn’t get the minimum wage up to $14.00 or $15.00, which we have been pushing for. But, for the first time now, workers at least at $11.00, the value of that will not get lost, and that is a huge, huge win.

So, the work has already begun. And, I think that many of the changes that we’re pushing for in the review that we are going to be organizing around is about rebuilding the floor of rights, through rebuilding responsibility of working conditions and wages and I think, essentially, which will support unions’ ability to organize.

So, for example, if you are unionizing a subcontracting shop, any union organizer knows that the employer at the top can just move the work to another subcontractor; right? And so, it makes it incredibly difficult to organize through the subcontracting chain. It makes it really difficult to take on temp agencies.

But, if we start to put back liability on the top of that pyramid, on the employers at the top -- just as people have started to do internationally against the retailers for the kinds of things that we have been seeing, the atrocities we have been seeing in Bangladesh, like the garment-factory fires, and some of the working conditions in the sweatshops there.

That campaign internationally has to come domestically. We need to ensure that the folks at the top, whether they’re the banks or the big multi-national corporations who are avoiding their responsibilities by subcontracting or using a whole range of labour leases like temp agencies, they need to feel the responsibility and be responsible for their work force, and not shed that any more. And, that is what we need to do with ESA reform.

We need to reduce the incentive to contract out. We need to re-regulate the labour market. So, we need to push for equal pay for equal work. We need to push for joint and several liability. We need to make sure that no one is exempt from getting access to basic protections.

Why should it be that certain workers shouldn’t even get access to minimum wage just because they pick mushrooms, or just because they are doing different types of work? That is appalling. That shows the power of employers in our province that have fought to get massive categories of workers exempt from basic statutory entitlements, like minimum wage, breaks, overtime.

We need to, as I said, rebuild the floor. We need to make sure that we’re changing the definition of employer and employee, and mirror it, just as we do in health and safety, so that all workers are protected and are seen as workers. And so, that stops the ability of employers to misclassify them.

We’ve got to take on temp agencies in this review. We really do. We’ve got to make sure that we limit the percentage of temp agencies that are used in workplaces. We have to ensure that if employers want to bring in temp agencies, they have to pay equal wages and benefits.

We have to take on conversion fees, and we have to make sure that the client company is fully responsible for all working conditions, not just overtime wages and public holiday pay, but for the whole thing.
And, I think that once we start to rebuild that floor of protection, the incentive to basically create the second, third, fourth tiers of workers will start to become minimized. And, I think that is where we have to go.

We have to ensure that any employer in this province who wants to hire migrant workers has to register with the government, put up a bond so that if they renege on their wages, that they will be held responsible.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan right now have a rigorous licensing system where they ensure that anyone, any employer, any recruiter who wants to bring in a migrant worker through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program has to register before they even get permission to bring someone in. Ontario needs to follow this.

Wages and benefits. Did you know that the minimum wage is now going up to $15.00 in San Francisco and in Seattle? Ontario has one of the highest minimum wages now. And, again, that was won through the kind of organizing that we saw across Ontario, which Unifor was active in and helping to mobilize in cities across the province. We need to continue that.

$11.00 is still not enough. It is 16 percent below the poverty line. I don’t think that that is acceptable; do you? Do you think that that is acceptable, that people have to go to work for $11.00 an hour? I don’t think so.

And, I think that that is what we need to organize around, and we need to use this Employment Standards Review and this Labour Relations Review to push for higher wages, because if we don’t do it, who is going to do it? We need to step up and do this.

Over half of minimum-wage employees are employed by corporations that have over 100 employees. So, you know what? It is not true that it is all about the small businesses who have less than 10 workers. No. It’s massive corporations like Tim Horton’s, like Walmart, that are the ones that are hiring workers at minimum wage. And, we have got to take that on.

You know, the top executive compensation at the 50 largest employers of low-wage workers, like McDonald’s, Target, Walmart, averaged $9.4 million last year. So, did you hear the government saying, well, businesses are going to close down?

But, guess what we heard when workers got a 75-cent increase after a 4-year freeze? That’s what we heard. We heard that all businesses are going to close down. The sky is falling. Workers are going to lose their jobs. People are going to be fired.

Yet, when executives get their compensation of millions and millions of dollars, nobody says a word. So, we have to take that on, because that is the kind of stuff that is out there. And, it makes a measly 75 cents seem as if workers are asking for the sky.

And, we have got to push for better standards and raise people’s expectations that it is okay to fight for $15.00. The sky is not going to fall. And, we are going to stand together and fight for those higher wages, and not be scared by corporations who are trying to keep our wages and our benefits down.

And, I will tell you that if we work hard to raise the minimum wage, that is going to mean a pay increase for nearly a million people in this province. A million people in this province are surviving on less than $14.00 an hour, sisters and brothers. I don’t think that that is acceptable. People are living in poverty. We have one of the highest rates of workers who are working for minimum wage in this country. That is unacceptable.

Sick days. Do you know that 16 million workers in this province have no access to unpaid sick days? No job-protected unpaid sick days, 16 million workers. So, people have to make daily a choice about if they’re sick, whether they go to work or they lose their job. That is unacceptable.

If you’re in a workplace less than 50 workers in this province, you have no access to any job-protected unpaid sick days. So, people are going to work sick and their health is suffering.

Two weeks ago in the States, Massachusetts and New Jersey passed legislation where companies that have more than 10 workers get 5 paid sick days. In Oakland, California, workers in companies that have more than 10 workers are going to get 9 paid sick days.

We can do it, too, in Ontario. We can stand together and fight for some of these basic issues and conditions for workers. It is a shame that workers can’t even take a day off. And, those are the workers that need union support and higher wages and working conditions.
We have got to take on hours of work. We need equal pay and treatment for workers who are full-time and part-time workers. We need to increase hours for those that want it. It is absolutely appalling that retail workers have to be available for 50 or 60 hours a week, but only get 15 to 20 hours of work a week. That is appalling. How are people supposed to pay their bills? We need predictability and security for workers.

So, in San Francisco right now, legislation is being debated. It has already past the first reading. It is a Retail Workers Bill of Rights that covers retail, restaurant and bank workers, where workers have the right to be offered full-time hours before an employer can hire additional part-time workers. And, there’s equal treatment with respect to pay, access to time off and opportunities for promotion.

That legislation has gone through first reading and it looks like it is going to pass. So, that is going to cover huge sectors of workers that have no protection in the workplace.

We can do that here in Ontario. People need a voice at work. We need to make sure that workers who want to unionize have the right to unionize, and are not so scared that they’re going to lose their jobs to do that.

So, we are here to say to you that many workers out there who do not have a union want a union. They want a union, but they’re in small workplaces. They’re in the service sector jobs. They’re working as temp agency workers. They’re in subcontracting shops. They’re in a whole range of shops that can’t unionize, because of this crappy legislation that we have in place.

So, that is why we have to change the Employment Standards Act, so that they can unionize and they can access union protection and have the full weight of union protection behind them. So, we have got to work together here, because workers do want to have a voice at work.

We need more enforcement, more resources and inspectors overall. So, these are the things that we are looking for in this review. We need more enforcement, so that employers face the penalties, the real penalties if they break the law, and prosecutions, and they don’t just get a $300.00 fine if they don’t pay people their wages for a year.

We need to expand protection, so that all the workers in our communities that are working through temp work or contract work actually are covered, and that they actually have legislation that protects them when stuff happens and they don’t fall through the cracks.

We need to make sure that migrant workers are protected, because if we don’t ensure that they are not protected, then we can just kiss our rights goodbye as well, because we are the ones next.

We need to make sure that people have a voice at work, and that means stronger union protection and reprisals against anyone who stops people from fighting for their rights.

And, we need a decent minimum wage campaign that is a living wage, that people can actually pay their bills, and look after their families and not be destitute, and always struggle to decide whether or not they can put food on the table or pay the rent.

We can do this. We really don’t have a choice. We have got this review coming up with a great opportunity for mobilization. This is a great opportunity for unions, unions and unions, sisters and brothers, to be working alongside those of us who are working with workers who have no protection. We are ready to work with you. So, let’s get going. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Deena, thank you very much for that presentation. And, you are right. We have a lot of work to do. But, right now, on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, I just want to present you with this gift.

Thank you for all the hard work. Keep up the fight. We know that you are right into it and you are doing a great job and, again, for educating us; making us understand the challenges that are out there. We need to fight harder on all of those fronts. So, thank you very much. It’s much appreciated.

Okay. Going over to the next order of business on your agenda, we have a presentation. It is the Ontario Labour Law - From Defence to Offence. And, it will be presented by Fred Wilson, our director of strategic planning and, also, with Jenny Ahn, the assistant to the president.

After this is completed, we will be going into Recommendation No. 4.
PRESENTATION: ONTARIO LABOUR LAW - FROM DEFENCE TO OFFENCE

FRED WILSON: Good afternoon, everybody. It is late in the day on Friday afternoon. Hopefully, we have got some energy left here for a really important discussion about labour rights in this province and what we have in front of us.

As Dino said, I am Fred Wilson, and this is my esteemed colleague and comrade 

JENNY AHN: Jenny Ahn.

FRED WILSON: Jenny Ahn. The Jenny and Fred Show. And, we are here. The purpose of this presentation is to frame up and get you ready for the debate on Recommendation No. 4 that is in your kits.

So, if I could ask, if you would please kind of pull that out and have that in front of you? So that as we go through this, you can see what it is, what we are talking about and where we are going, because as the previous speaker just said, we have some indication that a major labour law reform process could be opening up in Ontario. We will give you the details of that in a few minutes.

And, we may be at one of those points where after this historic fight that we have just come through to defeat Hudak's Right to Work for Less campaign, that we may be able now to move forward, because as it so often is in sports, in war and struggles of many kinds, when your opponent is attacking you and you have stopped their attack, it opens up the opportunity to counter-attack, to move forward, because there is now that space to fill. 

And so, that is why we have framed this discussion as Worker Rights in Ontario - From Defence to Offence. I know that might seem a bit fuzzy, so here is an image that perhaps you can relate to that might help you understand what we are talking about.

This is defence. Actually, it is great defence. It is none other than the Dominator, the indomitable Dominik Hasek who last week was installed into the Hall of Fame. Now, the point here about looking at somebody like Dominik Hasek is that it is no diminishment of his role that his basic job was to keep his team in the game. And, he spent a lot of his time flat on his back, making often what were brilliant, but desperate saves to keep his team on the game.

And, after decades of fighting Harris, McGuinty, Hudak, I think we have all felt like that. But, the point is, we have kept ourselves in the game, even though we have been fighting a lot of defence. And, I am going to let Jenny tell you a little bit more about that.

JENNY AHN: For those of you that don't follow hockey as closely as others, what you could see through this chart is that we have been playing defence for the last three decades. So, we know the last time when we have had some labour law reform was back when the NDP was in government here, but it didn't last very long because, when Mike Harris was elected as Premier, all of that was unlegislated and taken away.

So, what you see here is the various types of legislation that has all been adopted or passed over the many decades. What is interesting to note is Ontario. We are not the worst in terms of passing this anti-union, anti-worker legislation.

Our friends in British Columbia have had 39 pieces of legislation passed. But, unfortunately, sisters and brothers, we take silver. We are No. 2, with 37 pieces of anti-worker legislation that has been passed. And, you will see that the national or federal scene, along with Quebec, has been tied at No. 3.

What you'll see, though, when we talk about playing defence, is there has been a total of 213 pieces of anti-union, anti-worker legislation that has been passed. And, that is why we are talking to you today, recognizing we've been on defence, but where we need to move forward on the offence.

FRED WILSON: Okay. So, here is an image about offence. I don't know how many people can see this guy here, but this is not just offence. This is the future. This is a 17-year-old junior hockey sensation, Connor McDavid, who is considered to be the next great one, the next Sidney Crosby, a scoring sensation. He is the future. He is not only brilliant, but tough. He is about to set a new record in junior hockey in Ontario this year for scoring. But, he is also tough as nails, and he may miss the World Junior Championship, because he broke his hand punching out one of his opponents about two weeks ago, not that we endorse that sort of thing.
Because as I said, in sports as in war and in struggle, you need role models, and that is the kind of a role model we want. And, it is time for us now to kind of start to play our offence, because the conditions, we think, are there. So, we know that we defeated Hudak in 2014, in what I suggest to you we might call a turnaround year, 2014.

Deena Ladd talked about Bill 3B. It has its shortcomings. But, Bill 3B is different, because it may be the first piece of legislation passed in the last 20 years, not only in this province, but perhaps in any province in Canada outside of Quebec where it is generally a progressive legislation, a progressive agenda for workers. And so, we see a new -- kind of a new opening, new opportunities opening up.

And, now, we have the opportunity, perhaps it is still an opportunity because it has not yet been publicly announced, for a labour law reform process to be announced hopefully before Christmas. Now, there are some key factors. There are some key factors that are going to determine whether or not this opportunity, this window, is really something that can make real changes.

We know this. Katha mentioned this morning that the last time that there was a labour law reform in Ontario was 20 years ago and it was very short-lived. I'll come back to that in a moment.

So, if this window does open up, we know that it is a once-in-a-generation strategic opportunity. And, if we make the best of this, we will be able to really set down some positive gains that is going to change the terrain on which we work. If this window goes through and there is some sort of a reform and it makes very little change, realistically, we can expect it is going to be quite a few more years before labour law is back on the agenda. That is just the way it works.

So, what are the key issues that we need to think about? We have had some discussion at Unifor about trying to learn from past experiences, to make sure that this opportunity is one that we can use. First of all, it has got to be timely. We need a timely process.

We know that 20 years ago, when labour law reform was opened up before, it didn't work so well. First of all, the government was appointed or the government was elected. It took them over a year-and-a-half to set up a commission. They set up a commission. They gave it 30 days to report. After the report came down, then they wrote a report. They sent out that for another 4 months of discussion.

It was 3 years into the government's mandate before they actually adopted progressive legislation. Two years later, the Harris government came in and all of that was undone.

So, we have learned a lesson about a timely process. We want to make sure that the mandate is broad and not focused on smaller specific items. But, when this process opens up, we get to deal with the whole picture of the vitality, the relevance of collective bargaining as institutions in Ontario.

And, we want to make sure that the structure of this process allows an opportunity for us really to be heard. If it takes place behind closed doors, in private meetings with interest groups, we shouldn't expect very much, because we are going to need an open public structure to be able to win a public consensus around what is possible. Jenny?

JENNY AHN: So, part of this, is to talk to the government, with Kathleen Wynne, with the Minister of Labour, to ensure that we do put this pressure on. Jerry Dias, is constantly in communications, calling and meeting with the government.

So, what is interesting now is that there is this mandate from Kathleen Wynne to Kevin Flynn, the Minister of Labour. So, what is common, once there is a new Premier, is they often would send out a letter to all their ministers giving what the Premier wants in terms of her vision and her mandate.

What is very different this time around is that Kathleen Wynne has actually published what her mandate and her vision has been for the various ministries including, the Ministry of Labour. So, you can see this on the government's website.

But, what they have done and written about in this letter was to support labour and employment law reform. So, one of the seven clusters that is in this letter that the Premier has sent to the Minister of Labour is to lead a review of Ontario's system of employment and labour standards; to reflect the realities of the modern economy such as the rise of non-standard employment.
What we are hearing is that they are looking at the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Ontario Labour Relations Act* and trying to modernize that. So, one of the things, interestingly enough, on Thursday morning, yesterday morning, I had an opportunity to sit in a stakeholders meeting with the Ministry of Labour.

And so, one of the examples they gave of trying to modernize or make sure that the ESA and the *Labour Relations Act* is reflecting the changing employment, it is just even adding things like noise parameters, because many years ago, they may not have had to put in parameters of what is a health and safety concern in the workplace. And so, you may hear of changes in that regard, in the next month or two.

They will also develop a wage gap strategy that they hope to close the gap between men and women, in the context of the 21st Century. You will see coming up over the course of the weekend, we have a resolution that talks about pay equity and the need to continue to have pay equity plans maintain it.

There is a recognition that there is still a problem around pay equity and maintenance. It came in place 30 years ago. And, they are hoping to develop this strategy on wage gap.

They also have a piece about protecting vulnerable workers. And, our union has played a role together with the Workers Action Centre on Bill 18. It is a very large omnibus type of bill, but it is apparently a priority for the Ministry of Labour. They want to strengthen the protection for most vulnerable workers in the province.

They say they want to create a more level playing field for employers. We will be a part of the discussions about how do they create it, if there are not as many inspectors, as Deena Ladd had mentioned in her presentation. But, again, a step in the right direction that your union has played a role in.

Another piece is about promoting occupational health and safety; in particular, around workplace mental health programs, and to be able to expand employer-provided services for Ontario workers. And, the Minister has said that this is of personal interest to him, so we will see some changes in supporting mental health in the workplace.

Another one is to uphold and respect the collective bargaining process and maintain a respectful labour relations climate, a very important one for all of us who go to the bargaining table that we will definitely remind them that this has been part of the mandate and it has been published. So, we hope that this is something that does carry forward in our collective bargaining process.

So, that is what the government is doing. And, more importantly, for us as a labour movement and you heard from Sid Ryan earlier today -- we passed the recommendation on affiliating, if we haven’t already, to the Ontario Federation of Labour.

Katha Fortier and I have the lovely privilege of sitting at the OFL Executive Board. It is usually some lively discussions and debate, but some good work that gets done there, bringing all the unions together in the province.

There is also another group, called the Union Dialogue Group, looking at particular labour law reform, which is headed up with Lewis, and John Aman, and others are also part of this discussion on how do we, in collaboration with other unions together with the OFL, look at labour law reform, look at what we need in changes in terms of organizing laws and whatnot.

So, moving forward, the OFL has five labour law priorities. And, one more here. So, there is a consensus worked and discussed with the OFL executive. And, these are the five priorities as a labour movement in this province that we will be pushing forward on.

One is around card-check and organizing. And, you heard from Peter Kennedy’s report and John Aman’s. We have had some successes, but there are challenges to continue to organize the unorganized. And so, what we are asking is for card-check, a piece of legislation we used to have, which was then taken away with Mike Harris, which is essentially saying that if we have the majority of organizing cards signed by workers in that workplace, that they should automatically be recognized to have a union represent them, rather than having a two-step process of having 50 plus one card signed, and then having a 5-day period where the employer intimidates and plays all sorts of
unethical practices to scare workers to vote against having the union.

And, you know, the politicians don’t have to go through a two-step process, 50 plus one or the majority of those that vote. They get elected, but somehow there is a double standard here when it comes to workers who want to join a union.

The second priority is successor rights for the contract sector. And, this is when a business is sold. We want to have successor rights to extend the rules and have the rules more fair, especially when it’s vulnerable workers in the contract services sector who may lose all their collective agreement provisions when contracts are re-tendered. A really important piece when workers are very vulnerable here.

The third priority -- and I think I screwed this up again. No, here we go -- is first contract arbitration. So, workers who take that bold step to join the union, who go into their first contract collective bargaining, that if there is not an agreement made, that we can put pressure on both sides, quite frankly, both us in the union as well as to the employer to try to get a deal.

If not, then to move toward a set period of time. We have seen this in other provinces, like in Manitoba, where they would settle that first contract through an arbitrated settlement, to get the workers to have their first collective agreement and move beyond, and then build their process and continue to build a stronger collective agreement.

Then, another priority is the reinstatement during organizing drives. We know that workers play a huge risk when they stick their neck out and they’re a lead person when they try to organize their workplace. And, sometimes, the employer gets wind of that. And, we have seen that key organizers may get intimidated or even terminated.

And, we want to ensure that any worker who is a part of an organizing campaign will get reinstated during these drives. It is so important for them to get back to work.

And then last, but not least, is to change the organizing rules such as having early access to employee lists and offsite and online voting. So, that is very similar to when we have a provincial or federal election, and all political parties get a voters’ list. So, why can’t the union get a voters’ list to know who are the workers, what are the numbers, so that is a more level playing field, just like it is for the politicians?

FRED WILSON: So, what is going to be our game plan to try and make the most of the coming months on labour law reform? We have been having active discussions at Unifor about putting together a plan that involves the centre, and the regions, and our local unions across the country, because although this is Ontario-focused, labour law reform is an important issue across the country as a whole.

So, what are we talking about? The first thing here for Ontario is to secure a timely process with a broad mandate. We think it is important that we get an announcement from the government very soon. The government was elected in June.

If we can get an announcement from the government on a process commencing early in 2015, we have time to put in place an effective process that would allow us the opportunity to build public consensus around progressive reform.

It would allow this government, then, to enact that legislation and implement it well before the next election, making it, therefore, more likely that regardless of what happens in the next election, whatever we win now we keep, and that we move forward instead of, as we did 20 years ago, getting some gains only to lose them shortly after and without that new system entrenching itself into the culture and the institutions of collective bargaining.

The second thing that is very important, we need to make sure that when we approach these issues that we are speaking on behalf of all Ontario workers. The history of labour law, workers’ rights in Canada, is that these matters have always been separated: different acts, different pieces of legislation, different processes, different players involved, different timing, and different results.

And, that is why it is important that this announcement be for a comprehensive review of both the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act, and that we speak to the interests and rights of workers as a whole, and not let them separate and counter-pose the rights of workers in precarious workplaces and the rights of our members under the Labour Relations Act.
There will be a tendency, and certainly it’s very understandable that after all of those anti-labour bills that we have faced in the past, that we will want each one of those little things, each one of those acts, those kind of death by a thousand cuts, to be fixed.

And, there will be a tendency to want this process to do something that we can get our hands on, something concrete and practical and immediate. But, we can’t lose sight of the big issues here that address union density and the scope and relevance of collective bargaining as a whole, because really what this exercise is all about is to stop the gradual decline in trade union density and the marginalization of collective bargaining, in terms of determining the social and economic outcomes in our country. That is the overall kind of trend that we have got to address and reverse.

So, what are those big issues? Those big issues essentially are ‘A’ to ‘D’ in the resolution and the recommendation from Katha that you have before you, the priorities. So, take a look at those now. I won’t go through them. But, those are the main priorities that we want to put emphasis on that will really change not just the detail -- not just the detail of labour relations, but the very ground that we work on.

I just want to mention I think Jenny has mentioned most of those that capture the OFL priorities. I just want to mention a little bit about No. C, Sectorial Rights and Standards, because we have opened a discussion at Unifor about how we could use this process to put these issues on the agenda during this process.

So, what are we talking about? What are sectorial rights and standards? Well, Deena has mentioned some of them already. Minimum wage is a standard for all sectors, although some sectors are treated a little bit differently than others.

The point here is that sectorial rights and standards are already well-established in Ontario and have been for many years. There is already existing in Ontario an extensive list of sectorial rights and standards that affect working conditions: domestic work, road building, residential care, mining, public transit, temporary agencies.

There is already sectorial standards affecting all of these areas, but they’re not as good as we want them. They could be enhanced, but they already exist as a precedent.

And, important to note that the Government of Ontario has today and for many years has the legislative authority right now to strengthen these sectorial standards or to apply new sectorial standards to any economic sector in Ontario. It is in the law now. We have had this right for many years.

So, what do we mean by sectorial certification, which is different than just setting a standard, right, about conditions of work? Sectorial certification would be an amendment to the Labour Relations Act that allows us to define collective bargaining regimes across a geographic and economic sector, so that the norm in collective bargaining under a sectorial certification would be joint bargaining across that sector, within that geographic region.

And, that would ensure that, first of all, workers have an opportunity to organize. And, if they organize, they become party to the prevailing collective agreement in their sector.

And, it also importantly ensures that it is a level playing field for employers. And, because it is a level playing field for employers, they all have to abide by the same collective agreement; that the gains made in bargaining are not quickly undone by low-wage competition; that we already have a sectorial certification system in Ontario. It is construction. Construction has sectorial certification.

So, what we are saying is, if it works in construction, why wouldn’t it also work in retail, or services, or any of the other areas where low-wage competition prevails, and as a result, where enterprise bargaining is at a very, very low level of union density?

Okay. So, we are going to submit, as the recommendation suggests, a proposal, a comprehensive proposal to this process, once it gets going. The key for us is that this comprehensive proposal that we want to submit is one that is concrete with many, many examples drawn from your experience to make sure that our members are engaged in this process.

And, part of their engagement is that we will be calling for labour law reform, and speaking for the rights of all workers by telling the actual stories of our members and how they face what their realities are in the workplace and in the economy.
And, Katha earlier asked you in her remarks that we would want your participation, by making sure that your experiences are forwarded to us, to be part of this comprehensive submission.

And, finally, this is a great opportunity. This is a great opportunity to speak to our members through our Rights at Work campaign. Just in closing, we should remember that although we are ready to try and play offence, we know that we are still playing defence in many ways.

And, certainly, on the federal level, if we don’t win that next federal election, watch out, 377, 525, all of that, bad news is back in a big way. So, we know that we are still fighting defence in a big way.

And, if we are unable to start to turn the tide on union density and the role of collective bargaining, if we are unable to do that, we can expect renewed attacks on our fundamental rights, even at the provincial level.

So, yes, we had a Right to Work campaign where we have been talking to our members. This is an opportunity across Canada to start to talk to our members not about just turning back the tide, but also about how we expand and extend trade union rights, and how we can bring the benefits of collective bargaining to hundreds of thousands of other workers in Ontario and across the country.

So, that is our introduction to this discussion. You have the recommendations in front of you. And, now, over to you.

DINO CHIODO: So, I want to thank Fred and Jen for the Jen and Fred Show, and all the work that went into that presentation. They did a wonderful job helping us understand the situation that is in front of us.

So, I will have Candace come up and read Recommendation No. 4. So, we are looking at the recommendation on labour law reform.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4:

CANDACE LAVALLEY: The recommendation of labour law reform.

I recommend that Ontario Regional Council calls upon the Government of Ontario to commence a labour law reform process early in 2015 with a mandate to modernize labour relations in Ontario, strengthen the institutions of collective bargaining, and support all Ontario workers to exercise their democratic right to join a union and engage in free collective bargaining.

I recommend that the ORC Executive work with Unifor National to develop a comprehensive submission to the government based on these priorities:

a) New organizing rules to allow for freedom of association without interference, intimidation or obstruction by employers.

b) Successorship laws to ensure continuity of bargaining rights after changes in business arrangements such as a transfer of ownership or reorganization of production, including successorship for contract workers to protect union security and the gains made in bargaining when a contract is retendered and awarded.

c) Sectorial rights and standards to ensure minimum conditions for all workers, and sectorial certification to extend collective bargaining to historically under-represented sectors with low wage competition and smaller workplaces.

d) Plant closure legislation to address disinvestment by global corporations as a bargaining tactic or reprisal to workers for asserting their rights, and to provide third party arbitration when closure agreements cannot be negotiated.

With this goal in mind, I recommend that the ORC work with the OFL and coordinate efforts to ensure that Ontario labour has a strong consensus and clear priorities for labour law reform.
I further recommend that Ontario local unions continue the Rights at Work campaign to inform members of the continuing threats to trade union rights and engage members in advocating for strengthened labour rights to create a stronger and more equitable economy.

I also recommend that Ontario local unions discuss labour law reform in Ontario at their earliest opportunity and forward their proposals for labour law reform to the Ontario Regional Director. I encourage them to send examples drawn from their experience of how workers’ rights, job security and safety are not being achieved because of Ontario’s economic realities and existing labour legislation.

I further recommend that Unifor work to ensure that labour law reform in Ontario also addresses rights and employment standards for all Ontario workers and, in particular, the rights of part-time, temporary and precarious workers.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Candace. Could I have a mover on the motion?

Okay. Moved and supported. If we have anybody at the mics? Speaker on mic 2.

RANDY KITT: Thanks, Dino. Randy Kitt, President of Local 79-M, Chairperson of the Media Council and on the NEB. I rise fully in support of this motion. It is an extremely important initiative. We have defeated Hudak in Ontario, and I am confident that we will resolved and successful in removing Harper in 2015.

But, this is not only about removing our enemies. It has to be about positive change. After elections, MP’s and MPP’s must be constantly reminded where their support comes from, and what is in the best interest of their constituents.

I want to read you a little list here:


This list is a list of the 10 most noticeably absent is Unifor. And, that is not our fault. That is not the fault of our leaders. But, I believe it is something that we have to be better at, lobbying our governments.

And, I know Unifor has lots of information and lots of education on lobbying rules and strategies. And, I urge local unions to make it your mandate, not only to win workers’ rights at the bargaining table, but to win legislative rights at all levels of government, and to make lobbying a priority in your communities and at all levels of government.

Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you Randy. We have a speaker on mic 7.

CAROLINE HADDAD: Hi. Caroline Haddad, staff, Organizing. I rise in support of this recommendation.

I just want to speak briefly on card-check. I’ll give you an example. The gentleman that was introduced earlier, Courtney from Porter, they fall under federal legislation. It’s an automatic certification. So, if they have a majority support that signed the cards, it’s just a matter of time they will be certified, and they will belong to our union and have the right to sit down and bargain a collective agreement.

Provincially, and this is where we are looking to change it, currently the system is you need a minimum of 40 percent to sign a card, and then you ask for a vote. And, the vote takes place 5 business days later, and the employer has 5 business days to do everything he can or she can to convince the workers not to join the union and vote no.

We recently, unfortunately, lost a vote at a workplace just this past week. It is a small workplace with 28 well, 33 people working there. We went in with 19 cards signed, a clear majority. Only six of them, voted yes when the time came a week after we asked for the vote, because the employer had sufficiently scared them that something bad would happen if they brought the union in.
And, this is where the injustice is, because those people signed a card. They understood they needed a union. They wanted a union, and yet, the employer was given this time to convince them that it was against their best interest, but in the employer’s best interest as we know.

So, this legislation is very important to get changed. And, I recommend everyone fully support this campaign and throw their support behind the OFL, so that we can make these changes, and people who want to join our union have the ability to do so without being scared out of it by their employer. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic 1

**DEB TVEIT:** Deb Tveit, assistant to the president. And, I just want to say that I want you to support this. And, I am here because of card-check and because you could get reinstated. So, I do not want anybody to go against the recommendation because of that, but that is a fact about how I became a member of this union.

Both those things happened in my life, during a campaign with Johnson Controls in Tillsonburg who was ruthlessly against the union. And, we would have never won a vote at that facility. It would have never, ever happened. I would have never had an opportunity, as well as my co-workers, to be members of the union.

So, we need that. We certainly do need it. I think it is probably the most important, but that’s because it’s very personal. That is probably why I think that. But, we certainly do need to do that and we need to look at what happens.

I strongly believe when workers aren’t intimidated, aren’t coerced, or aren’t promised things by employers that they make the right decision and they join the union. We have seen that historically.

Certainly, Freightliner at St. Thomas was a prime example. As soon as the employer left those workers alone, I think they joined the union in 5 days, even though John Brady had been trying to organize them for 10 years. But, in 5 days, after the employer left them alone, we had enough cards signed and they were members of our union.

So, I really think we need to look at percentages and what happens at certain percentages, and have the government impose on employers that if a union shows that they have a certain amount of people supporting the union, then they have to leave the workers alone, and let the union come in and talk to them, and let the workers decide. And, I think that would really help people trying to join the union, to certainly have that opportunity to join. So, certainly support it.

And, I know, Katha, we are giving you and your Executive Board a lot of work. But, certainly, issue those ideas that you have to Katha and the Board, and let’s really lobby the government and make a change through labour law for organizing. It really, really will help people that want to join the union, people like Toyota.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, sister.

**JOHN AMAN:** John Aman, staff. I agree with Deb. But, ironically, coincidentally, myself included, when we organized my workplace in 1985, we had card-check. We paid $100, and we had a majority of folks that signed the card and we were certified. And, my plant was around for 30 years until it, unfortunately, closed.

But, I agree with every aspect of this recommendation, not only on the card-check rules, but around the successorship laws, around the competitive bidding that occurs under federal sector of workers having to compete when we have done a number of votes. For an example, at the GTAA around the passenger service agents, from Servisair purchasing Handlex, Handlex purchasing Swissport, and it’s a spiral to the bottom.

So, we need to ensure not only that workers have a free and unfettered access to organizing, free of any fear and intimidation -- because we know that, given a choice, a worker wants to belong to a union. But, unfortunately, given a choice between a union and their job, if that’s what their choice is, and sometimes it is that, they’re going to choose their job, no matter how bad it is.

So, we need to address these issues and find a way to equal the playing field, despite whatever laws the neoliberals like to use, democracy in the workplace, mandatory votes. It’s hogwash.
I think Caroline talked about a workplace where we had 80 percent or 70 percent signed up going into a vote. And, we see this not very often, because we have learned our lesson and we work hard with folks.

But, it happens when an employer -- and, by the way, the employer was, unfortunately, a Mercedes Benz dealership who we have about 6 bargaining units with, who we have a bargaining relationship with, who want us to play nice. And, yet, the minute there’s an application filed -- I mean, these guys resort to all their tools in the arsenal to try and prevent that from happening.

And, also more importantly, I agree with the strategy. I think this has got to be framed in a way that it is not a self-serving bill for the unions to fill their coffers. We have seen many -- the pendulum swings to the left and it comes flying back to the right. And, we saw it from Bob Rae’s changes to the Labour Relations Act, and then Mike Harris comes in with Bill 7 and some of the Walmart bill, and we still haven’t recovered from that.

So, I stand here in full support. And, I urge every single delegate in this room to contact their MP and to advocate on behalf of this recommendation. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Good job. Speaker on mic 5.

DARLENE WILSON: Darlene Wilson, President of Local 4304. I am very excited and motivated at this motion, and I stand in support of this. All of us in this room, we have the honour and the privilege of belonging to a union, and having a unionized workplace where we work, and there are so many out there that do not have that privilege.

Quite often, people just think of money or wages when they think of needs to join a union. And, those are huge needs, but there are so many other needs as well, with health and safety and working conditions.

I have been involved with the workers at Toyota on this organizing campaign. And, when you get involved on the inside with these workers and see some of the daily struggles that they’re having, surely, we can create wage for those that are not contract there, but their working conditions are horrific, the WSIB issues and the way they treat their injured workers there.

There are just so many issues so, so many reasons why we need to get behind and understand, and support the availability for people to get a union in their workplace. So, we do need labour laws that are going to make it easier and enable workers to get a union and to be able to belong to a union, and not laws that deter them. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Well said, sister. Seeing no other speakers on the mics.

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Opposed if any?

(opposing votes shown, if any)

Carried. CARRIED.

Thank you very much.

So, brothers and sisters, that concludes our agenda for today. So, I just want to say thank you to everybody for participating today and making it a successful day, getting a lot of the work that we had set out accomplished. In saying that, I do have a few announcements before we do adjourn.

First off, I just want to make mention with regards to this Rethink Childcare postcard that is in front of you. If you can, just looking at the back, it’s amazing when you read it, that there’s enough regulated spaces for only 20 percent of children under six. And, if you think about a single mother that has children, it’s an unfair practice that they don’t have the opportunity to get a job and be able to afford or even have space available for their child.

And, from that, the Women’s Committee is asking that you sign that document and you put it towards the end of the table, so they could collect those, and they could send those in to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Also, I have a few announcements that I would like to make with regards to the Workers Disability Caucus. They will be meeting tonight between 5:30 and 7:30 and that will be in the Sheraton Hall A.

There will be the Purse Auction, which is occurring tonight in support of lupus. That is between 6:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. in Sheraton Hall E.
And, there is the Unity Team meeting, which will be held right here in this room. It is for everyone, if they want to participate. Anyone is welcome. We will be going through our process with regards to endorsing the Unity Team. And, that will be right as soon as adjournment is completed.

And, I would like to also note that the LGBT Caucus breakfast will be in the morning, in Sheraton Hall C, at 8:00 a.m. In saying that, I move to adjourn. So, moved. Seconded.

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down.

(opposing votes shown, if any)

Carried. CARRIED.

Sorry. We’ve got a point of privilege on mic 5. Thank you.

CINDY PAYNE: Thanks, Dino. It’s Cindy Payne. I am the staff liaison for the Workers with Disabilities.

DINO CHIODO: Yes.

CINDY PAYNE: There is no meeting tonight. It is going to be at lunch tomorrow.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. So, you heard it from the committee itself. There is no meeting tonight. It will be tomorrow at lunchtime. Do you have a room, sister, tomorrow?

CINDY PAYNE: I believe it is Sheraton C.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. Thank you. Have a wonderful evening.

I see no other points of privilege at the mics. Have a great night and we will see you here tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m.

--- Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.
DINO CHIODO: First off, I just want to say thanks to some of the individuals from last night. We had a great time. There was lots of camaraderie. I know a lot of people had some good times. They spent some time together networking, discussing issues and ideas from local to local, which is also an important initiative, and that is some of the work that we do with regards to coming to Ontario Regional Council.

So, I know there is some fun time in that. But, at the same time, I know that there is a lot of work even after hours, and after we’re concluded in our actual meetings that take part. There’s a number of things that we have to get through today. So, early this morning, we will be moving into Recommendation No. 6. We’re thinking of doing that at approximately 9:30. And, at the same time, we hope to be able to this morning review at least a few resolutions.

Then, we will get into Recommendation No. 1 at approximately 10:00 or 10:30. And, that is just to give you, again, an idea, so you can put some thoughts together, some comments. Jot it down on paper. So, if you do want to go to the mic, which we encourage, we would appreciate that very much.

In saying that, I will get into the Credentials Report. And then we will go into some of the work that has to be done, to establish our Election Committee.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

DINO CHIODO: So, the National Secretary-Treasurer’s Office sent out 745 credentials to 264 local unions. In addition, the office sent credentials to 25 National Executive Board members and 9 National Council and Retired W orkers Executive members.

As of November 22, 2014, the National Secretary-Treasurer received 528 credentials, representing 168 local unions, the National Executive Board and the National Union Council of Retired W orkers.

As of 8:56 a.m. today, registered for the convention of 425 delegates, representing 128 local unions, the National Executive Board and National Council of Retired W orkers. In addition, there are 117 national representatives, 22 special delegates with voice and no vote. There are also 38 alternates, 11 special guests, 62 observers, 16 other staff and one media in attendance, for a grand total of 692 persons attending this Ontario Regional Council.

So, now, understanding that we have a potential election for this afternoon, we will need to appoint some volunteers. What we want to do is what we have done at the inaugural elections, and we have a box with everybody’s name in it.

That’s the fairest way that we can come up with individuals to participate through the process. We will pick a couple of extra individuals, just in case there is a conflict, or somebody can’t participate, or is not available to participate.

So, what we will do is we will pick names out of the box. And, we would ask that you be available through lunch. Lunch will be provided for you, so you don’t have to run around. And, what will happen is, there will be some discussions with regards to what your job or task would be if an election ensues.

So, you will be required to, again, participate through lunch, just so everybody understands that. And, that is just for preparations of the actual elections.

So, with your indulgence -- this way, you can blame Katha if your name gets pulled.

Mike Smith, out of Local 25.
Matt Root, out of Local 5555.
Laurie Lessard-Brown, out of Local 1359.
Barry Semper, out of Local 2009-A P.

I just met this guy in the elevator today.
Mike Day, out of Local 27.
John Johnson, out of Local 222.
Emily Heycoop, out of Local 5555.
Manon Pegu Lane, out of Local 2458.
Sorry, I have just been informed that she is not here, so we will be pulling out another name.
Deborah Henry, out of Local 414.
Mark Wraith, out of Local 4451.
And, the last name is Keith Punchak, out of Local 900.
So, to each and every one of you that have volunteered, we thank you very much. What will happen is at lunchtime, we would ask that you just come up to the front here, and we will be able to facilitate making sure a lunch is available for you.
So, from here, actually we will be heading to Sheraton Hall A. So, actually, if you can, just go to Sheraton Hall A, and that way there, lunch will be provided. We will be able to go through the dynamics of what we have to do with regards to starting the procedures on holding the election, which will take place after lunch.
And, just for all the delegates that are in the room currently today, in order to participate in the election, you have to be registered as a delegate. So, with that being said, registration will close at noon today. So, if you have not registered or if somebody still has to be registered and is not here as of yet, they have to be registered and have to take part before noon today.
I would like to introduce a few people that are in the audience today, if I can. I want to recognize -- we called him “Pit Bull” for the longest time. But, I want to recognize Bob Chernecki. He has always been dedicated and always comes back. You can’t shake him off. He is a pit bull in all sense of the term. Bob Chernecki.
And, I believe I saw Ken Lewenza as well, the past CAW president. Is Ken Lewenza in the room? Ken Lewenza.
Okay. So, we do have a busy day today. We would like to get things started. So, what I would like to do, I would like to call up K.H. Wong, to introduce Tullio DiPONTI.
K.H. WONG: A founding member of CAW Local 2458, Tullio DiPONTI has served on the local union executive board for 13 years. He brings a total of 31 years of union leadership experience to his current position as secretary-treasurer of Unifor Local 2458, in Windsor, where he has represented workers in healthcare, education and other services. He is an experienced negotiator at both small bargaining tables and review large master negotiations. A tradesman out of the University of Windsor, Tullio is active in the Skilled Trades Council and serves as the secretary-treasurer for the Windsor-Essex Skilled Trades Council. His committed involvement includes serving as secretary-treasurer for both the Windsor and District Labour Council and the Windsor-Essex Health Coalition. Here is Tullio.
ORC FINANCIAL REPORT
TULLIO DIPONTI: Wow. Thanks, K.H. I appreciate that. Well, I can tell you one thing; that this financial report is 100 percent better than the last one, so I might as well say it. But, before I start, I just want to recognize Richard Vann is behind us. Richard Vann is the Director of Finance for Unifor National. Richard.
Okay. So, let’s get going. I hope everybody has got their financial report in front of them. And, we will start off. The first page is a balance sheet as of August 31, 2014. So, in cash, we have $3,074,892.00; accounts receivable was $263,071.00; dues from Unifor were $736,899.00. The total asset as of August 31, 2014 was $4,074,862.00.
If you go back to the page after that, it will show how we got to that $4 million. So, we start off with a balance of zero. The dues revenue was $937,584.00. We had $3,137,278.00 transferred from the former CAW Council. As we reported at the last council, there was some money left over for CAW Council of approximately $5 million. And, that was our portion for the Ontario Regional Council. So, that gives us a balance of $4,074,862.00.
Now, if you go to the other page, you will see Expenses and Revenues, and our expenses are listed. So, we had a dues revenue of $1,048,402.00; interest of $45,185.00; total revenue would have been $1093,587.00.
Expenditures are listed down below for a total expenditure of $156,003.00. So, that would give us revenue of $937,584.00. And, if I may, I will go through some of the expenditures.
The Communications, that is the video production that you see going around. That is for the December and April Council. Now, all the contributions were brought in front of this body here and were passed. But, I think it is important that I should remind the people what we contributed money to:

Operation Christmas Cheer; Weekend to End Women’s Cancer; Community Foundation for Nova Scotia; B.C. Health Coalition Legal Defence Fund. That was Dr. Martin. And, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. And, also, we did participate in a Bob White Golf Tournament. And, we gave a scholarship to Emily Albert.

Lost wages is pretty well what it says. We do have the odd occasional meetings where we bring our board to Toronto where we meet, and we have to pay for their lost wages.

Meetings and functions. Again, you will see that the bulk of that is December Council and April Council. December Council at the Sheraton here was over $35,000.00, and Port Elgin was just over $8,000.00.

Material and promotion, that was -- let me just get to that. And, thanks, Richard, for providing me the details here. Material and promotions. They were the keychain holders for December Council, and the wine glasses that everybody got. That was for December Council.

In regards to travel, travel includes hotels, per diems, air and rail, parking, mileage, taxis and the Internet. So, for that, I would like to move for adoption of my financial report.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. Do I have a mover? Seconder? Any questions? Seeing no questions, I don’t see anybody at the mics,

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

Thank you very much. Apparently, Tullio, it was 100 percent better, so good job. Okay. So, what we are going to do now is we are going into Recommendation No. 6. So, if everybody could take their recommendation sheet out, I’ll have Katha read the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6

TULLIO DIPONTI: Dino says I look like Katha, so I’ll do it.
I recommend that the Ontario Regional Council, on an ongoing basis, match the annual donations of the Social Justice Fund made to Women’s Shelters and Food Banks across the province in December of each year, with the approval from the Executive Board.

DINO CHIODO: Can I get a mover on the recommendation? Seconder?

Discussion? Nobody is at the mics. Oh, I’m sorry, brother. We have got a speaker on mic 6.

COLIN JAMES: Colin James, Local 222. I rise in support. However, I would like to see an amendment. With so many homeless youth out there, I would like to see youth shelters added.

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

KATHA FORTIER: Just for the brother that asked the question, thank you. I believe that there are a number of shelters that would be youth shelters that were included. What happens is every year, our Social Justice Fund, which is now combined with the Humanity Fund, gets a number of requests. I mentioned it in my report. The amount between the two, the food banks and the shelters, was just over $60,000.00.

But, every year, there are requests that come in from across the province. The requests are done for this year. But, if there is a specific youth shelter that you would like to see supported, any request can go to the Social Justice Fund, which is now, again, combined with the Humanity Fund. And, the Council will have the ability to match those donations.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Katha. Speaker at mic 4.
SUSAN McKINNON: Sue McKinnon from Local 444. I rise in support of this recommendation. We actually need more donations coming to the women’s shelters and the food banks. It is very important to keep the shelters alive and running. We still need more provincial and federal governments to assist along with us. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. I see no more speakers. All those in favour? (favouring votes shown) Down. Opposed, if any? (opposing votes shown, if any) Carried. CARRIED.

Thank you very much. I would like to call up Jim Reid, so we can go over one, maybe two of the resolutions that were presented yesterday.

RESOLUTION NO. 1

JIM REID: Thanks, Dino. Good morning, everyone. We are on Resolution No. 1. And, the committee recommends concurrence. So, this is with the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities.


YUNUS PANDOR: Yunus Pandor, President of Local 554. I rise in support of the resolution and hope everyone in the room will support it wholeheartedly. No one wished to be disabled in any way, but we know it is the reality. We wish to recognize this reality, and hope to care and share with people with disabilities.

We need to give them and treat them as one of us, and give them equal opportunity to excel in whatever field they are and represent. I am sure, given a chance, they would not only prove themselves, but in many cases, would be better than the others.

While Unifor recognizes and welcomes everyone, regardless of their ethnicity, colour, or orientation, we also hope to give and recognize people with disabilities. I would also like this council to recognize December 3rd, which is declared as the day of persons with disabilities by the United Nations, and we also hope that they will work with our National Union to promote this day as well. Please support this resolution. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on Mic 1.

SAM SNYDERS: Sam Snyders, president of Local 1996-O. As a labour activist and a worker with a disability, I stand in favour of the resolution. As president of a local, I see all too often what can happen with a worker with a disability. We have seen discriminatory practices, mistreatment and misunderstanding of the workers. I have seen employers constructively dismiss workers who have become disabled or developed an illness.

A disability or an illness is not the obstacle we face. It is society’s perception and attitude about that disability. With slight modifications, treatments and minimal expense, 70 percent of workers with a disability can lead productive lives and be part of our labour movement well into their retirement.

Most workers with a disability require no special accommodation and the cost for those that do is minimal: 15 percent of accommodations cost nothing; 51 percent cost between $100 and $500.00; 12 percent cost between $500.00 and $1000.00; and 22 percent cost more than $1000.00.

Consider for every $100 spent on the health and safety of a worker, an employer will see a $2.50 return. So, it’s sensible.

Please support this resolution. Help increase the awareness, because it’s our members, our union members, our family members, our labour activists, and because one day it could
be you, let’s break the barriers down, eliminate the myths and promote the real facts. Each and every one of us can be a voice on this. Thank you.

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

DEREK MacLEOD: Derek MacLeod, president of Local 6004 and proud member of the Ontario Workers with Disabilities Committee. I just want to talk about four different things. I’ll talk about, first of all, what is a disability; second of all, what does a disability look like; what a disability isn’t; and then what we can do to show our support for this day.

So, the first thing, just by a show of hands, who here identifies as having a disability? Now, I am just going to read the definition of what a disability is. So, a disability is described as a condition. And, a condition could be a number of different things. It could be a disease. It could be something you would need to get treatment for.

It could also be something that is temporary. So, it could be a broken limb. So, it is not something that is permanent always; it is something that is temporary. But, it is something that limits a person’s movements, so your ability to stand, walk, bend over, things like that, or your senses.

And, I see there are a lot of people in here who have vision aids, such as glasses. And, without those, how would you be able to perform various activities during the day? Or, it is something affects your activities, so your ability to work, to participate in sports, or do day-to-day things.

So, with that, I’m going to ask a second time, how many people identify, either have had or have a disability? Perfect. I didn’t know how that would go, so I was hoping it would kind of go that way.

And so, yes, that kind of segues into the second part, which is, what is a disability? And, disabilities take many shapes and many forms, and they are not all visible. A lot of them are invisible. Mental health, for example, is a big one that we are dealing with. And, disease is another big one that you can’t always see.

And, I know myself when people find out, they say, “Oh, Derek, you’re on the Workers with Disabilities.” I have had people say, “Well, you don’t look like someone with a disability.” They have a puzzled look. And, I think that is part of what Sam had discussed, is looking at it from a different perspective or from a different lens.

And, what is a disability? Disabilities take different forms. We know about the ones we can see, but there are ones that we can’t see. And, it is important to recognize that, that they take many shapes.

Now, what a disability isn’t, is not the thing that defines the individual. You’re not defined by the disability that you have, and you are not less valuable to society. You are not less valuable to your community, to your local, or to your workplace.

And, it is really about having the opportunity to showcase what it is that you can do. And, all of us have different skills and abilities. And, it is the focus on that.

And, I will share a little story about a very close friend of mine who would be the stereotypical person with a disability. He has limited use of his hands and arms and has a power wheelchair. And, he had worked with me.

I work at Bell on a computer, talking to business clients. And, all day, I will be on a computer, talking to them. And, he would do the same thing. But, he was doing it without the use of his hands, working with a computer. So, he would have a stylist that would be in his mouth. And, he would hunt and peck on the computer.

And, he was equally able to do that, just like anyone else who had the two hands. I used to tell him -- I said, “Well, I can do more orders than you can.” And, he used to tell me I was cheating, because I was using my hands. He said, “Try doing it without your hands.” And, I said, “Well, you’ve got me there. You’ve got me there.”

But, he had the opportunity to do that and to have a career, because people saw beyond the disability. They didn’t see him as someone in a wheelchair who couldn’t type. They saw him as someone who had abilities, who was able to work.

Now, unfortunately, he came to a point where he had to make a decision in his life. The doctor had told him, “Listen, you have to make a choice. You’re either going to be able to
work, continue working, but you won’t be able to use your neck any more, or you can’t work. You basically have a choice to make.”

So, he decided he couldn’t work. And, instead, what he did is he got himself training to be a certified dog trainer. He became a dog trainer, which is amazing for a guy who is in a power wheelchair, to be training animals. And, I always called him the dog whisperer, because he really had this uncanny ability to connect with animals.

And, anyways, one day he was out, I think he was at one of the parks with some dogs. And, he ran into a principal from a local elementary school. And, that person saw him and gave him an opportunity to work with kids in one of the local schools.

And, the parents of those children were absolutely amazed by the change and the inspiration that he was to the kids that he was interacting with. So, again, it was an opportunity where somebody saw him for the ability that he had, not his disability.

And so, what we can do to support this day is we could talk about the issues. We could talk about disabilities. And, we could also just reach out to a local community group or organization -- there are hundreds, if not thousands of them -- to provide either our time or a financial donation. And, there are hundreds of them. Thank you.

DINO CHIDIO: Thank you, brother. Speaker at mic 4.

DENISE VIAU: Hi. Denise Viau, Local 444, Caesars Windsor. I also sit on the Workers with Disabilities Committee. And, my job at Caesars Windsor, I’m an accommodation rep, so I deal with accommodation needs with our workers with disabilities. And, I have to say that it is becoming increasingly challenging with the mental health issues and with the aging workforce.

Also, outside of my job, I work with the Therapeutic Riding Association, helping disabled children ride horses. And, I also see their challenges every day. So, I am often working around people with disabilities.

And, I also have a disability myself, but I also -- and, I don’t want to repeat what Derek said, because, basically, I’m pretty sure everybody in this room either has some form of disability or you have a family member that does.

And, just quickly, in Ontario, there is 18 million that have some form of disability. And, they predict by 2025 that this number will double, which is astonishing. And, over 54 percent of the working age with disabilities are either unemployed or not in the labour force.

So, as you can see, we are facing a disability dilemma. And, this is why I feel it’s very important to bring light to this special day, recognizing December 3rd as the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Thank you.

DINO CHIDIO: Thank you, sister. I would like to make just a simple point, if I can. And, the reason why yesterday, when it was raised, on your sheets, I don’t believe you have a second BE IT FURTHER -- you don’t have a BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED. And, it was read out yesterday. So, I want to be clear that there is another component to the resolution. And, it may not appear on your papers. And, it says, basically:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ontario Regional Council Persons with Disabilities Committee prepare a statement for distribution to local unions to mark December 3rd.

So, I just want you to, again, keep that in mind through this process. Sister at mic 1.

CYNTHIA PAYNE: Thank you, Dino. Cindy Payne, Unifor staff. And, I am also the staff liaison that works on the Workers with Disabilities Committee. I stand in support of this resolution. I stand here -- this is getting a little emotional. I stand here as a mom, a wife, a proud staff and member of Unifor. But, I also stand here as a worker with disability.

I was diagnosed and have been living with MS for the last 15 years. The struggle I have is when most people find out that I have MS, the first thing they say to me is, “You don’t look like someone who has MS.” And, it is that whole visible/invisible thing. MS has very many different elements to it.

I work very hard to try and not make it define who I am. I have been very lucky. I respond to the medication. And, the medication is not a cure. It slows down the process. And, to date,
there is no cure for MS.

What I find is that as a national rep, what I struggle personally with is that I don’t always respond as quickly. I also have to think a little bit more. It takes me a little bit more time to get the message across.

It does not mean that I am not capable to do the work. It just takes me a little bit more time. And, we want people to recognize that and the struggle that people deal with personally in order to get themselves up and get to work on a regular basis.

One of the examples I want to use is the Canada Post situation. When it was announced that Canada Post was going to eliminate the boxes, most people, their first thought was, oh, my, the loss of jobs. And, it certainly is a concern.

My first thought as someone who struggles with MS is, you know, gee, in the dead of winter, how am I going to get to the mailbox? And, my friend and neighbour who lives a few doors down, whose MS has got him in a wheelchair, how is he going to get his mail? How is he going to get to the mailbox in that struggle?

And, what I would like to do, and I think the purpose of the day of persons with disabilities, is to try and merge those two thoughts together, so that when we think about that, we think of both parts, that you think about the effect on people with disabilities as well as the jobs. And, together, we will be able to make change and move forward.

And, that is why I think that the day of persons with disabilities is the first step into going forward and creating change in that, so that disabilities and people with disabilities are not invisible any longer. Thank you very much.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Mic 2.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Dino Chiodo, president of Local 444, Ontario Regional Council Chair. And, I find it compelling to come up and speak, because first off, I learned I have a disability, and I am somewhat using the disability pretty regularly or element to help me through my disability.

But, at the same time, the reason why I get up is because you hear some of the compassion. You hear some of the frustration. You hear people at the mics that are speaking that actually have disabilities. But, how many times as a representative have I gone into the workplace and somebody says, “That person is faking it. That person is not really sick. Why are they on that job? Why are they on light duty? Why are they doing that work?”

And, as a representative, I am just here to say that it is our job to make sure that we are standing next to that person saying that they are hurt, and we have to represent those workers. And, from that, it is about educating people, because you can’t see every disability that is out there.

We have to be clear with regards to making sure this is a good first step, and providing that letter, marking December 3rd as persons with disabilities, is an important component of what we have to provide, to support our membership.

I just heard 18 million Canadians suffer with disabilities and that could double within the next few years. That is an amazing number, because our jobs aren’t getting any easier.

And, I know it is a challenge for us to sometimes stand up and defend individuals that don’t seem to have a disability, but they are invisible. They’re not see-able, but they’re real. They happen, and we know they happen. And, it is our responsibility as workers to make sure that we’re defending those people together. Please support this resolution. Thank you.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Sister on mic 1.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: Debbie Montgomery, Local 4268. I stand in support of this resolution. And, I just learned today that I am disabled. And, I think a great many of us learned that.

I worked for a good many years with children with special needs and disabilities, and they taught me more than I could ever teach them. Their resilience, it was just amazing.

The parents, what they deal with on a daily basis and their spirit to go on and be determined and fight hard to get their children their special needs at a time when governments are looking to cut it all out. They don’t want to fund it. I think we need this day, just like we need Remembrance Day. We need to have that day, so people stop and think for a moment.
And, I can tell you it has been a long time since I have had to push a baby buggy. But, this weekend, one of our Executive Board members brought his wee baby. And, I walked through the concourse with his wife and the baby and the buggy. And, we were hunting for elevators and lifting things downstairs. Disabled people can’t always do that.

So, it just goes to show you, we still don’t have a society that is -- and those invisible disabilities, not to mention what people talked about, the ones you don’t see and that.

We have to be a little more tolerant in our workplaces of mental illness. It might not be something that is apparent, how people struggle every day to perform their jobs. So, I just want people to give consideration to that. And, I really think we need this to go forward.

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

DOROTHY WATTS: Hi. My name is Dorothy Watts. I am the vice-president for Local 8300. I was fortunate enough to recently complete some instructor training with the OFL, the ODRT.

And, something very interesting was brought forward in a video, which was there was a man who was blind or sight-impaired. And, he said, “I’m not disabled, until I went to a restaurant and somebody handed me a menu.” That is when he became disabled.

So, I stand very strongly in support of this as I myself am a worker with a disability. And, my union involvement and my being here today was because I went to my employer and I asked for an accommodation. And, in nursing, I was told that is not going to happen.

So, I ask for everyone here to give very careful consideration to this and stand in support, but also realize that this is something a lot bigger. So, when you go back to your respective workplaces, keep that in mind as well. Thank you.

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

RANDY KITT: Thanks, Dino. Randy Kitt, president of Local 79-M, on the Executive Board. We had a member, Mario Casanova at Local 79-M who had Crohn’s disease and suffered from depression. And, those are two very invisible disabilities, although he was accommodated by Management and supported by the union.

The co-workers around him didn’t see his disability, and often talked about him behind his back. And, Mario took his own life this year. And, it’s such a sad and horrible situation. And, I know that his death has brought awareness to our members and Bell Media. And, it is just something that we have to keep in the top of our mind at all times. So, here’s to Mario.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Randy. I see no more speakers at the mic.

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

Thank you very much. Thank you for endorsing that resolution, an important resolution for persons with disabilities, and supporting each of those workers in and out of our workplace.

Okay. Going back to our agenda, we are bringing up the next presentation, which is Imagining. And, it will be done by Angelo DiCaro. He is a national representative. Angelo, you’re coming up.

Oh, sorry. Sorry about that sister. Point at mic 4.

CHRISTINE CONNOR: Sorry about that. I tried to get up before Angelo. Just a point of interest. Christine Connor, president of Local 414, National Executive Board member. I just wanted to thank everybody last night that showed up for the purse auction to raise money for lupus.

Not sure of the total count, because we can’t close off the machine until Monday, but I am sure we did really, really well, and I hope everybody had a great time. Thank you very much for your support.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. Now, for Angelo DiCaro.

PRESENTATION - IMAGINING A FAIR TRADE FUTURE
ANGELO DICARO: We can applaud again. How about it? Why don’t we just do that? All right. I’m kidding.

Okay. So presentation, Dino. A few other words attached to Imagining a Fair Trade Future.

Okay. So, I was just going to sing Imagine by John Lennon, for half an hour.

So, this paper, you should have copies of this paper received in your kits when you registered. Yes, I am presenting this discussion paper called Imagining a Fair Trade Future. It includes contributions from the Unifor Research Department, including Bill Murnighan, Jim Stanford, Jordan Brennan and myself.

And, we hope, depending on how this conversation goes, perhaps this could be the first of many discussion papers that our Research Department publishes. It is good fodder for debate.

The paper was developed, in part, because the issue of trade in Canada has resurfaced in recent years, and it has resurfaced in a very, very big way. Canada is actively negotiating 14 new trade agreements, including a major deal with South Korea, which is nearing its full ratification; a hugely significant deal with the European Union called the Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement, or the CETA for short, which is nearing completion; and a monster free trade accord called the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which involves 12 different nations. And, that would effectively create the largest single free-trade zone in the world. And, the TPP is considered to be in its late-stage talks.

So, trade agreements -- and I will show you a bit more about this after -- they are coming at us fast and furious. And, in most cases, Canadians are pretty much unaware of all these deals being negotiated. In most cases, Canadians aren’t terribly interested in talking much about free trade deals.

Frankly, and I will attest to this, oftentimes they can be quite boring.

And, in this paper, which absolutely is not boring, and you should read because it’s quite exciting, we ask some of the basic questions like, what is trade? It sounds elementary, but it is important that we go back to that kind of root discussion. What are free trade agreements? And, why is our federal government so gung-ho about signing more and more of them?

Most importantly, we’ll outline a set of alternative principles for trade, principles that should govern how we trade, and why we trade, and what measures we use to determine trade’s success.

So, let’s start quickly with a quick walk-through of the basics here.

What is trade? In the paper, we draw a very clear distinction between trade, free trade and free trade agreements. These terms often get mangled together as if they were all one and the same thing. In fact, and as many folks in this room know, they are not one and the same thing.

Trade, for starters, is an economic activity. It is an activity that has been around since the dawn of time. And, Canada has long been a trading nation, right from its earliest days. In its purest form, trade supports our collective development and trade can enhance our standard of living.

Medicines, for instance, discovered in one region can actually help those suffering elsewhere. Trade exposes us to new cultural forms and tastes, which facilitates learning and inclusivity among peoples.

Free trade is something very different. Free trade is not an economic activity.

Free trade is not trade. Free trade is a theory, a theory that came into being in the 18th century, led by political economists like Adam Smith, who is shown here. Adam Smith famously argues that for us, free markets are our only and best pathway to reaching prosperity.

Free trade, when it was developed, was a counter-theory to what is termed mercantilist modes of economic development, where state-supported industries were used primarily as tools to build empires and further colonial ambitions.

Colonialism, through mercantilist economic development, happened largely across the European continent, and also across the global south, from Africa into the Americas.

So, we understand that trade is a basic economic activity. Free trade is a 250-year-old economic theory. So, what is a free trade agreement?
Well, in and around the 1980’s, we have come to learn what that is. It became the framework governing how trade was to happen, and it was based on the theory of free trade. Free trade agreements are the policy tools that set the rules on how trade should be done.

And, if you’re wondering who these two guys are laughing at, they’re laughing at you and they’re laughing at me. They’re laughing at all of us, because in 1988, they helped set in motion a seat change in how trade was done between nations. And, they tricked all of us into thinking that we still lived in the year 1788.

Together, they had introduced what is now the infamous Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement; a deal that changed the playbook on trade for North America and also for much of the world. This 1988 deal contained a whole bunch of pretty wacky stuff.

It put limits on government’s ability to set policy and manage their own economy. Perhaps something that would have helped stop someone like Napoleon from invading Germany, I am not totally sure, but it is certainly an odd goal for any nation in the 20th or 21st Century.

It made private capital and financial investment flow from country to country happen with very few limitations. And, it granted private investors, the traders, people doing much of the trading, which are oftentimes corporations, giving them extraordinary new rights, including things like extending their patent protections on products that they develop, and access to these fun free trade courts that allow them to quickly and efficiently sue us over the democratic decisions that we would like to make in our day-to-day lives.

If you’re wondering, these components are pretty standard in free trade agreements all around the world. And, what these agreements don’t typically account for are these sort of pesky minor social and economic goals, like enhancing workers’ rights, and promoting racial and gender equality, and eradicating poverty, and protecting the environment, and other sort of these trivial things that we worry ourselves about for, really, no good reason.

Mulroney and Reagan’s deal in 1988 set the table for a far more ambitious and historic free trade accord in 1994, and that accord included Mexico. And, it was called the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA. And, it still is, today, the most ambitious corporate rights deal that has ever been signed.

Now, NAFTA, when it was discussed and it came into being, came attached with lots and lots of promises to Canadians, everything from increased trade flows, to productivity enhancements, to new jobs, to new business investment. All or that was going to be flooding into our country. Free trade and NAFTA can only be good, because that’s what the theory tells us.

Well, it has been 20 years since NAFTA was put into force. And, I don’t know. I think 20 years is a fairly good amount of time to take stock and step back and assess what it is we have actually gotten ourselves into. So, 20 years, I think. And, a lot of folks have been doing this over the last year.

Now, just to draw by way of comparison -- I remember Fred’s presentation was great, because it drew reference to some hockey icons that we have seen here and there. I don’t know if everyone watches hockey in the room, but I certainly know everyone likes Justin Bieber.

And so, you see, the funny thing is like NAFTA is kind of like Justin Bieber. It sounds ridiculous, but it is actually true. See, in the early years, we were just dazzled by Justin Bieber’s innocent boy charm, his wispy untamed hair, his voice. It’s like an angel singing from heaven.

But, see, it took us about 20 years before we actually got to get a handle on what the Biebs was all about. I am still a Belieber, but it’s -- I’m not going to lie. It’s getting harder to do this. So, yes, Bieber is a lot like NAFTA, sort of good early on, but really kind of fell apart as things kind of progressed.

So, in your paper, you are going to find this really neat chart that was based on some research that Jordan Brennan, one of our economists, has put together. And, just by way of a quick explanation, you will see four indicators that we used typically as determining the economic success or failure of something.

And, you will look at the 20-year or more periods, or the period before the 1988 deal and the NAFTA were signed, and then the period after that 1988 deal and the NAFTA were signed. And, on every single indicator, from business investment, private sector job growth, average hourly
earnings and GDP per capita, every single indicator, we did better before these ridiculous free trade agreements started getting signed and being put into force.

Now, not everything has to do with the 1988 CUFTA and the 1994 NAFTA, but that is not what they promised us. We couldn’t lose in these deals, and these numbers shouldn’t be showing up, if those deals actually lived up to their promises.

And so, I will let you take a better look at those figures in your paper, when you do get a chance to read it. But, I guess, the interesting part of this is, you think what would any reasonable government department focused on trade -- what would they do? You would think they would be sitting there in their offices with calculators. As every year of these trade deals were in force, they would be checking, “Hey, is this working?” or “Is this turning out positive benefits for Canada?”

There is nobody with calculators doing this in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. But, now that we have known this, and you would think if someone was checking, what would we deduce from this experience with NAFTA? Maybe we would say, “Hey, instead of signing more of these deals, let’s just proceed with some caution.”

Well, that is not what we have done since the NAFTA. We kept signing free trade agreements. We signed three more in between 1997 and 2003. We signed agreements with Israel, with Chile and with Costa Rica. Now, those three countries are by no means comparable to the size of the United States and its dominant economic position. But, the fact that we signed those deals are still concerning nonetheless.

And, the funny thing is, when you consider the economic impact of all of those five free trade deals put together, another thing that kind of comes out of the numbers is that we actually do better where we don’t have a free trade agreement. Our exports are higher to countries where we don’t have a free trade agreement -- and our imports are lower with countries we don’t have a free trade agreement.

So, we’re kind of like the big loser in this whole thing, and that is kind of why Reagan and Mulroney are laughing at us, because these things are complete and utter failures, based on what the numbers tell us.

Now, I want to just do a quick activity here. I want to have everyone in this room, just for this moment -- you’re all getting a promotion. Maybe it’s not a promotion, but let’s pretend it’s a promotion. You are all now federal Ministers of Trade for Canada; okay?

So, you know what you know about NAFTA, based on very clear economic metrics about its impact. You know, if you have taken your calculator out and done those numbers, that when we have a free trade agreement, we actually do worse economically than we do with countries where we have no free trade agreement.

So, the question that you would be asked is, what wouldn’t you do? What wouldn’t you do in a situation like this? Maybe what you wouldn’t do is you wouldn’t sign more free trade agreements. But, instead, our Minister of Trade and our Prime Minister are quite hell bent on doing the complete opposite of that. And, their approach has been, well, forget it. I’m not going to look at the numbers coming off my calculator. Let’s just keep doing this, because this is what the theory tells us works. This is what is best for us.

Most concerning is most of the agreements on this list are shaped in the same mould as the 1998 CUFTA and the NAFTA. And, in the case of the Canada EU CETA, it is even more ambitious, even more far-reaching on a number of different fronts. But, I’ll tell you, the NAFTA and the CUFTA, they apply to things that our federal government does. And, most trade agreements, that is exactly what it is, is the federal government is bound by it.

In the CETA, they said, “Hey, heck, we’ve got other levels of government. Why don’t we just make everybody bound by the terms and conditions of a free trade agreement?” So, you know what? Big EU corporation, go ahead and sue the Province of Ontario. Maybe go ahead and sue one of our municipalities. That’s fine.

This is now the next generation we’re seeing of these free trade agreements, and it is actually quite scary. And, this is really the starting point for the discussion paper. We feel Canada right now is at a crossroads on trade.

We recognize trade’s historic economic value and the positives that it can yield,
but we are also locked clearly in a very rigid ideological framework. And, our trade officials are stuck, heading down the same path, without much critical reflection or re-evaluation on where we have gotten so far and, clearly, no exploration of alternatives.

Is there another way we can work through trade? Does it have to be these free trade agreements? That conversation is just simply not happening. So, we say there has never been a more important time to critically evaluate the workings of our global trade system.

Well, why? (a) Because we are going to get walloped by a whole bunch of new corporate rights style free trade agreements in the coming years. That is the first reason.

The second thing is because trade absolutely matters. It matters a lot to our economy, an economy that is not doing so well, not operating up to its potential, and it is certainly not delivering the goods for working people, the unemployed, students or environment. And, trade also matters to our union. On page 5 of the paper, you will find a list of specific Unifor sectors that, typically, these corporate rights agreements will have a direct impact on. And, you would think that would mostly be the sectors of manufacturing, because companies will move plants and they will ship goods in cheaper from other countries. But, in fact, there is a lot, lot more to these deals and it affects a lot of us in our workplaces.

Trade matters. We know this. And, the consequences of these agreements are real. I will just give you a few quick examples. Thanks to free trade, an innovative policy by Ontario policies that were established in our provincial government’s Green Energy Act were struck down by the World Trade Organization who is the epitome of free trade theory. They are the ones who police free trade policy and are the global governing body on all things free trade.

They struck down those policies. The Green Energy Act was designed, if folks recall, to increase our province’s wind, and solar, and other renewable energy outputs by giving financial subsidies to energy suppliers, but they get those subsidies only if they produce a portion -- not the whole thing, but a portion of those materials in Ontario.

That policy was designed to create tens of thousands of new manufacturing jobs in a province that was hard hit. Well, apparently, that kind of policy doesn’t jive with free trade theory. So, therefore, that kind of policy can get struck down.

Thanks to free trade, a major U.S. chemicals company, Ethyl Corporation, forced Canada to overturn a ban that we had placed on a dangerous and poisonous fuel additive known as MMT, a policy that was very much a public health policy, but certainly would influence and impact the profits of a chemical company that produced that additive.

And, what they did was they used their new free trade court in NAFTA to threaten a lawsuit of $350 million against the federal government. And, rather than fight that, the government catered to it and overturned the ban. So, another tip of the hat to how good free trade policy has been for our country.

Free trade has also enabled a Canadian mining firm, Infinito Gold, to threaten to sue Costa Rica -- remember that we also have a free trade agreement with Costa Rica -- over a ban that the Costa Ricans set on open-pit mining.

And, they’re using free trade agreement investor protections to launch that lawsuit, $94 million, the largest lawsuit by a corporation against Costa Rica’s government in its history. The lawsuit still hasn’t been settled and the struggles of Costa Ricans still continue.

And, lastly, thanks to free trade, one of the most successful trade policies we have ever seen in this country, the North American Auto Pact, was struck down in 2001 by the WTO, killing thousands of jobs. Unlike a free trade agreement as we know them now, the Auto Pact provided car companies with tariff-free access to sell finished cars and parts between the U.S. and Canada, but required that those companies assemble one vehicle in Canada for every one they sold here.

That is not a bad idea. That is trying to build a reciprocal trade relationship, a smart policy that helped build our auto industry. But, a policy, despite how smart it was, didn’t jive with free trade theory. So, again, it gets struck down.

Part of the challenge we face is how we refrain the debate on trade. Too often, our answer to the question of free trade, we know this, is no. No free trade. And, we say no for good
reason, because of the examples that I have just outlined.

But, absent an alternative approach, no has given our opponents the chance to back us into a corner. No to free trade becomes no to all trade, no to progress. We have nothing to say but no. And, we kind of become the old mercantilists, the protectionists, the empire builders, the people who are anti everything.

The paper tries to get our union leadership and our activists imagining a trade future for Canada that distinguishes between trade and free trade, and reminds us of who we are and what we stand for on matters of trade. We have always been a movement that has been for development, for equality, for justice, for sustainability, for democracy and the redistribution of wealth. And, we can’t lose sight of that when we talk about free trade agreements.

Now, the 12 principles that we outline on pages 10 and 11 in your document, you’ll find them -- and we think that these 12 principles are a good starting point to guide our country’s trade policy and principles that reflect the true values of our progressive society, everything from building in fairness for trade, transparency in negotiations, inclusivity, making sure mutual benefit is one of the outcomes, the protection of public services, not privatization, the preservation of industrial and social development tools, the protection of cultural sovereignty, not granting private investors rights that are above the law that apply to the rest of us, enshrining workers’ rights protections in any agreement, indigenous rights, making sure that that is front and centre in the negotiation of any trade accord, sustainability as well as autonomy.

These principles could be the new cornerstone of Canada’s trade policy. These principles could be the platform on which future trade deals are negotiated and evaluated to level the playing field between developed and developing nations to more fairly facilitate the movement of goods and services and investment and people across borders, just as trade is supposed to do.

The enemy here isn’t trade, if trade is done right. Our enemies are the ideologues who have taken hold of the trade mechanism and used them to promote greed, inequality and injustice. But, when it is all said and done, these are just 12 principles. They don’t really mean much, other than what they say on paper. The question is, how do we move forward and how do we put these principles into practice? That is our key challenge.

At the end of the paper, you will find a list of possible ways Unifor members can engage on trade issues through the union, at their workplace and in the community. It may sound like an old refrain, but activism totally matters.

Trade activists -- I’ll be certain here -- they are probably laughing at this right now, because they have spent the better part of 20 years banging their heads against the wall. And, many in this room will agree, as many people in this room have been involved in trade fights over the years, that walls, they hurt, you know. They friggin’ hurt when you bang your hand against them for 20 years.

But, consider this for a second. It was activists that raised the profile of global sweatshop labour. Activists helped change the debate on global supply chains, and to some degree forced change. Activists are the ones who articulated the good logic of buy local, which continues to influence business practices and consumer behaviour today. Activists also helped stop monster free trade accords in the past, like the multilateral agreement on investment, and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas.

I don’t what to get too technical on this, but these agreements are like the NAFTA or the NAFTA on steroids. And then, to be frank, activists on both sides of the Atlantic are the reason why people still question whether that Canada EU CETA is ever going to get ratified, and that is a good thing.

Activism takes many forms. It is the millions of people who flood the streets of Seattle in 1999 to protest the World Trade Organization, or the 2001 protests in Quebec City. But, it is also the conversation that’s had between a shop steward and a union member over coffee break. It is the presentation that gets delivered to the House of Commons’ standing committees by the Unifor National President. But, it is also the personal letter that is sent by a Unifor member to their MP or MPP.

We have been doing a very good job standing up to this corporate rights trade
agenda. And, now, we have to redouble our efforts, because our trade activism will be put to the test in 2015.

There is no doubt that the Harper government will point to these near-complete trade deals, especially with Korea and the EU as symbols of their economic credibility. Harper will argue that the other 12 free trade agreements in the works, including deals with Japan and with India, will be threatened if another party is going to win power.

What is more worrisome is that the federal opposition parties will also likely support many of these Harper-led freed trade deals. The Liberals will do it, because they are trying to position themselves as a middle-of-the-road party, desperately trying to shed itself of the protectionist stigma that Conservatives have targeted them with for years.

That is why the NDP has uncharacteristically supported a free trade deal with Jordan, and that is why they more recently supported the free trade deal with South Korea.

Trade will factor into the election debates more than they have in the past 2 decades. We have to be ready for this discussion. We have to be ready for this debate. Hopefully, this discussion starts today when we have our debate on the recommendation that is put before you. And, we do hope that this paper is used as a tool as we all prepare for this critical moment next year.

So, on behalf of Jim, Bill, Jordan, I want to thank you for your attention. I also want to thank you for not booing my Justin Bieber joke, because I was sort of worried about that one. I don’t know. And, I really do look forward to the discussion from the floor. So, thanks so much.

DINO CHIODO: Angelo, excellent job. And, also say thank you to Jim, Bill, Jordan and yourself for the hard work that went into putting this document together, Imagining a Fair Trade Future. And, this discussion paper goes a long way to provide the tools that people need to be able to make the arguments with regards to what our challenges are, especially in free trade situations.

Just bringing up the recommendation, I’ll have Katha come up and read it.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

KATHA FORTIER: So, this is Recommendation No. 1 on trade agreements. I recommend that Unifor Ontario activists, in accordance with the direction set by the National Executive Board, work with our allies across Canada and around the world to advocate and campaign for a just and balanced world trade system, a system that reverses the trend of corporate-rights agreements and that is guided by core progressive principles of democracy, justice and sustainability.

I further recommend that Unifor continue its opposition to the Harper government’s proposed free trade agreements with Europe, Korea, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Foreign Investment Protection Agreement with China (that would lock in investor rights for at least 31 years) and that our union demand the removal of the investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms (including NAFTA’s Chapter 11) from any existing or proposed trade agreements.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, Katha. Can I get a mover? Seconder? Going to the mics. I’ll recognize Ken Lewenza, the past president of CAW. Ken.

KEN LEWENZA: Ken Lewenza, Local 444. Let me welcome our National President, Jerry Dias, to the Ontario Council, who has been on one plane after another plane, meeting councils, our members, taking on the corporations. So, Jerry, welcome to the Ontario Council. And, take a deep breath, my friend.

Let me just say this to our delegates here today. The labour movement is an inspiration to most of us. The labour movement gives us an opportunity to fight for economics, social justice, fight for those that are most vulnerable.

When you talk about the debate this morning on disabilities, when you talk about the recommendation on food banks, when you talk about the issues that are facing our communities, it is all related to the free trade agreement.
And, the only thing that I would ask Angelo to do, and the leadership of our union, is to be a little more simplistic on the question of free trade. When free trade was introduced, Bob White at that time was the president of our union, and Maude Barlow from the Council of Canadians.

Brian Mulroney is conservative as he was and as a free trader, he did the democratic right thing. He introduced trade, but he made it an election issue. He said, “On such an economic policy and economic change in Canada, we’re going to take it to the electorate.” And, he went to the electorate and said, “We’re going to introduce a free trade agreement.”

And, what inspired the labour movement is Bob White and Maude Barlow went from one community to another community, to another community, talking about the adverse effects of free trade. What Bob White said was, “Our social programs will be weakened”; where Bob White said that, “We will have less jobs and less opportunities for future generations”; where Bob White said that, “The competitiveness from one country to another will be so intense, the Canada that we have once known as a progressive country will change.”

I remember that. I was inspired by it. And, we went to the electorate, and Brian Mulroney won the election. And, quite frankly, that was the beginning of a significant change in Canada.

I ask you all, do you believe you are better off today than you were 20, 25 years ago? To the young people in this room that may not have been around during the free trade debate, do you think your parents are more secure today than they were 25 or 30 years ago? Do you think our healthcare, our universal healthcare program, is more enhanced today than it was 25 years ago?

Do we think our public education is better today, where university students are leaving universities and college with the highest debt level ever, and the Bank of Canada Governor says, “Hey, go out and work for nothing,” with the most education that they have ever had in their lives? Brothers and sisters, what I believe every time we talk about this, let’s get a little video clip for our workplaces. All we need is a one-minute clip of what Bob White and Maude Barlow said, and then what D’Aquino said from the business community.

And then we will be able to say who has credibility on this issue. If it is one thing that we have credibility on, is our lives have changed. Our economic circumstances in Canada have changed. The future generations are not going to have the same opportunity as this young guy did, when I joined Local 444, worked in the Chrysler plant and fought for economic and social justice, not just in the collective bargaining realm, but in the political realm.

So, brothers and sisters, we have got the data. We have got the proof. But, we have got the emotion and we have got the human dignity on the ground where, today, seniors are being told, “Stay home with your children. We don’t have enough long-term, not-for-profit facilities”, because everything is privatized and most people can’t afford it. So, we are going to protect our seniors.

We have got to fight against free trade. If we are going to fight for jobs for our kids and our grandchildren, we have to fight against free trade. If we are going to defend decent jobs, and decent incomes, and fight for equality versus the growing inequality, we have to fight against free trade.

And, my last point is, brothers and sisters, you have credibility. It was the labour movement. We spent millions of dollars on ads, on commercials, going from community to community.

Bob White was an inspiration to all of us. Maude Barlow was an inspiration to all of us. And, today, our founding president of the CAW, Bob White, and the former president of the Canadian Labour Congress and, I would argue, the most progressive trade union leader in the history of our nation is in a long-term care facility in Kincardine with dementia. And, every day I think of him. And, every day I ask myself, is he in a better position as a senior that is suffering with dementia? Is the future that he fought for really paying dividends for him? And, the answer is not.

And, brothers and sisters, you have the credibility. You have the desire. We have got the human facts, not the economic facts. We have got the human facts. And, if we are going to do anything for my hero and the hero of the labour movement in Canada, we are going to continue his fight against free trade, defend jobs, defend social programs, defend the right for young people to
have a decent income and decent wages, fight for social programs that we are all going to eventually need, because that is our responsibility in the labour movement.

Thank you, Bob White, for your fight against free trade. Thank you, Unifor, for taking on the fight. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for fighting for the next generation and the generations that built this country. Thank you, brothers and sisters.

DINO CHIDO: And, that, my friends, is why we invite retirees to participate. They still have the passion. They have the fight in them and they can express themselves better than anyone. Ken Lewenza, thank you very much for that passionate speech on free trade.

What I am going to do now is I am going to take a few more speakers, and then we are going to get back into the business of the day, and then we will get back to the formation that we have for speakers to finish the debate.

So, I am going to take two more speakers right now. Mic 4 and 5. And then if you can please remember your place, we will come back to you as soon as we get back to the discussions, but we want to get back to the order of business. Speaker on mic 4.

CHRIS TAYLOR: Thanks, Dino. I was really hoping that you weren’t going to pick mic 4 after that speech from Ken Lewenza, but I’ll do my best.

Chris Taylor, president of Local 200 in Windsor, and National Executive Board member. We have talked about free trade, since free trade was put in place under NAFTA. I am in full support of the document.

There is nobody in this room and, as a matter of fact, there is nobody in this country that hasn’t been negatively affected by the free trade agreements that were put in place. It doesn’t matter what sector you’re in. It doesn’t matter what job. You will all be affected by free trade agreements.

Detroit Three bargaining, 2008/2009, and this is how things move along when government doesn’t understand the effects of free trade. In 2008/2009, we went into bargaining with Ford, Chrysler and GM where the industry almost collapsed. All three were facing bankruptcy. Ford didn’t go for government money, but Chrysler and GM actually entered into bankruptcy, both sides of the border.

And, what did the government say? The government said, “If you want money from us to ensure the future of the automotive industry, you are going to have to compete with the transplants here in Canada, Honda and Toyota.” In the States, they were told they have got to compete with the southern transplants. That was 2008 and 2009.

2008/2009 and 2012 bargaining with Ford, Chrysler and GM; Ford, Chrysler and GM tell us as workers, as CAW at that point that if you want investment in your country, you have got to compete with your UAW counterparts. We have made that our bargaining priorities. We want investment. We have to have it.

Now, what happens, it is no longer the UAW. It is no longer Toyota and Honda in Canada. It is no longer the Southern States. It is South Korea. It’s India. It’s Mexico. We can’t compete with those countries. $5.00 an hour an autoworker is paid in Mexico, all-in costs of $9.00. That is impossible to live on, no matter where you are.

Free trade is certainly not free. It never has been, it never will be, and in this country, we have never seen it. Again, I go to the recent decision with Ford Motor Company. It wasn’t us at Local 200 competing with another UAW plant. Ford made it very clear. It is Canada or it is Mexico. You don’t understand what kind of pressure that puts on you.

And then when we go to our government and say, “By the way, you are the ones that put the rules in place that we have to compete dollar for dollar with these jurisdictions. You have to step up and put the money out.” And, what do they say? “Not our problem.” Capitalists, no matter who they are.

You heard Ken and Angelo talk. Angelo talked about the NDP. Our own labour party is now saying that they can’t be the party of no. So, they go out and support the South Korea free trade agreement. They are in support of most of the measures put in place under CETA. The Trans-Pacific Partnership, they are considering.
We have got Ford Motor Company in Canada, Dianne Craig, saying, “Please don’t enter into that agreement. It is not going to do well for Canada.” And, we still have governments, including our own NDP, that are out there promoting it.

What is really concerning, a lot of the free trade agreements are with countries that don’t practise human rights laws. They don’t support women’s rights. They support child labour, slavery.

Look at what happened. Rana in Bangladesh should still be fresh in our minds. And, who are the companies that were responsible for that? It was Walmart. It was Joe Fresh through Loblaw’s. That was the result of free trade agreements.

So, brothers and sisters, you heard Ken. We have two choices. We can sit here and say there is nothing we can do to stop free trade agreements. We have even got our own NDP party saying they agree with trade. Or, we can continue the fight and say, “No. Let’s take a breath here. We understand we’re a trading nation.” Every nation is. If you build a product, you’ve got to get it out of your country.

But, we can sit back. We can look at the negative impacts. We can understand what is going on. And then we can continue to push and promote fair trade, not free trade. We have got a responsibility here, because if we bury our heads in the sand, we know what the outcome is. We are seeing it already.

So, this union needs to continue to fight. We need to continue to promote fair trade and we need to get the public educated and involved in it, because as a union ourselves, we can’t do it. We need everybody in this country to understand the negative effects and we need to educate them before the next election.

Stephen Harper needs to be told, “Stop going to other countries to try to promote trade. Come back to your own country. Put some friggin’ jobs on the table here.” Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. We will go to speaker on mic 5.

WILLIE LAMBERT: Willie Lambert, Local 1256. I would like to speak also in favour of the paper and compliment the intelligence of it. With the experience that we have had in the last 30-some decades since the advent of the first of this corporate-driven model called free trade, some of the experiences that, unfortunately, I didn’t have in the middle ‘80s, the understanding of a former union of ours CAW, Bob White, like Ken had said, understood this right through and through.

The NDP largely in the 1988 election, if you will look at it factually, lost that issue. Broadbent, I give to the Broadbent institute, but I always think I wish I had had done better in ‘88 then. It was stolen by a phony corporate lawyer called John Turner for the Liberals.

And, ultimately, Canada has been ruined in great part since that time. I mean, we all love Canada, but capitalists don’t love any nation’s state. And, they sure as heck don’t have much care or concern for the beauty and the capacity of this country. They just want to pillage each every opportunity for profit.

And, I just feel so very, very badly that many of the folks in our country don’t understand the impacts. And, that is our job -- as it was in the middle ‘80s, it is today -- to inform and better place the dialogue and discussion on this issue, because it doesn’t go away. It never goes away. You never really completely lose. You’re always in a struggle. You’re always in a battle. And, ultimately, today, this argument, it resonates even more, I would say, because of the social ramifications of youth unemployment.

They call it middle class. Actually, it’s middle income. It’s not a class. But, there are so few people in that middle area of the economy left. Why? Because, ultimately, unions don’t have the sense of capacity that we once did to make sure that the economy is humanized, and people have a decent rate of pay to buy a home and raise children, and so forth.

I was talking to Alex Keeney yesterday. And, what haunts him and haunts me is that when we are finished and we are no longer in the realm of the good fight that we have, the next generations that come after us are not going to have what we have. And, that is something that really, really is troubling.

I just want to say that, ultimately, it is so demoralizing to have us almost beg to the point where we have to only hold onto whatever is left in investment with regard to giving all sorts
There has got to be some opportunity for equity of ownership. Opportunities for the public of Canada, never mind us beyond it, to have some level of control on what these decision-makers make for decisions to move investment and jobs.

So, what I am saying is, ultimately, public ownership and the capacity of Canada to re-find itself is not such a scandalously revolutionary idea. It is just logical. And, ultimately, we have to come back to talk about public ownership, and we have to talk about how we can develop the Bank of Canada to serve the nation investment and rebuild the so-called middle-class or middle-income folks and investment in the economy.

And, we are full of natural resources. This country has got so much to offer the next generations that we are concerned about. But, ultimately, it falls on our shoulders. It is so darn depressing to hear that Mulcair would support that guff because, ultimately, we have got to push all these political parties to understand that what has given for the last 3 decades is a real erosion. It is not progress.

Progress is driven by moving forward, advancing and making the life for the next generation better than what it was for ours. And, that is what we are all about.

DINO CHIDO: Thank you, brother. Before we get on to the order of the day, I would like to recognize a point on mic 1. It’s point on mic 1.

SHAWN ROUSE: Point on number 1. Thank you very much. I will be quick, because I know we have a busy schedule today. My name is Shawn Rouse. I am President of the Health Council. And, I am here today with Steve Olsen, who is one of the trustees of our Health Council.

And, we are here to identify and thank Katha Fortier in her opening remarks yesterday in bringing light to a very serious issue that is currently moving its way through the provincial legislature, and it is known as Bill No. 2. And, it is an act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act of 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder.

It sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred during the employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown.

This amendment to the WC Act is probably one of the few positive changes to WCB in the last 20 years. And, it is to help actual frontline workers, frontline first response workers. These are the workers who run towards danger when we are running away from danger. I know that is kind of a statement that has been over-used. But, these are the people who protect us every day and take care of us in our deepest and dire needs.

And, we have these members in our union. And, we need to ensure that this act or this bill is actually passed with all parties’ support that is currently being listed in the legislature. And, we need to make sure that they don’t get dazzled by the next shiny public relations item and forget to keep pushing forward on this and get it passed.

It has been in the legislature once already in the spring, and it died when the election was called. And, now, we need to make sure that nothing else happens, and it goes through, and it gets passed and brought forward under actual legislation.

So, we have a petition today that is being handed out to all the tables for everybody to take the time and sign on the petition. We have a little over 500 people here today, and we need to get a little over 500 signatures on the petitions.

And, anyone that needs extra petitions to take back to the workplace, there will be extra copies of the actual paper available for you to pick up from the Healthcare display table that is outside, as well as it’s on the actual Unifor website.

And, the best way to find it is on the search window that is at the top of the webpage, and to type in PTSD and hit Enter. And then a whole slew of information comes up on this petition and others as well that go with it and the news releases.

So, I am also going to just turn it over to Steve, for just a second.

STEVE OLSEN: Thanks, Shawn. I have been a paramedic for 20 years.
DINO CHIDO: Congratulations, brother, on helping that woman on the street, again, as well. Very important.

STEVE OLSEN: Thank you. That is what we do. We wish her all the best.

DINO CHIDO: Excellent job in the Unifor spirit.

STEVE OLSEN: Since April 2014, 25 first responders, most of them paramedics, have taken their own lives. They have taken their own lives, because what we do is we walk into situations when people get to a point where they can’t deal with their situation. We walk in and we’re there to help.

Unfortunately, the sights we see, the smells we smell, the emotions we deal with, the violence we deal with, it is internalized. PTSD is a huge part of daily life for most paramedics. And, I am speaking for police officers and fire-fighters as well.

The atrocities I have seen over 20 years, I can’t even begin to tell you and I won’t tell you, because when people ask me the worst thing you have ever seen, it is the worst question anyone can ever ask me.

I am really, really, really hoping everybody can support this petition. What is happening right now with the WSIB is when you apply for PTSD, what they make you do is they make you relive every single traumatic call you have gone through, in order to prove that you have work-related PTSD.

Can you imagine what that would do? Holding a dead baby in your arms. Being there with a stabbing victim, where their mother is screaming at you to help them and there is nothing you can do. Having to relive those moments to prove that you have an actual disease is cruel.

So, what this legislation is going to do is it is going to be presumptive legislation. If you are diagnosed with PTSD and you are a first responder, it is going to be automatically taken care of and you are going to be protected.

There is a website called https://www.ivegotyourback911.com. It is put on by one of our Unifor paramedic units. Please go on that website and support it as well. We need all of your help.

We are here to get your back. We are here all the time, but we suffer. And, suicides, 25 since 2014, April, is way too many. It needs to stop. And, I hope everyone will support this. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIDO: Sorry, Shawn. I just want to make sure. You said the petition -- is it on the floor currently right now?

SHAWN ROUSE: The print version of them is being handed out right now.

DINO CHIDO: Right.

SHAWN ROUSE: And, we are going to ask people to fill them out in the course of time, before lunch, and then pass it off to the end of the tables.

DINO CHIDO: Right.

SHAWN ROUSE: We are going to have volunteers come around and pick up all the completed petitions, so that we can have them sent in to the legislature ASAP, to support the work that is keeping this bill going forward.

And, at the same time, if those folks want to download a copy for their local, then you can get copies of the petition from the website and we will also have paper copies left over at our Healthcare table as well, for people to take with them.

DINO CHIDO: So, you are looking for 500 signatures here, at least. There’s actually 692 people that are in this convention. So, it shouldn’t be an issue whatever.

SHAWN ROUSE: Exactly.

DINO CHIDO: That is the first step towards getting to where we need to be on that bill. Good job.

SHAWN ROUSE: Thank you very much.

DINO CHIDO: Excellent.

SHAWN ROUSE: Thank you very much everyone.

DINO CHIDO: Randy, do you have a point on two? Okay. So, then, let’s get into the order of the business. I would like to welcome Maureen Dawson, national representative, to
introduce our next speaker.

**MAUREEN DAWSON:** Good morning, brothers and sisters. I can’t tell you how thrilled I am to be here today, introducing our keynote speaker. When I heard that Michael Harris, one of Canada’s foremost investigative journalists, was going to be here, I was really excited. And, Michael has quite an impressive résumé, and through the years has broken some of the biggest stories in Canada.

While at the Sunday Express in Newfoundland, where he was the founding publisher and editor-in-chief, Michael uncovered the story of the abuse of the boys at the Mount Cashel Orphanage.

And, when Michael was at the Globe and Mail, he broke the story of the wrongful conviction of Donald Marshall. And, from 2000 to 2012, Michael hosted *Michael Harris Live* for CFRA Radio in Ottawa. And, he has also written 9 books, won numerous awards, including a Doctor of Laws from Memorial University in Newfoundland, and is currently a columnist for ipolitics.ca. And, all of this is very impressive.

But, what I believe is truly special about Michael is not the printed words on the page, but what is behind those words. Michael Harris is not your typical journalist. He has spent his career being a voice for those who don’t have one. Comforting the afflicted and afflict the comfortable describes his type of journalism.

He sees his writing as a vocation, and through his work, he seeks justice for those who are discarded by society. Michael’s columns on ipolitics.ca are food for the soul for those of us just a bit obsessed with politics in this country. And, that brings us to today.

All of you received a copy of Michael’s best-selling new book, *Party of One*, when you registered. This book is dynamite. In political circles, it is the talk of the town. On Twitter and other social media, it is a hot topic. And, why is this? Because this book is a complete deconstruction of Stephen Harper and his attack on all that is Canadian.

The Toronto Star said, “The Party of One is a devastating critique of Canada’s present government. And, it is fair to say that author Michael Harris believes the Prime Minister to be a clear and present danger, an existential threat to Canada’s democracy.”

And, 2015 is going to be a huge test for democracy in Canada. As the countdown to the federal election next fall begins, will we once again have to dodge election fraud, and robocalling, and 24/7 propaganda paid for with our own tax dollars? It is very likely.

And, will Canadians remember all of the nasty and vindictive actions by Harper and friends? Well, there is one sure way to make sure they do. We need to educate ourselves and our friends and families on what Harper has done in the nine years he has led the government. And, there is no better textbook than *Party of One*.

I am already a huge fan of Michael’s. And, after today’s address, I am sure you will be, too. And, I would like to ask for a big Unifor welcome for Michael Harris.

ADDRESS:  MICHAEL HARRIS, JOURNALIST/ AUTHOR

**MICHAEL HARRIS:** I would like to start out by saying I have been fighting the war against Stephen Harper for 3 years as a guerrilla journalist, and it is nice to see the cavalry has finally arrived.

Stephen Harper has cheated in each of the 3 elections that he has run since he has won power. In 2006, there was a financial scam going on called the *In-and-Out Scandal*. A lot of people think they know what that scandal was about but, in fact, it may have won the election.

It wasn’t just a factor in the election, because what it actually amounted to was the Conservatives were able to spend a million extra dollars in the last week of the campaign when it was crucial. And, that was a close election decided by less than 7,000 votes.

The *In-and-Out Scandal* started in 2006. It was an exercise in cheating by spending more money than people were permitted to spend under the election expenses legislation. The Tories fought that charge for five years. And, ultimately, they faced criminal charges when Elections Canada charged four of the senior officers of the Conservative Party in 2011.

It was at that point that Stephen Harper did a strange thing. One of the people who was charged was Senator Irving Gerstein. He was not yet a senator, but he was a senior
Conservative. So, while charged and under investigation by Elections Canada, Stephen Harper chose that moment to elevate him to the Senate. And, the reason he did that was to give him cover. Then, there was a plea bargain on the charge, so that the personal charges against those four officers were dropped, and the party had to pay a fine in excess of $200,000.00. In 2008, the cheating continued on exactly the same issue, which was spending more than they were allowed to spend. This time, it was Dean Del Mastro. And, you will remember Dean. Dean was the person who was going to check out the ethics of other people on robo-calls. Dean wrote himself a $21,000.00 cheque and got himself elected in Peterborough. Now, he is convicted on 4 counts of fraud, election fraud, and he is gone. The interesting point is, while he was under investigation, the Prime Minister kept him as his Parliamentary Secretary, which shows you what kind of standard is being set here. And then, Peter Penashue in Labrador, he also spent $30,000.00 more than he was supposed to, had to resign from Cabinet, and it was what I thought would be the last example until 2011 came, and we had robo-calls. And, make no mistake about robo-calls. It remains the great unsolved crime of our politics. One person has been convicted, Michael Sona. I spoke to him yesterday from prison in his first day or two inside. He was 22 years old when this happened. There were robo-calls made in 230 ridings, but we get a low-level 22-year-old operative in Peterborough as the only person who pays the price. And, the witnesses against him were all supplied by the Conservative Party.

But, you would never have known that if you watched the trial, because Arthur Hamilton, who is the Conservative Party lawyer, didn't appear as a witness, which almost makes it a travesty of justice, since Arthur Hamilton not only produced all the witnesses, but he also gave them their stories, and worked with them in actual interviews with investigators from Elections Canada. He sat in on the interviews and offered prompting to people who were recollecting, in many cases, details that they had heard about in the newspapers.

Michael Sona said yesterday, “I could have gotten a lighter sentence if I had shown remorse at the sentencing, but I didn’t do this, and I am not going to admit to it.” And, the last person who said that to me was Donald Marshall a long time ago.

One of the things I think people should be excited about in this room is this room is full of people who changed history in the Ontario election. And, what we are facing in 2015 is a Rubicon of far greater importance than election in the country’s biggest province. And, it is going to take the same effort to fight back against these people, the people who lie, the people who have cheated, the people who have stolen elections, and the people who have cancelled other people's rights and, in the process, crushed a lot of people.

Now, I know you have got a big agenda today, but it is necessary to talk a little bit about some of the experiences I had writing the book. You can read the book. When you write 150,000 words about something, you haven’t got much left to say. But, there are a lot of things that didn’t make the book that I think are terribly important, one of which is this.

We are not a country of scared rabbits, except for those of us who prefer the closet to the thick of things when the going gets tough. Stephen Harper hid in the closet during the recent assault on Parliament. And then a week later, ordered Vladimir Putin out of Ukraine. I don’t know what you make of that, but it is a less than the warrior Prime Minister in my books. And, he ended up having to apologize to his caucus over it.

But, when I said, “We’re not a country of scared rabbits,” I am afraid in some quarters that is exactly what we have become under Stephen Harper’s stewardship of Canada.

There were several people that agreed to interview with me for the book, some very famous people, some independently wealthy people who had nothing to fear that most of us have to fear, which is losing a job or something like that.

But, one very famous artist had a lot of very important things to say. And, after conducting the interview, he phoned me back and he said, “Listen, I just can’t do it. You can’t put my story out. And, the reason that you can’t is that I have represented several charities for 25 years. And, we are getting the word that if I criticize the government, they are going to lose their charitable status,”
which is not a very Canadian thing; is it?

And, I tried to make the point. I said, “Man, if you don’t stand up now, who is going to make that case? You are going to create this as the new norm. Everybody is going to start caving in.”

I did my best to get people like Richard Koven, who had detailed information about the detainee situation in Afghanistan. And, he came to my apartment in Ottawa.

And, I asked him the first question in the interview. And, he kept looking at my cell phone. He is an intelligence officer in the Canadian Foreign Service. I asked my question. Again, he kept staring at my telephone. I finally said, “Richard, have you got a problem with my phone?” And, he said, “Could you please remove the battery? Because I don’t know if you work for CSIS or they are listening. They certainly followed me to your apartment.”

And, that is the mindset that I have never seen. I have seen a lot of sensitive stories. Mount Cashel, believe me, was a sensitive exercise. The Donald Marshall case was a very sensitive exercise in human relations. Because they are powerful emotions. They get engaged. But, this kind of fear.

Then, I went to Fergus, Ontario, and I spoke with Michael Chong, after being turned down several times for an interview. Michael Chong had enough integrity to quit the Cabinet of Stephen Harper. And, I will just refresh your memories about why he did that.

He was the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. One day, if you can believe this, he was on his way to the Wednesday morning caucus. And, his deputies stopped him in the halls and said, “Something big is coming down the pipe. The Prime Minister is going to make a major announcement.” And, Chong said, “What about?” And, the Deputy said, “Well, actually, it’s about your department. And, what the Prime Minister has decided to confer nation status on Quebec.”

Michael Chong was the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and was not party to that conversation. Cabinet was not even involved in the conversation. It was an unconstitutional edict by a person that sees himself as a presidential figure, not as the Prime Minister of Canada, but a very executive-style U.S. leadership figure.

So, Chong resigned. He was called in to talk to Stephen Harper, and Steven Harper advised him to go along with it. And, Chong’s answer was, “You can’t operate like that. It is unconstitutional. It turns the whole government into a rogue government.”

And, this was something I heard over and over again. But, when it came to giving the details of the meeting, which were crucially important, and what he was told by the Prime Minister, he was too afraid, even now, to give the information, lest there be ramifications in his life, even though he was no longer in the Cabinet.

I travelled to Amherst, Nova Scotia, to speak with Bill Casey -- Bill Casey, the most popular Member of Parliament on the East Coast of Canada, the Maritimes, and in the news recently, he has decided to seek the Liberal nomination in the next federal election.

Bill Casey was the first person to confront a dark side of Stephen Harper that most people haven’t dealt with. They have seen it, but they don’t deal with it.

The Atlantic Accord was negotiated and it gave Atlantic Canada two options. We could stay with the old deal if the numbers worked better on offshore development, or we could get the new deal if the numbers worked better that way. But, we had the choice between the two things.

The deal was negotiated in good faith. Harper brought it back to Ottawa and changed it unilaterally. Bill Casey looked at the legislation, which was part of a budget and said, “Prime Minister, that isn’t what we did. You have changed it. You have changed the deal.”

And, he actually went to the Justice Department with the deal and had an opinion from four guys in Justice that, in fact, the Prime Minister had tampered with a negotiation that had been completed in good faith on both side, and changed the nature of it.

So, Casey was told, “Bill, you better tow the line and vote for the budget.” So, he took his Justice Department’s opinions to the Prime Minister’s Office and was told -- he put the judgments down on the Prime Minister’s desk.

And, he said, “Harper swept the judgments off his desk and says, ‘Bill, the fucking words mean what I say they mean.’” And, Casey was taken aback. And then he said, “You know your
fucking problem? You have never been with the program.”

And, at that point, Casey phoned his wife and said to her, “They’re trying to force me to sign the Atlantic Accord.” And, she said to him, “Is it the Atlantic Accord that was negotiated?” And, he said, “No, it isn’t.” She said, “Don’t vote for it.” The next day, he was kicked out of caucus. But, that is where the story actually began for him, and explains a little bit of the fear that I am talking about.

Casey decided to run as an independent. The Prime Minister parachuted a person from the Justice Department into Bill Casey’s riding. And, within a week of being into the contest, accused Casey of stealing money from the Electoral District Association, and brought in the RCMP and had him investigated while the election is going on.

Bill Casey, probably the most popular person on the East Coast, won that election. But, very shortly into his term, he got a call from the Mayor of Truro. And, he said, “Bill, you've got to get in your car and come down here. We have a big problem on our hands.”

And, what had been done was the infrastructure payments, which the Town of Truro needed, depended upon, had been cut. When they phoned the Prime Minister’s office to find out why, the answer was, “Ask your MP.” You didn’t vote for the right party and only if you vote for the right party, do you get the goodies.

So, Bill got calls from a number of mayors in the Maritimes, and felt like he could not run again, because everybody was having to pay for this. And, that is the sort of ruthlessness that we are dealing with.

And, when it comes to your particular field in the union movement, Bill 377 also should have you very, very alarmed. Bill 377 was fraudulently brought in as a private members’ bill. It was really a back-door government bill, fully supported by Harper.

And, as one union leader told me, who has spoken eloquently here already today, it was the worst pile of stuff he had ever seen in his life.

And, Bill 377 is not about union accountability, as its name would imply. It is about punishing unions, making it harder to run a union, making you report transactions of $5,000.00, and giving the false impression to people that unions do not already have financial accountability.

There are already statements that go across the country in a very detailed fashion. But, what Harper didn’t say in the legislation, he wants to make war on you. And, the reason I know that is true is because I have seen him do it to other groups of people.

This is what he said about the CBC, “First, we bring them to their knees. Then, we restructure them.” And, that is exactly what is going on at the corporation right now.

I was called by a fellow named Sean Bruyea. You may know his name. He is a champion of veterans in this country and himself a veteran. The government has behaved in a horrible fashion towards Canada’s veterans.

The veterans, as you have seen, have been stood up by Julian Fantino, the Minister, in meetings that were scheduled. They were disrespected when they asked him to at least please reconsider closing the Veterans Affairs Centres. And, he would not do that and, basically, blamed them for the tone of those meetings.

But, here’s the facts of it. The government cut $226 million out of the Veterans Affairs budget. They took $3.8 million and closed 9 Veterans Affairs Centres across the country.

I went to Thunder Bay to talk to a man whose Vet Centre had been closed. And, he was told by the Minister’s Office that “You can go to the closest one and get the service there”. Well, in his case, that was Winnipeg. So, he had to drive 8 hours on a fine summer day. Can you imagine what it would be like in the dead of winter in February?

So, Bill 377 goes up to the Senate. And, there is a guy named Hugh Segal there who understands completely that it is unconstitutional. It is one of the worst written pieces of legislation anybody in the Senate had seen. So, he amends the bill and sends it back to the House. It caused a lot of consternation. Hugh Segal then retires.

The government reintroduces 377, but the un-amended version, completely forgetting what the Senate had done, and sent back exactly what they want again, which is classic Stephen Harper. If you can’t get in the front door, he goes to the back door.

And, on the veteran issue, we used to have a system where if a veteran came
back permanently wounded and in need, he got a $31,000-a-year pension, not a King’s ransom, but much better than what we have now, which is a lump-sum payment. And, that lump-sum payment, they try to inflate by saying it is as high as $310,000.00.

But, the truth is, we sent 40,000 people to war in Afghanistan, and only 126 of those people ever got the maximum. The average payout is $26,000.00. And, you try to figure out how far that is going to go if you have come back without an arm or a leg, or even if you have PTSD, which is a condition they don’t even recognize. Have a pill. Have a drink. Divert yourself by watching NFL football every night. But, it is not really a condition.

In fact, I think the veterans are going to be a great ally of the union movement, and a lot of other coalitions that are forming across this country. Stephen Harper is building the coalition that is going to defeat him.

I want to mention Munir Sheikh. How many of you remember what happened to Munir Sheikh who is head of Stats Canada? He was the top dog at Stats Canada. And then suddenly one day, he starts reading in the paper that he is advising the Minister, Tony Clement, to get rid of the long-form census and replace it with something with far less information in it.

So, he does what any one of us would do. He knows that no statistician would ever recommend that, because it made no sense. So, he went to the clerk of the Privy Council. And, he said, “We have got to get the Minister to stop telling lies about me publicly. If you guys want to make a political decision, that is one thing, but don’t say that I advised it.”

And, there was a practical reason, because the people in the department thought Munir Sheikh was a Harper plant put in there to destroy Stats Canada, to make them produce the kind of evidence that they wanted to fit the agenda.

So, he was having a palace revolution, and that is why he took the unprecedented step of going to the clerk. And then he went to Tony Clement himself. And Clement said, “I misspoke myself. It will never happen again.”

The very next thing, the very next day in the Vancouver Sun, the same story appeared with a quote from Tony saying, “Munir Sheikh recommended the long-form census.” The reality was that Munir Sheikh then went to the PMO and said, “This has got to stop. There has got to be a public explanation of this.”

And, he was confronted by Dimitri Soudas who worked in the Prime Minister’s Office. And, he said, “So, you want to go out and call the Minister a liar, do you? Is that your plan as a Deputy Minister? You are not fit to be a Deputy Minister.” And, he said, “Don’t you realize getting rid of the long-form census is our ticket to a majority government?”

That was the last thing that was ever said to Munir Sheikh, because he then went and resigned. And, that is how he was driven from his job.

If you think of the F-35, this is a story that is 10 times more important than the Ad Sponsorship Scandal, which very unjustly and corruptly sucked up $100 million of public money. But, the F-35 fiasco was a $10 billion lie.

The Prime Minister stood up in the House of Commons and said, “We have a contract for 65 of these planes. They will cost $15.7 billion,” when, in fact, on the other side of his desk, he had the real number, a number, by the way, which the parliamentary budget officer, Kevin Page, had challenged them on. And, instead of admitting that he was right, they drove him out of office; another person who told the truth and paid the price.

Linda Keen, the nuclear commissioner, the same story. She stood up for legislation, she stood up for her scientific advice, and she was fired. She tried to sue the Prime Minister and she found that you can’t do that in this country. She wasted $100,000.00 of her own money to be told he has absolute privilege. There is no such thing as wrongful dismissal if the Prime Minister is involved, because you serve at his pleasure.

Stephen Harper wants unions to be accountable. It is the worse sort of bad joke, when you consider he rode into office on promises of accountability and transparency, and has delivered the most secretive government we have ever had in our history. He is a guy who doesn’t even give out the budget numbers to the opposition.

And, how can an MP ever challenge whether the government is wisely spending
our tax dollars, if they roll the legislation into a piece of legislation that has 70 bills in it? Nobody can read 70 pieces of legislation and understand what it is. And, that is why the omnibus legislation has now become the new normal.

And, I must say there are a lot of days when I sit and wonder if one of the worst professions that has been affected by Harper is the one I am in. I watch them on TV every night. Some nights, it looks like a pre-football-game celebration for Stephen Harper. There is no criticism of Harper. They are bending themselves into pretzels, trying to find a way to justify what he is doing.

And, I keep thinking of something I learned in the Richard Nixon years, and that is the office never sanctifies the man. Nixon tried to use that defence when he was doing illegal things. If your president does it, it is not wrong.

And, Harper has followed the same thing. He wraps himself in the flag and he wraps himself in the office. But, he isn’t worthy of the office. And, he has proven it time after time by lying to us about things. In a democracy, you can’t run the system on lies. You can run a political party on lies, if you want to. But, a country has to be informed. And, if we don’t have the information, how can we possibly be informed?

And, I want to just end this small speech with something out of my past. One October day, I received a phone call from a 25-year-old waiter at the Radisson Hotel, in St. John’s, Newfoundland. I had just written a piece called Justice for All. And, it was talking about equality before the law.

And, he said, “How come there was no justice for the boys of Mount Cashel?” And, I said, “What on earth is that?” And, he said, “Well, a long time ago, some terrible things were done to 91 boys at Mount Cashel Orphanage and they found out about it, but they didn’t do anything about it.”

So, I said, “Where are you?” And, he told me. I said, “What time do you get off your job?” So, I had a cup of tea with him after he had finished. And, he told me the whole story of Mount Cashel.

And, one of the things I always do when people ask me to become engaged in a case, because I know how long they can go on and also how dangerous they are for the people themselves, I always say the same thing. “What is success for you? What do you want me to do? What would meet your expectations?”

And, Shane Earle said, “I want the people who did this put into prison for what they did to children. I want the boys who went through this and have had their lives ruined to be compensated in some way, so they can start again. And, I would like a Royal Commission to make sure this doesn’t ever happen to any other little kids.”

So, I am sitting there, and I am a realist. And, I said, “Shane, any one of those three things would be a major accomplishment, but all three of them next to impossible”. And, remember, we are up against the Roman Catholic Church in this. And, we are talking about a denominational society in Newfoundland, where the two religions ran the society.

We are up against the Justice Department of Newfoundland that handled this case, and a lot of people would be culpable of terrible things if this story comes out. And, we are up against the Social Services Department. And, we are up against the Government of Ontario, because they took these priests who after they gave written confessions to the police were given a pass through the justice system and sent to Mono Mills, Ontario, for treatment.

Well, in the end, the boys got all three of those things. The bad guys went to jail. They were paid $13.3 million as a result of the work that was done. And, there was a Royal Commission under Mr. Justice Sam Hughes of Ontario who found every level of society had failed these boys.

So, when I took up this particular project and started bumping heads with the most vindictive politician I had ever met, someone who, I think, is ruthless to the bottom and, I think, a rogue Prime Minister as well, I remember saying to myself, you might have bitten off more than you can chew here. But, then I remembered Shane innocently asking for those three things, and getting all of them.

And, the reason I think -- the main reason I am here today is to say to you the difference is us. If we stand up and we do something about it, we can stop this man. But, if we sit back
and count all the reasons why we can’t do a thing, that steamroller that Stephen Harper has rolled over
the institutions of this country will continue to flatten everything in its path.

And, I, for one, I don’t want to live like a rabbit and I don’t think you do either.

Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Well, when you hear some truths like that, you really just have
got to shake your head and try to understand how the politics really are for a Prime Minis-
ter to have that much control.

But, over the last couple of days when we handed out the booklet, I had a couple
of people come up to me, and they said, “I can’t believe you guys are handing this out. What is this?
Michael Harris is writing this?” And, they really didn’t understand who Michael Harris was at the time.
But, you can see it is not the Michael Harris that you were thinking. And, I bring that up, because I knew
he was going to be speaking here today.

And, I have not read the book yet, but I have spoken to a few individuals that
have. And, it really does show the difference between what Stephen Harper portrays to the public and
what he does behind the scenes to destroy the initiatives that are up against him.

And, I mean, you coming here and expressing that and letting us understand
even more is just so important. It really gives us that information that we need with regards to making
sure we do commit ourselves once again to standing up united in Ontario, to fight against Stephen
Harper, the Conservative agenda, to make sure that we don’t have to go through this another four years.
You have come here and you have talked to us about the importance of making
sure that when we are looking at community partners or agencies, basically, and they are being
challenged by the likes of a Stephen Harper and their funding is pulled away, we deal with that every
day.

In Windsor, Ontario, we speak to community partners, and we ask them to come
out and support initiatives as easy as CPP, and Old Age Security, and Guaranteed Income Supple-
ment, as Hassan Yussuff has spoken about so diligently yesterday.

And, the reality is, they say, “Listen, I don’t really want to get involved, because I
have got to put in my application with regards to funding. There’s an RFP out there, and I am worried
that they might not fund me.”

So, those words that you spoke here today are so true. We thank you for putting
yourself on the line, because those types of truths are going to come under scrutiny. There is no
question about it. And, you are an amazing hero to a lot of individuals, exposing the true facts of what
Stephen Harper portrays and what he is trying to do to the labour movement, destroying us with bills
like C-525 and 377.

So, I just want to give you a token of our appreciation from the Ontario Regional
Council for the hard work that went into putting that book together, for the amazing stories that you
just shared with us. And, you are a true visionary. And, we want to say thank you from the bottom of
our hearts from the Ontario Regional Council. Thank you.

So, Mike has just expressed to me as well that he will be doing some book
signings. So, there will be a table set up outside. So, if you have the opportunity and you want to get
your book signed, please stop and have that done a little later on. We will get that all prepared for you,
for this afternoon.

Okay. So, what I want to do -- because, actually, he has only got an hour,
because he has to get back onto a flight. So, we are going to be setting up a table outside, just outside
the doors here. So, if you want to get the book signed, please stop and have that done a little later on. We will get that all prepared for you,
for this afternoon.

We have got a point at mic 4.

HERB JOHN: Herb John, Local 200, Retired Workers Executive Board. I would
like to make a suggestion that we put this book on the home page of Unifor to make this information
available to everybody as soon as possible. I think the information that was shared with us today is
something that everybody needs to hear. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Yes, so I think that might be a little bit of a challenge. What we
will do is we will be able to put a link, and put the title of the book and what the book is about and, for all
intents and purposes, where people could probably go to purchase the book. But, that might be the initiative and we will be able to put that forward.

Point of privilege, mic 5.

ANDRE DESJARDINS: Andre Desjardins, Local 4266, president. We have a school bus campaign table in the corridor over there with two laptops. We would need as many signatures to this petition as possible. If we can ask all the delegates in the room if they can stop by the table and sign the petition? Our drivers really need your help. Thank you.

DINO CHIDO: Okay. So, getting back to the order of business. I believe we have a short video, before we introduce our next speaker. Can we roll that?

--- Whereupon a video is played

DINO CHIDO: I think I heard somebody shout out, “It’s all crap.” There is no question about that, but it has really got to drive you crazy to even want to sit and look at something like that, when their best argument is a windmill in Port Elgin. Can you imagine that?

And, what I enjoyed as well is the veil of secrecy that Dias lives under, even though he has been around for more than 30 years to fight the fight, and doing a tremendous amount of work with major corporations like Coca-Cola, Boeing, GM, Ford, Chrysler Corporation, over the course of those years, and leading some of those bargaining sessions. So, I mean, it’s lies and more lies, just like we heard from Michael Harris from before.

So, getting on to our business of the day. What I would like to do now is I would like to ask Jim Reid to come up to introduce our next speaker.

JIM REID: Thanks, Dino. It is my pleasure to introduce our favourite secret agent.

Jerry was elected as Unifor’s first National President at the union’s founding convention during Labour Day weekend of 2013.

He is an experienced and trusted negotiator and organizer, taking on corporate giants, like General Motors, Ford and Coca-Cola.

Jerry is a committed trade unionist, focused on the needs of the local union leaders and the rank and file members. His dedication has earned him the trust of members and bargaining committees right across the country.

Before the founding of Unifor, Jerry served as an assistant to the National President of the CAW, a post that he held under two presidents since 2007.

Jerry began his work life in 1978 at the then DeHavilland Aircraft, now Bombardier Aerospace in Toronto.

He was elected shop steward later that year in what would become a lifelong dedication to the labour movement.

As plant chair in 1985, Jerry led the work stoppage that resulted in the current day national Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, or WHMIS, which includes the right to know about dangerous materials.

He also fought against the sell-off of DeHavilland, which would have resulted in a plant closure.

Jerry was also elected local union president of CAW, Local 112, before being appointed to the union’s national staff as the aerospace sector coordinator in 1993.

Over the last three years, Jerry has taken on the issue of Violence against Women through his participation, along with his son, Jordan, in the Hope in High Heels Walk.

Jerry is the top fundraiser, helping to provide a large chunk of the operating budget to the Halton Women’s Place, a women’s shelter and centre in Burlington, Ontario.

Jerry is a progressive labour leader with talents that will help guide Unifor in the transition from a bold idea into a powerful union for all.

It is my great pleasure to welcome our President, Jerry Dias.

ADDRESS: JERRY DIAS, NATIONAL PRESIDENT, UNIFOR

JERRY DIAS: Well, good morning. I want to start off my remarks by saying to Michael Coren from Sun TV and to Michael Kydd from Amerigroup that “You can kiss my union butt.”

Jim Rome, an American author and entrepreneur, he had an incredible saying. He
“It is the set of the sails not the direction of the wind that determines which way we shall go.”

So, Unifor’s first year was really about setting the sails. We have made some friends. We have made some enemies, clearly. Some of them are in Ottawa. A lot of them, I would suggest, are in Ottawa. We have our critics. We have our friends. We have been diplomatic at times. We haven’t been very diplomatic at other times. But, the facts are that people are depending on us. They are depending on Unifor to be the strong, left progressive voice in Canada.

And, we determined our priorities at the founding convention. We set our sail. We were established to fight. We were established to push. We were established to be the left voice in Canada. We have to understand unequivocally that left voice in Canada will never be held by a political party. Yes, we have a party that leans more to the left. But, a true, strong working-class voice will always be dominated by the labour movement in Canada.

So, how do you build a progressive union? How do we do it? You can follow the direction of the wind or you can set the sail. And, let me tell you, we could have followed the direction of the wind and see how unions were structured elsewhere in Canada and, frankly, unions that were established in other countries.

We could have built a union that was structured where the staff have all the say, where the National Executive Board are made up of all staffers for the union, like in so many unions across the country. But, we decided to do it differently.

We built a union where 19 of the 25 positions on the National Executive Board are rank and file. Why? Because the union belongs to the membership, not to the staff of the union.

And then we created these councils. So, now we have this rank-and-file National Executive Board, and then we created councils. So, I was in British Columbia yesterday, speaking at the B.C. Regional Council. And, why are these councils so important? These councils are so important, because they are going to determine the direction of our union. They are going to determine the politics of this province. But, more importantly, once again, the movement, the union, is going to be built on the ideas from you in the room.

So, the union is setting the sail right across the country, and we have been for the last 14 months. We set the sail in collective bargaining. We could have just followed the wind direction, but we didn’t, because we know what the direction is today in Canada. The direction in Canada, as well as in the United States, is a system of two-tier wages, two-tier benefit plans, eliminating defined benefit pension plans and accepting DC plans.

So, though we have had some of this over the last few years, we are clearly a union that is saying those days are over. We are not going to accept two-tier wages. We are not going to accept two-tier benefit plans, and we sure as heck aren’t going to go back, taking away our defined benefit pension plans and putting in defined contribution plans. So, I say that before all of us today, because we need to maintain those principles at the bargaining table.

And, I watched the fight that happened at Cascade out in B.C. First of all, how many in the room today were in British Columbia for our Canadian Council? Raise your hands, because I want to make sure that I am not duplicating a lot of my remarks.

But, for those of you that weren’t in B.C., you need to understand the importance of the strike, and you need to understand the principled position that the members took.

The fight was over two-tier wages, two-tier benefits. After 10 weeks, 10 weeks on the picket line, the company had removed all the concessions. They had one left. The concession that they had left was to strip away the position of the full-time plant chairperson and turn it into time as required.

After 10 weeks on strike, we went back to the membership. And, the membership, after 10 weeks, rejected the collective agreement by 95 percent, walked the picket line for another two weeks until the company backed off, and that’s how you build a union across the country.

And, I talked as well about our friends at Bombardier. Eight weeks on the picket line. What was it about? Future hires, defined contribution plan, different benefit plans, change of structure for new starts.

The same thing. After 8 weeks on the picket line, the company forced the vote. They took it to the membership. And, the membership voted overwhelmingly to reject the collective
agreement. They walked the picket line for another 2 weeks until the company backed off. Now, all new hires will start with a defined benefit pension plan and the same rights as all the other members at Local 1075 in Thunder Bay.

Not only are we setting the sail in collective bargaining, but we are setting the sail in the politics of the labour movement in Canada. And, I am going to talk about this a little bit. I talked about it at Canadian Council, but it is so important to talk about it today, based on the backdrop of what is going on both in British Columbia and here in Ontario. At the CLC convention in Montreal, we took a bold stand. We could have stuck with the status quo and had harmony, or we could fight for change knowing, we need a stronger labour movement in Canada. So, we chose to fight for change. It really didn’t make us very popular with some people, but I raise this, because it is so important, because Hassan’s election really exposed some of the deep rooted politics of the labour movement.

There are those that would like to continue the shift to the centre. There are those that don’t like to change the status quo. There are those who are comfortable that Harper was elected, he was re-elected and then he was elected with a majority government.

I am not suggesting they were comfortable with that, but when you are afraid to make change in the backdrop of that, then you have to start to question, what do we need to do in order to change the politics of the country? So, I am saying this because of how active we are at the labour council level and some of the stuff that you might be hearing. So, in Montreal, for those of you that weren’t there, at the time of the election, there were 5,000 people in the room. And, let me tell you a story, because I was sitting up on the stage with the heads of the affiliates. A head of one of the major affiliates said to me, he says, “Jerry, we’ve got you.” And, if you were at the CLC convention, you would see, as he laid it out, that from a straight numbers point of view, they had us 60 to 40, was the way he said it.

But, then, the election came down, and Hassan Yussuff was elected by 40 votes. And, do you know what it means? It means that yes, we played a major role in getting Hassan elected to change the direction of the movement in the country. But, it was Steelworkers, CUPE members, Machinists, NUPGE, Teamsters. It was the activists in those unions that joined with us, because they knew that we needed a stronger labour movement in Canada.

So, when you hear now from some of the frustrated unions that we have created this raiding union, that we’re looking to take over the labour movement, that we’re looking to take over one federation after another, you need to think that it was, in essence, the activist based within those unions that joined with us to create a better environment here. So, when I hear those types of comments, I chuckle and accept that they’re blatantly foolish.

So, we have got a lot of work to do. The one thing that is for sure, we are not going to change our course, brothers and sisters, because we are going to continue to fight at the bargaining table. We are going to fight at the federations. We are going to fight at the central bodies of the labour movement to make sure that Canadians have that true left voice that they’re desiring.

So, I tell you this, because within the next couple of days, we are going to have an election at the B.C. Federation of Labour. And, Jim Sinclair was the president for 15 years. So, they formed a caucus. They formed a caucus to take out Jim Sinclair.

So, a person that is running against Jim Sinclair is an employee of the Canadian Labour Congress. And, a person that was running for secretary-treasurer was a staffer with the BCGEU. And, I tell you this, because Amber from the CLC is a Unifor member. Aaron from the BCGEU is a Unifor member. So, now you have a staffer and a staffer joining together to knock out a Unifor President of the B.C. Federation of Labour. And, I tell you this, but I want to get back to the main point. The politics of our union will be determined by the rank and file.

And so, what happened at the B.C. Council meeting yesterday the delegates voted overwhelmingly, unanimously to support Irene Lassinger as the president of B.C. Federation of Labour. And, the reasons that I say this is because the Unifor members that are running that don’t have the support of the caucus really need to decide whether or not they are on staff of another union and that is where their loyalty is, or if they are going to be loyal to the democratic process of Unifor.

And, we are having those same types of debates at the Ontario Federation of Labour, because those are trying and squeezed out Jim Sinclair are trying to squeeze out Sid Ryan. And,
why are they trying to squeeze out Sid Ryan? Because Sid Ryan supported our position.

That said, the priority in the Province of Ontario was defeating Tim Hudak. And, he was a labour leader that was out front and centre and said that if we need to vote strategically to defeat Hudak, then that is what we are going to do, and that has ruffled some feathers. And, Sid also is very, very aggressive as it relates to his support of Hassan Yussuff.

So, we are going to continue the debates within the labour movement, because that is what we are entrusted to do. We are not going to step backwards, because we are not going to allow those that establish the direction of the wind to affect how we have set the sail.

So, I think about our democratic process within this room. And, I want you to think about the last Ontario Regional Council where we decided that the priority was going to be to defeat Hudak. And, you would have read in the news, I am sure, that we had a very major public divorce with our Unifor members in Ottawa and across the country that were members of the NDP staff.

After Hudak was defeated, they didn’t like the position that we took, that our priority was to defeat Hudak. So, I went to a meeting two weeks after the election of about 300 or 400 NDP staff in Ottawa.

Well, to say that I was unpopular would be a bit of an understatement, as they fired grenades and grenades over decisions we made unanimously in this room. And, as they were threatening and questioning our position, I said to them -- you need to know this. I said to them, “Number one, one local union is not going to determine the politics of Unifor. And, number two, I am not here to beg you to stay because, in fact, if you don’t agree with the democracy of our union, I think you are best to go somewhere else.”

It wasn’t a very popular statement, but the facts are that we are going to determine the politics of our union, not any individual local union. So, today, they are members of the UFCW.

Now, in B.C. a couple of days ago, I met with Dan Doyle. Dan Doyle is Christy Clark’s Chief of Staff. And, we met over the Port of Vancouver dispute. And, I talked about it, the importance of the Port of Vancouver dispute, at the Canadian Council.

The Port of Vancouver dispute was important, because of the way it was settled. It was settled after people walked the picket line. Our 350 members joined 1,300 non-union truckers. And, they walked a picket line, because they hadn’t had an increase in 10 years. The price of trucks had gone up, the price of fuel had gone up, and the waiting times at the Port of Vancouver were three to four hours. So, if a trucker worked a 10 to 12-hour shift, he might have made three runs. So, they were on strike to improve their lives.

The strike was $130 million a day, and nobody was pushing to settle it.

Ultimately, the reason nobody pushed to settle it was that Christy Clark’s government introduced legislation to force our members back to work.

We flew into Victoria and we organized a press conference. And, we organized a press conference to tell Christy Clark’s government that we were going to defy the legislation. They knew why we called a press conference, because we were straightforward in what we were doing.

So, when we showed up in Victoria, they called us into a room to say, “Cancel the press conference. We will talk.” We said, “We’re not going to cancel the press conference as long as you are going to continue to introduce the legislation in the House,” because the previous day, the NDP had filibustered in the House and the legislation was being introduced the second day.

So, the government said, “As long as we’re having meaningful dialogue, we will not reintroduce the legislation.” And, we said, “As long as we’re having meaningful dialogue, we will delay the press conference.”

Brothers and sisters, at the end of the day, we got an agreement and everybody was back to work the following day. But, do you know why we got an agreement? Because the B.C. government understood that we were absolutely going to defy the legislation. And, that is the type of union we are going to establish. And, that type of principle worked all its way through to Ottawa.

And, it happened again two weeks ago as we were in bargaining with the St. Lawrence Seaway, 450 members. We had a strike deadline on Friday at noon. On the Tuesday before,
I got a call from Kellie Leitch, the Federal Minister of Labor. She said, “Jerry, there is no way we are going to allow your members to strike.” And, we said, “Kellie, there is no way you are going to prevent us from striking.” And, she says, “We are going to pass legislation.” I said, “I don’t give a darn if you are going to pass the legislation.”

She said, “You and I need to talk.” I said, “Well, actually, I am hopping on a plane to meet you at 2:00. If you would get off the phone so I can pack, I can get on a plane and we will meet in couple of hours.” And so, we did.

And, when I got there at 2:00, in her office was the COO of the St. Lawrence Seaway. And, she sat down and we sat down. And, she said, again, “We are not going to let your members strike.” And, I said, “I’m repeating myself, Kellie. You can’t do a darn thing about it, because we are going to strike.”

And, I said to the COO from St. Lawrence Seaway, “If you think that the government is going to do your job for you, I would suggest you better get your butt back to the bargaining table and find a way to get a settlement that is satisfactory to our members.”

The conversation was going nowhere. So, Leitch said, “Can we meet later on this evening?” I said, “Not a problem.” So, we did. So, we met later on that evening and, once again, she threatened the legislation. And, once again, I told her we were going to defy it.

So, she said, “Let’s see if we can find a compromise.” She said, “If you move your strike deadline from Friday at noon to Monday at 5:00, then if we don’t have a deal, your members can strike for five days before I’ll introduce the legislation.”

So, I said, “We have got a partial deal. I will take the fact that we can strike for five days without you legislating us back to work, but you need to know, after five days if you legislate us back to work, we are still not going back to work.”

So, she thought that I wasn’t being very, what is the word I’m looking for, cooperative. But, ultimately, we got a deal. We got the deal through the collective bargaining process. And, we got the deal, because the government knew that we were going to defy the legislation.

And, I am saying this today, because we are continuing to set the sail. We are not going to be blown. We are not going to take the direction that the wind takes us. And, I say this, knowing that we have got some major bargaining and we have got some major challenges ahead of us.

We are in bargaining right now with CN and CP. And, we are heading into bargaining in the New Year with Air Canada. All these are regulated federally. And, I know what is going to happen. Bargaining is going to be tough, and the employers are going to rely on the government to push us around. So, I am respectfully suggesting to all of us that with the commitment, the determinations and the will of our bargaining committees and our members in CN, CP and Air Canada, if the government tries to introduce legislation to take away our collective bargaining power, then we will defy the legislation until our members get the agreement that they deserve.

We are in tough bargaining all over the place. I look at Kelly from Bell Media, knowing she is in tough. And, what are we dealing with? We are dealing with Bell Media. We are dealing with Bell that is making millions, and is coming to the bargaining table to say that we need to take reduced benefits and we need to take less than we deserve.

It is not going to happen. We are with you. Whatever you need from us as a national organization, I am telling you, sister, we are with you and your bargaining committee and our members.

And, I look at our healthcare members in the room, and I know that the provincial government is preaching austerity. Listen, you can never find prosperity through austerity, and our members in the healthcare sector deserve better. And, our members in the healthcare sector deserve raises. And, our members in the healthcare sector will darn well get raises, because we are going to take on the government to make sure that we get it.

So, we have our rallies. But, not only are we going to make sure that we get the increases that they deserve, we are going to have the debate about healthcare. We need to have the debate in Canada about the future of the healthcare system.

We need to talk about the Healthcare Accord. Think about this. Think about it.

In the previous 10 years, during the life of the Healthcare Accord, the federal government put $41 billion
into the healthcare system just to maintain it at the levels we had. The $41 billion was over and above what they were traditionally spending.

So, by Harper refusing to renegotiate in March of this year, he is looking to destroy our most cherished social program, Medicare, because we know what happens. If you don’t continue to put in the billions and billions every year, and the waiting lines get longer, you have less staff. You have less doctors. You have less money to spend on hospitals. You have less infrastructure. We have less money to spend on long-term care facilities and nursing homes. Our system starts to disintegrate.

Harper is doing this by choice, because he doesn’t agree with universality. He doesn’t agree with the healthcare system that we have in Canada. He believes firmly, philosophically, in a for-profit healthcare system.

So, we need to make sure that our members and the communities understand exactly what he is doing, because where is the money going that should be going into our healthcare system? It is going into his crazy income-splitting plan. Think about this, an income-splitting plan, which costs $5 billion a year. $5 billion a year is what we need to go into our healthcare system.

So, the $5 billion, the top 5 percent of Canadians will receive more in tax breaks than the bottom 60 percent of all Canadians. Eighty-six percent of Canadians won’t see a change at all. And, this is the direction that he is taking this country?

We are in the fight of our lives, brothers and sisters. And, it all is so much tied in to how we communicate with our members, to how we continue to push government, because not only are we going to push the federal government, and not only are we going to influence the politics during the next federal election, we need to make sure we continue to push this provincial government.

And, let me give you an example, and it should be public next week. So, I have got to choose my words carefully. We have a mill in Fort Frances. And, this is important, because this is the type of union we are, by the way. We have a mill in Fort Frances that closed a year ago. And, we fought during Resolute bargaining to make sure that they idled the plant. And, they idled the plant.

And, we have been working with the Ontario government and Resolute, and we thought we had a solution. A company called Expera was going to buy our Fort Frances facilities, and invest millions and millions of dollars to retool, to reopen it to create jobs that are so, so important in these forestry communities. The deal fell apart.

But, last night, we were able to conclude a deal with Resolute and the Ontario government that would keep the mill heated for another 6 months, that buys us time in order to find a solution to bring our members back to work because, brothers and sisters, that is the type of union we are going be. We are going to be a union that is going to fight at the bargaining table.

We are going to be a union that fights to create new jobs for young people, and we are going to be a union that never forgets the sacrifices that our members have made when their workplaces close as no result of anything they did. We are going to fight like heck to make sure there are real solutions. And, the agreement that we reached last night is a step in the right direction.

I think about the fights. I think about our participation in politics. I think about what has transpired in 2014 and some of the important court decisions. I never thought the day would come that the courts would actually be on the side of working-class people in certain situations.

And, I want to talk about some of the key victories. In January of this year, the courts ruled in British Columbia, the Supreme Court, that the Clark government abused its power as it related to the teachers. They bargained in bad faith. They tried to provoke a strike. They tried to legislate away the teachers’ rights to bargain classroom sizes. The courts found the government guilty and awarded the union $2 million in punitive damages.

In March, we had the Port of Vancouver strike where they introduced a legislation. We know what happened there. But, then, soon after, I thought about the legislation that was introduced in Alberta, where the courts once again ruled that the Alberta government had bargained in bad faith and were trying to destroy the integrity of collective bargaining.

In May, we fought Tim Hudak and we won, brothers and sisters. We won. And, understand how important that victory was, because defeating Hudak wasn’t only important for us in
this room, it was important for working-class politics right across the country, because you’ve got to know if Tim Hudak would have got elected in the Province of Ontario, then that whole right-wing ideology would have spread right across the country.

And then 377, we had it. We had it defeated at the Senate. We heard what Michael Harris had to say. We worked with Hugh Segal. We worked with the Senate. We had it put it in the mud. We had a bunch of amendments. We thought things were heading in the right direction. A lot of the commentaries were even coming out in the newspapers that were saying that it is bad politics to start attacking the labour movement, so things were starting to turn.

So, as we are on the cusp of a federal election, we need to focus on what they are doing and what they would like to continue to do, because in 2014, they passed five pieces of regressive legislation. C-4, where they can unilaterally impose what are essential services, taking away people’s right to strike. 525 was them stripping away, for the first time in seven years, card-check in Canada. In Newfoundland, they took away card-check in one of the most progressive provinces that we have had for years as it relates to union density.

Nova Scotia, two pieces of legislation attacking healthcare workers: one, attacking the right to strike; two, if you can imagine, deciding what union workers are going to belong to, taking away people’s democratic right to choose the union of their own volition. And then 377 that we now know is back, which is really just red meat for the Conservative base.

We need to know that since 1982, there have been 213 laws passed stripping away labour laws. So, do you know why we are involved in politics? Let me give you an example.

Kijiji, two weeks ago, the company’s name, Urban Planet. Job type: Part time. Looking for student volunteers to work in a clothing store, 10 hours a week. You will be learning how to merchandise, work on displays, hang and fold clothing. This is a volunteer position for those looking to introduce themselves into the retail world. Service hours for school. Must be 16 years of age. Please inquire in person with resume at the Urban Plant in the Five Points Mall to Matt or Colleen.

We have got temporary foreign workers that should be Canadians. We have got one out of every five jobs that is being created as being held by a temporary foreign worker. And, I said it before and I’ll say it again. If you’re good to work in Canada and you’re good enough to pay taxes in Canada, well, then, you should be a Canadian.

So, when I think of the crimes that this federal government has made, I think it’s time we start talking about the 10 disgraces that this Canadian Federal Conservative government has bestowed. So, let’s name the top 10 Canadian disgraces.

Let’s start with No. 10 on the list, from Peterborough, Dean Del Mastro, the Conservative Member of Parliament, Stephen Harper’s former Parliamentary Secretary, who was just found guilty on three counts of violating the Canadian Elections Act. Guess who paid his legal fees? Canadian taxpayers. We did. So, he is No. 10 on the list.

No. 9 disgrace, Michael Sona, the Conservative staff and the first Canadian ever to be convicted for trying to prevent people from voting. The first Canadian ever to go to jail for violating the Canadian Elections Act. And, do you know what the judge said? The judge said, “He didn’t act alone.”

No. 8, Michael Duffy. He has got to hit the list, 31 counts of bribery, fraud and breach of trust. And, you know what? The principal reason why I believe there is going to be an early election, because I am not convinced that Harper is going to wait to see the Mike Duffy trial, the explanation on Nigel Wright giving him $90,000.00. I am not convinced that Harper wants to see or listen to what Mike Duffy is going to have to say.

No. 7 on the list, Julian Fantino, the Conservative Minister of Veterans who walked out on the veterans. He presided over the closing of all the veteran offices. His ministry gave that treasury $1.3 billion. Do you know what he said? That the veterans don’t need it.

So, you’ve got to know, we’re working with Ron Clark. I don’t know if you have seen Ron Clark traveling the country, a veteran who is out there exposing Harper, who is bringing together the seniors to say that this disgraceful treatment of our war veterans and heroes has to be stopped. And, there is nothing like Ron Clark who is deeply committed out there leading the charge. And, you need to know that our union is actively supporting Ron Clark.
No. 6, Tony Clement, Minister of the Treasury Board who used G20 money to build a gazebo in Huntsville. But, he is also now trying to provoke a strike with the public sector workers, so he can strike and take away their sick leave provisions.

One of my favourites, No. 5, Stephen Poloz, the Conservative-appointed Governor of the Bank of Canada who thinks students should work for free. What a disgrace. Here is one of the most powerful Canadians. His economics can change the economy in Canada by lowering interest rates to create a more conducive environment for investment, by making sure the Canadian dollar stays low. So, instead of talking about opportunities and instead of talking about what we need to do to put young people to work, he says they need to get out of their parents’ basement and go to work for free. What a disgrace.

No. 4, Chris Alexander, the Immigration Minister -- now, think about this -- in Canada. He tried to take healthcare away from refugee claimants until the Federal Court judge, Anne Mactavish, struck down the law. She said it was cruel and unusual treatment. It puts lives at risk. This isn’t who we are as Canadians. It is an outrageous question of Canadian standards.

So, now, what is he trying to do? He is trying to take away social assistance from refugee claimants. And, I just think it is absolutely insane to have it buried in the latest omnibus bill.

No. 3, Peter Mackay, our Justice Minister that said, with the legislation that he put it on prostitution that was once again struck down by the courts, when he was questioned his legislation put sex workers in dangers, do you know what he did? He shrugged his shoulders and he says, “There will always be danger in this degrading activity.”

Stephen Harper, No. 2. And, here is why he drives me absolutely nuts. I took a look at the Globe and Mail three days ago. There’s a Globe and Mail writer. Three days ago, the front page of the Globe and Mail, “Rinelle Harper’s rescuer marvels at her ‘will to live.’”

And then yesterday, the front page of the Globe and M all, there was a picture of Rinelle Harper’s mother with her as she is holding her, then hugging her as she almost died at the hands of men.

And then I think about Loretta Saunders who was found at the side of the road in Nova Scotia. And, I think about Tina Fontaine who was found in a body bag in the Red River. And, Stephen Harper said, “We should not view this as a sociological phenomenon. It is just a crime.” Over 1,180 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and he says, “It is just a crime.”

So, our No. 1 disgrace across Canada has to be the entire Conservative Party of Canada. They’re a national disgrace because of how they treat women, how they betrayed our young people, how they treat our seniors, how they attack the labour movement, how they attack the social movement, how they attack the civic movement, civil society, how they go after unions on 377. And, think about what they are saying. As they reintroduced Bill 377, Bob Runciman, the senator, said, “We are reintroducing it, because the unions spent $10 million in the recent Ontario election to defeat Tim Hudak.” And then there was a big article in the Financial Post. I don’t know how many of you saw it. There was a big article in the Financial Post that said that Unifor has a $40 million war chest to take down Stephen Harper.”

When I read the article, the first thing I thought was, “Christ, I hope Peter Kennedy doesn’t read this thing first thing in the morning.” But, anyway, it was a great article.

And, here, you had all the Conservative backbenchers all saying, “Harper, call an election. Call an election before Unifor has a chance to put together and mount a campaign to expose us as a government that is cruel. So, call the election.”

This is the backbenchers saying that to Harper.

So, you should all feel proud, by the way. You should feel proud of the fact that the government understands that we are going to help shape the politics of the country.

But, the best article came two days later. By the way, we are not going to spend $40 million to bring down Harper, unless you tell us to. That is our union, I’ll tell you.

Two days later, there was an article in the Financial Post written by Conrad Black. And, Conrad Black was saying, “Harper, don’t do it. Don’t call a snap election, because Unifor is trying to paint you into a corner. Don’t buckle because, in fact, if you call a snap election, people will see that what it is you are trying to do is hide from Michael Duffy’s scandal. So, don’t do it. Don’t let Unifor
push you into a corner.”

And, I read this article and I laughed. And, I thought it was wonderful. But, you know what? There is poetic justice, because a couple of days later, I was on the Amanda Lang Show. So, a person came downstairs to pick me up, to take me upstairs, and said, “Hold on, we need to pick somebody up that is also going to be on the show.”

So, we rounded the corner and there was Conrad Black. I said, “Conrad Black.” He goes, “Jerry Dias.” I said, “Oh, this is a wonderful, wonderful chance circumstance.” So, him and I are walking through the CBC and people are looking at us going, “Now, this is the odd couple.”

So, anyway, I said, “Conrad, about your article in the Financial Post where you said to Harper, ‘Don’t bring down the government’, and you talked about us having $40 million to bring him down. Do you remember the article?” He says, “Of course, I remember the article.” I said, “I thought I should be the one, Conrad, to tell you personally. We’re going to spend a lot more than $40 million to bring down Harper.”

You know, brothers and sisters, I am sick of this government as I know we all are. I am sick of a government that supports wars that kills innocent civilians, kills children. I really am sick and tired of a government that doesn’t deal with the fact that we have so many seniors that are living in poverty.

I can’t stand a government that would raise CPP from age 65 to collect and keep our seniors working until age 67.

I can’t believe we have got a government that won’t raise CPP from $11,000.00 a year, knowing that we have so many seniors living in poverty. They know that over 840,000 Canadians every month go to food banks, of which hundreds of thousands of them are seniors, and they don’t do a darn thing about it.

I can’t handle any more a Prime Minister that is a liar when he says that our economy is the envy of the world, when we know that is anything but true. We know that in the United States, they created 2.3 million full-time jobs last year, and in Canada, we created a little over 100,000.

I am sick of a government that tries to suppress voters through the Unfair Elections Act.

I am sick and tired of a government, and we’re sick and tired of a government that supports free trade deals that are anything but free, that will impose CETA on us, that will impose trade deals with South Korea. They will impose more trade deals when they know that we have lost almost 700,000 manufacturing jobs here in Canada, and their trade deals will take away even more.

We need a government that is going to talk about creating jobs. We need a government that is going to put in place an auto strategy, so that our members in Windsor that work for Ford don’t get betrayed again. We need to make sure that our members in Oshawa have jobs. We need to make sure that our members in Brampton who work in the auto industry have an auto strategy that is going to put people to work.

We need to make sure that our members in the energy sector have a strategy, that we have an energy strategy in Canada, because we are a nation so rich in raw materials and natural resources, why don’t we have a strategy here in Canada that will utilize our strengths to put young people to work?

So, we really do need a government that cares. I am sick and tired of a government, as you all are, that will impose C-4 or 525, 377. We are sick and tired of Harper. But, you know what? Not only are we sick and tired of Harper, Canadians are sick and tired of Harper.

So, you know what, brothers and sisters? Our time is now. The federal election may be several months down the road or it might be as far as October next year. But, one thing that I am absolutely confident of, if we do to Stephen Harper what we did to Tim Hudak, we are never going to have to worry about an attack on working-class people in Canada for years and years to come.

So, brothers and sisters, we were born to take on this fight. So, let’s make sure that we get politically active and we hit the ground, we hit the streets and we take them out of power. Together, we can do it, brothers and sisters. Let’s get it done.

DINO CHIDO: Wow, what a great conclusion to our morning and our agenda. I mean, it is amazing to hear such a dedicated president, passionate president, coming forward talking
about the issues from coast to coast to coast, giving us the vision and letting us understand what is in front of us, how we take it on and how we are going to move forward.

Again, if we can, I think an individual like Jerry Dias, the National President, deserves another round of applause for the great speech, coming here, flying in on the Red Eye to be here to talk to us before we went out for lunch today.

So, again, that is the conclusion for this morning. Again, I want to thank Jerry. He did a tremendous job in his speech, and he has been doing a tremendous job, flying all over, meeting people, talking to individuals about issues that are important to them.

But, we do have to continue on, and there’s a couple of announcements. But, I believe there’s a few speakers at the mics. Point of privilege. Mic 1.

MARY ELLEN: Mary Ellen, from Breckles Insurance Brokers, which is our insurance for Unifor group insurance. We have a table out in the hall that over the course of the weekend, we had an iPad out there for everyone to put their name in, their email address, giving us permission to contact you to call in and get quotes from us.

We are a small unit. We organized in 2006. And, we do have a winner of the iPad that you all signed up to enter in to win as well as give us permission to do quotes for us.

From Local 1285, Bill Turner. If Bill is in the room, if you can meet me at one of the exit doors, and we will go to the Breckles table and you will be given your iPad. And, thank you, everyone for putting your name in there.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Bill was holding that ticket for me, just so you know. Thanks, Bill.

Okay. No more points of privilege?

What I do have is a few announcements, before we do break for lunchtime. We have the Workers with Disabilities caucus, which will be meeting right after this at the Sheraton Hall C.

We also have the United Workers of Diversity, which will be meeting as soon as we adjourn in Sheraton Hall E.

And, I have the Election Committee that will be meeting in Sheraton Hall A. And, those individuals are Mike Smith, Matt Root, Laurie Lessard-Brown, Mary Semper, Mike Day, John Johnson, Emily Heikoop, Deborah Henry, Mark Wraith and Keith Punchak.

So, if you guys could please attend at Sheraton Hall A? They will have lunch for you, and they will go over all the election process. And, we are coming back here to reconvene for 1:30.

Thank you for such a wonderful morning, and enjoy your lunch, and we will see you at 1:30. Thank you very much.

---

CREDENTIALS REPORT

DINO CHIODO: I’ll call our meeting back to order. What I would like to do is I would like to get into the Credentials Report. The delegates signing in was cut off at noon, so the report is as of 11:57 a.m.

Registered for the convention are 433 delegates, representing 129 local unions, the National Executive Board and National Council of Retired Workers Executive.

In addition, there are 122 national representatives, 22 special delegates with voice and no vote. There are also 39 alternates, 17 special guests, 64 observers, 16 other staff and one media in attendance, for a total in attendance of 714 persons.

RESOLUTION NO. 2

DINO CHIODO: Also, what I would like to bring up is we have a few resolutions that have to occur. There is Resolution 2, 3 and 4. But, I have spoken to the owner of Resolution No. 2, which is Local 8833, and they have respectfully withdrawn that resolution.

And, just so we are under the same understanding, the logic behind why they withdrew it because, first off, the committee had recommended non-concurrence. And, the reason why the committee had recommended non-concurrence is because when a recommendation comes to the floor, in essence, it has to be voted on. And, that is what the Constitution dictates and determines. It comes to the floor in the floor of a recommendation.
They, basically, asked to have it set up as a resolution format. But, in essence, it is provided in the same context and it still has to be voted on. So, they understand that. It has been explained. And, from that perspective, they have respectfully withdrawn their resolution. So, I thank them very much for that.

I think I have two points of order. Point of order on mic 1.

ONTARIO HEALTH COALITION

NATALIE MEHRA: My name is Natalie Mehra. I am the Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition. And, I just wanted to thank you from the bottom of my heart, on behalf of the Ontario Health Coalition and Ontarians who are fighting to save their hospitals and maintain single-tier public Medicare.

Thank you so very much for the hundreds and hundreds of you that came out to the rally yesterday. I was standing on the stage and you could see the crowd was taking up a good part of the lawn at Queen’s Park. And, then, all of a sudden up University Avenue, it looked like 1,000 people with red flags came marching to join in solidarity. It was a beautiful thing.

I also wanted to tell you this. Sometimes, we don’t realize that what we do actually really does make a difference. And, in fact, we wouldn’t have public Medicare, were it not for unions. I have the earliest photographs from the first fight for Medicare in this country. And, they all feature big placards, Farmers and Unions United for a Healthcare Covenant for All. That was the first struggle that won, actually, public health care in this country.

And, I have been the Executive Director now of the Health Coalition for 14 years. Dan Benedict, from your union, from the CAW, founded the Health Coalition to defend public Medicare in this province. And, for 14 years, your union has been a leader. We would not have preserved public Medicare without you.

So, from the bottom of my heart, thank you very much. What you do really does make a difference. Thank you.

DINO CHIDO: Natalie, before you leave, I want to just express our appreciation from the Ontario Regional Council for the work that you did to make sure that that initiative that was put on with regards to the rally at Queen’s Park went as successful as it did. And, we know how hard it is to organize, get things done behind the scenes, and it costs money to be able to do that.

So, on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, and I will need a mover, we would like to provide you with $2,500.00. But, I would like a mover. So, moved. Seconder? Any discussion?

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

And, again, that is for the hard work and dedication that you have to healthcare, and it is an important component of what we need to provide on a daily basis. Thank you very much for your hard work.

Point of privilege on mic 2.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHEER

CHASE ROBINSON: Hi, there, brothers and sisters. For those who don’t know me, my name is Chase Robinson and I am a delegate from Local 247. I stand before you this afternoon to speak on behalf of Operation Christmas Cheer.

Our founder and lead organizer, Casandra Robinson, could not be here today, unfortunately, but she does send her regards.

For those who don’t know, OCC is a non-profit that helps union brothers and sisters across the Province of Ontario on strike and lockout over the holiday season. We provide grocery gift cards and food hampers to every member and family from a unionized grocery store, as well as toys for every child.

We have helped every local in the Province of Ontario on strike or lockout over the holidays since 2004, since our humble beginnings in 2004, raising $2,000.00 to support the 24
families of CEP, Local 102-0 in Pembroke, as well as Local 324 in Dryden.

Over the course of the last 10 years, we have been able to help 107 picket lines, provide 2,000-plus toys; 22,148 pounds of food have been raised; 5,537 individual families with up to 22,148 lives have been touched by OCC in the last 10 years.

$545,524.00 has been raised through 1,064 unique locals, unions, labour councils, Federations of Labour, companies and individuals, covering 31,293 kilometres, which we have driven across Ontario over the last 10 years.

It is extraordinary to think what we have been able to accomplish through the hundreds of volunteers and the over 1,000 union supporters, including dozens who are in this room. I think that deserves applause as well.

Every dollar raised has gone to those families and individuals going through hardship, due to strike and lockout in the Province of Ontario over the holidays. From the bottom of our hearts at OCC, thank you very much.

So far this year, there are 4 locals out on strike or lockout in Ontario. USW Local 9176, Toronto, 130 members on strike for 62 weeks; USW, Hamilton, 36 members on strike for 71 weeks; UFCW 175-633, Toronto, 66 members on strike for 71 weeks; USW 1-1000, Pembroke, 40 members on lockout for 238 weeks, with this being their fourth year on lockout over the holidays.

In a show of solidarity, these 40 members gave up their OCC donations last year to the PSW’s and members of SEIU Local 1, in a true show of solidarity last year.

Any support you can show, whether it’s money, time or even your words of support, go to help so many across the Province of Ontario.

For those in Ottawa, December 6th, we are having our third OCC charity event, hosted by myself and the Ottawa and District Labour Council. Come grab a bit to eat. Come grab some photos. Spread some cheer.

We also have a couple of door prizes, with the top prize being, so far, Sens tickets actually, donated from UFCW. So, we have got some good stuff. So, come check us out. Check us out on Facebook. Send us a like. Go on our website to look how you can help, as well as download the electronic version of our 10th Anniversary Picket Line Press.

Thank you all again so much for your continued support. And, for anybody who is looking for me. I am over here by mic 2. Come and say hello, and I would love to grab a photo.

Thank you very much.

DINO CHIDO: Chase, just before you leave the mic, because we supported your initiative last year when we first became Unifor and, again, I think it’s relevant and it needs to be supported again and continuously. But, from that perspective, I believe that from the Ontario Regional Council, we would like to put $2,500.00 towards your progress and program with regards to reaching out to those families, especially those that are on strike and lock out, because they definitely need it and they deserve our support.

So, can I get a mover? So, moved. A seconder. Any discussion?

All those in favour?

(favouring votes shown)

Down.

Opposed, if any?

(opposing votes shown, if any)

Carried. CARRIED.

Thank you very much for your hard work and dedication, Chase. I appreciate that.

Point on mic 2.

BRENT MACMILLAN: Brent MacMillan and Cathy Crowder here. I am from Local 38. Cathy is from Local 39-O, Huntsville. And, we are on the executive of the Ontario Communications Council, which met earlier this week here at the hotel.

And, on behalf of the 25 Unifor locals in Ontario that represent Telco locals, I would like to present a cheque to Operation Christmas Cheer for $5,000.00.

DINO CHIODO: That is what unionism is all about. Congratulations. Great job, guys. Excellent job.
Congratulations to the Telco groups that provided that type of resource. Wonderful job. It shows compassion, it shows solidarity and it shows our true testament to supporting our fellow workers.

So, I don’t see any more speakers on the mic. Getting into our business of the day, what I would like to do is I would like to bring up Barb Dolan to introduce our next guest speaker. Barb Dolan.

BARB DOLAN: Thanks, Dino. Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. It is my great pleasure to introduce Alexa Conradi. She was first elected as the President of the FFQ, the Quebec Women’s Federation in 2009.

She is the youngest and first openly Lesbian leader of the FFQ, and is now in her final mandate. She has a Master’s degree in Political Communication, and her thesis focused on the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada.

She is also a spokeswoman for the World March of Women in Quebec, a global grassroots feminist movement whose goal is to propose an alternative vision to capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism.

Known for her courageous participation in public debates, she has been an active participation in the 

Agression Non De Noces, #BeenRapedNeverReported campaign, and she fought the Quebec Charter of Values, despite immense public pressure, to accept in the name of women’s equality.

She has published texts on religious fundamentalism, rape culture, economic fundamentalism and on why feminists must be involved in the fight against racism, heterosexism and other systems of oppression.

Brothers and sisters, join me in welcoming Alexa.

ADDRESS: ALEXA CONRADI, QUEBEC WOMEN’S FEDERATION PRESIDENT

ALEXA CONRADI: Good afternoon. It has been really exciting to watch what Unifor has been doing since its creation, and thank you so much for the invitation.

I have been invited to speak about the World March of Women, because we would really like to extend an invitation to you, to be part of this global movement of women who are shaking things up.

The World March of Women comes from a process that was set up in Quebec years ago. What we did in 1998 was invited women across the world to join forces, so that we could fight the strength of global capitalism that had really started to ruin our working conditions and impoverish us all across the world.

And so, we decided to join forces for the year 2000. Many of you here might have participated in Ottawa in the march in 2000 for the World March of Women.

And, what has happened since then is that we have kept our march going. And, we now have over 50 national coordinating bodies all around the world. So, we are active in different places, to give you an idea.

We are in Peru, where women are fighting against Canadian mining companies. We are all over Europe, where women are fighting the austerity measures. We are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where women are struggling against militarism and the rape culture.

Women in Tunisia who are struggling for democracy and women’s rights.

And so, this global women’s movement, whose goal is really to create alternatives to systems of oppression, is organizing its 4th International Year of Action in 2015. And, I would sincerely like to invite you to participate.

In Quebec, we have maintained our coordinating body, and we have been active in every single international action in building this global movement. But, unfortunately, outside of Quebec, this has not remained true. And so, I think the kind of leadership that you have in Unifor is an excellent opportunity to create a possibility for this Canadian participation in this global movement.

So, the theme this year of the action in 2015 will be touching on the question of the dispossession of our bodies, our labour, our land, our territories and the earth. And, I am going to make some connections to those issues and to ones that you have been addressing throughout your time here.
So, many of you, I am sure, have followed the discussion around Being Raped and Never Reported. And, of course, talking about violence against women is always a challenge. But, one of the things we all realize is that women can never be entirely free if we continue to be the subject of violence.

And, what this whole debate around Been Raped, Never Reported is realizing how many of us have been affected by this question. Our bodies are literally being dispossessed through violence that often occurs exactly at the age when we are coming of age.

So, you can imagine your sense of self and what possibilities you have and dreams that you have for yourself, when your own body gets taken away from you through rape and violence. And, these are deeply connected to our possibilities of actually believing we can live and adjust in a fair and equal world.

As you also know, the 25th anniversary of the Polytechnique Massacre is coming up. And, we will be underlining that massacre and what we have to say about it and remember about it. It is important to remember these issues. We will be talking about the fact that it was actually a terrorist attack on women and on feminists.

And, the reason why I say it like that is that the killer made it very, very clear that what he wanted to do was attack women who were standing up for equality, who were moving into worlds where men were more dominant and women trying to become engineers. And, he made it very clear that he didn’t think women had their place in that world.

And so, what we are doing also in that time is struggling against the dispossession of our agency and the place we want to take up in the world.

There is also another kind of dispossession of our bodies as women that is happening at the moment. It was referred to earlier. It is the over 1000 indigenous women who have been killed or disappeared. And, it is a message that we are sending to indigenous women that, in fact, we are dispossessing them from their own land. And so, this project of the march in 2015 is to look at the ways in which our society continues to dispossess women from their own bodies.

But, we are also going to be discussing the ways in which our society and our economy and other systems function to dispossess women of their own labour. The austerity measures that we are facing all across this country right now are just increasing the quantity of precarious and part-time labour, and women are the first on the front lines of that. And, it is particularly the case for immigrant women.

The healthcare and social services are being attacked all across this country. And, this is areas where women have found meaningful, interesting work and with the idea of creating assembly-line processes around caring for people; we are now dispossessing the meaning of that work for so many people across this country.

We are also creating work ghettoes for people of colour. There is a growing realization that there is a division that is growing between the women who have improved their working conditions and their lot and the women who have been left behind. And, those are racialized divisions that are happening right now.

As this country is going through increasing cutbacks in its public and social services, they are also asking us as women to take on more for free. So, as we try and juggle care for the elderly, care for our children and our own work life, we are finding it harder and harder to balance it all. And, I would say most women around Canada are dealing with the tensions and the stresses and the strains of being expected to do far more than they can actually accomplish.

So, we are seeing inequalities between men and women. We are seeing inequalities between rich and poor. We are seeing inequalities between women themselves, growing across this country. And, we feel we need to stand up and make a statement about that.

To keep connecting up with the theme of the march in 2015, we are also concerned about what is happening to our land. The shale gas, the tar sands, the petrol economy, these are all things that are contributing to global climate change.

And, I want to point something out that is really fairly unknown. Global climate change that is creating all of these natural disasters leads to higher rates of violence against women. So, sometimes we don’t see the connections, but they’re there.
Why, you might ask? The reason is that under natural disaster conditions, communities are shaken up. They are often displaced. And, whenever chaos ensues, there tends to be an increase in violence against women. So, not only should we be concerned about global climate change and its unbelievable lack of leadership in this country around this issue, but the fact that it also creates just further and greater injustice for the women around us.

We can also see how common good is being attacked under austerity and global capitalism at this time. Our social programs, our systems that are there to support one another are under attack.

So, in that context, basically, we have, as a World March of Women, made a call out for the women of the world to resist these changes, to resist them with the spirit of attacking the right-wing, neoliberal and Conservative agenda that dispossesses our bodies, our land, our communities, our social justice of solidarity, peace, equality and liberty.

So, over the next year, starting with the International Women’s Day, going through to October 17th, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Poverty, women across the world will be joining forces with their men as allies -- will be joining forces to take up a very clear stand against the forces of global capitalism and how they play out in our own states.

And so, what we will be doing on the 24th of April -- and, this is an international invitation. On the 24th of April, which marks the terrible anniversary of the collapse of the textile factory in Bangladesh that killed hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people, mostly women, we will have a day of action to denounce the exploitation of women’s labour.

And, what an opportunity this could be for women, workers and the union allies to stand up in Canada against the Walmartization of our jobs, against the precarious labour here and around the world that women are facing and that, increasingly, others are facing as well.

So, I am here to invite you to take part in this global movement that is now in the Philippines, in South Africa, in Switzerland, in Belgium, in Peru, in Brazil. It is such a living and alive project that our international secretariat has moved in the last 5 years from Quebec to Brazil, and it is now in Mozambique. And so, there is nothing quite like it around the world, to have such a connected united movement.

And so, in this context, the 24th of April, from 12:00 to 1:00, we will all be in action at the same time of the day. And, what that will mean, because of the time differences around the world, it will mean 24 hours of feminist global action for solidarity against women’s exploited labour.

And, I think we can imagine the possibility where each local identifies the sights of women’s exploitation right now, here and around the world, and join together in an action that raises the issues.

And, the reason why I think that this is a really important year for this. As you have been talking about, there is an election this year, an election in Canada. And so, while we have to get rid of Harper, we also have to really build the seeds of a much more progressive, just and feminist society.

And so, we have got a lot of work to do, to not just get rid of the government in place, but we have got a lot of work to do, so that the people in this country share our goals of a different world.

And so, in that sense, the World March of Women can contribute in some ways to both, because as the women show what a disaster this government has been for women, it can also show the way for a better world. Thank you so much.

**DINO CHIODO:** Alexa, I just wanted to congratulate you for the work that you are doing and really reaching out to giving the women confidence, basically, to speak out on their betrayals. Our body, our territory, it is an important initiative. And, it is talking about acting out against missing Aboriginal women and stopping violence against women.

These are supporting initiatives that are important to each and every one of us. And, we have heard a number of people already speaking about the importance of what is happening in our communities, and not being able to have a say against it.
I look forward to the collaborative effort on April 24th. And, on behalf of the Ontario Regional Council, I would just like to give you a token of our appreciation. But, at the same time, we know how challenging this is and how complicated it can get. You have to spend money to be able to achieve certain tasks and goals.

We would like to put a motion forward -- if I can have a mover for $2,000.00 -- for the work that you have done and continue the important work that you continue to do. Moved.

Seconder.

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

Thank you very much for being here.
Okay. I think I see a point of privilege.
I am going to ask Ken Lewenza to come up to the front, so we can go through the election process. I have asked him to conduct the actual election, to call for nominations.
But we will do the point of privilege at mic 6.

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

ROSS GERIER: Ross Gerrie, Local 636 in Woodstock. I am going to introduce our newest sisters in our local union who put up a courageous fight to join our union.

But, before doing so, I want to take you back to a little history, September 16th, when Maria Labarge walked into our office and said, “We want to join your union. We have got some work clerks here. There’s 15 of us and I have got 7 people that are interested.” So, we didn’t take it lightly. We said, “Yes, okay. But, we have got to do some homework.”

And, those numbers just kept growing. It wasn’t 15. It went to 30. It went to 40. It went to 50. It went to 73, because there was more than work clerks there. There were secretaries. There were typists. Those kinds of things. So, we had a challenge ahead of us, for sure. And so, we got into it.

Remember, this is September 16th. So, we had a meeting. Thirty-four people came out to that first meeting. Signed their cards. Hey, we’re almost there. We’re almost at 50 percent.

At our next meeting, two weeks later, we had 43 cards signed. So, we said, “Okay, let’s go. Let’s rock. It’s time to do it.” But, then, I find out there’s 83. So, now, we’re down to below the 57 percent we’re at. With all said and done, we’re getting ready for the vote. We find out we’re at 40 percent.

What am I going to do now? We’re going, because the committee, the two ladies that are here with me today and the chairperson, said, “We can make it happen.” So, I took their word for it and they made it happen. But, along the way, there was a lot of difficulties, a lot of challenges.

It was on the Sunday before the vote. And, I phoned Tim. I said, “What is going on, Tim?” Oh, he said, “I had a couple of people phone me on the weekend.” I said, “A couple of people? We’re at 40 percent, man.” He said, “Don’t worry. We’ve got it covered. The girls are on it and it’s going to happen.”

We went in and I guess what I’ve got to say is, 40 percent is not withdrawal. Forty percent is victory, because when we came out, we had 43 cards signed, we came out with 122 new members.

So, I would like to take this time to introduce the two sisters that made it happen and Tim. The chair at the hospital is Tim Dukes. And, standing with me, Maria Labarge and Kelly Muirhead. So, I don’t know if they want to say a few words or not, but they are quite welcome to the mic.

DINO CHIODO: Please feel free to do so.
TIM DUKES: The girls are a little gun-shy. It is understandable. It is their first time out. So, I am just glad we got them to come down here.

I mean, I am a third-generation Local 636 member. My grandfather was on the board and my father was on the board, so I am very union at heart. I am 100 percent to the bone.

So, it was really nice to rally these sisters. And, like Ross said, I mean, the numbers were totally against us and the odds were definitely not in our favour, but we had the gut feeling, so we went away with it.

And, I just want to thank the Organizing Committee, and Ross, and Brent, and my Executive Board and everybody that supported us along the way. And, it was a great run. And, I welcome the girls. And, hopefully, we can get them a good contract in the future and move forward.

And, keep up the fight everybody.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. A job well done. Point of privilege on mic 4.

TIM CARRIE: Thanks, Dino. Tim Carrie, Education Department, Unifor Family Education Centre.

I just wanted to bring to the attention of the delegates these cards that are out there at the Education table. These cards are a wonderful way to have a one-on-one contact with your members at work. And, to all the financial secretaries here, they’re free.

So, I mean, if you take a look at these cards and the information that is inside of here for your members, all the way from “What’s a collective agreement? What’s a grievance?” Some really important information.

And, on top of it is an area where you can put your name in as the committee person, your contact information, your Health and Safety representative. You can fill it right in here now. So, if you think about that in regards to one-on-one contact, bring this out to your member. Give it to your member and say, “Here is some great information for you. And if you need to get a hold of me, here is the information you can get a hold of me with.” That is how we continue to get one-on-one with our members. It is a great tool to use.

So, please, they’re there for you to see. And, if you need to need more, and I hope you all do, you just get a hold of the Education Department at our National Office, and we will make sure you get them. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks, Tim, for the information. Now, getting into our agenda items. And, the next piece of our agenda, the nominations and elections. And, I am going to call Ken Lewenza up to go through that process. Ken Lewenza.

KEN LEWENZA: Thank you, Dino. Again, we have an election for three positions. And, I will just remind the delegates, as they were part of the report initially, the first nomination will be for a Political Action Committee member, replacing Chris Taylor who left the Political Action Committee to be a member of the National Executive Board.

The second position is the Ontario Regional Council member-at-large, replacing Mark Mathewson, who also went onto the National Executive Board.

And then the third position will be the Ontario Regional Council member-at-large, replacing Wayne Gates who got elected to the provincial legislature in the last couple of months.

So, I will now open up the nominations for the Political Action Committee. That will be the first nominations, and I will take nominations as we speak. And, I believe that is mic 5, my dear sister, Theresa.

THERESA FARAO: Hello. I am Theresa Farao, president of Local 240. I would like to nominate a young woman. She is an amazing activist. She works tirelessly on behalf of Local 240. But, she first started off as a youth delegate. She was the very first youth delegate appointed to the Executive Board.

And, once she took on that role, she didn’t just sit there quietly. She worked hard on the Youth-to-Youth provincial campaign. She took the municipality bylaws to task, and changed the garment policy, so that when they purchase the garments, they’re Canadian made.
She has done amazing things within her own workplace. She went from being the youth delegate to a trustee, and to recording secretary of the local. And, she is a chairperson of a large unit of 430, Green Shield Canada.

And, works very, very hard on behalf of those workers and on behalf of the membership of Local 240, which by the way is very exhausting. And, she works 24/7, which makes me work 24/7. So, good luck to you, because she is going to put you guys to work.

So, I nominate Jodi Nesbitt.

KEN LEWENZA: Thank you, Theresa. Any other nominations for the Political Action Committee spot? Second time, any other nominations for the Political Action Committee spot? Don’t see any other nominations. Would Sister Jodi Nesbitt go to the mic and accept her nomination or reject it, either way?

JODI NESBITT: I accept with great thanks to my nominator and president, Theresa Farao. I would also like to thank our local for their endorsement and also the Ontario Regional Council. Thank you.

KEN LEWENZA: Congratulations, Jodi, on behalf of all of us, of course. The second position is the Ontario Regional Council member-at-large. It is an opening as a result of Mark Mathewson going on the National Executive Board. So, Ontario Regional Council member-at-large. Is there any nominations for the member-at-large of the Ontario Regional Council?

GREG BRADY: Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. Greg Brady, Local 199. I stand before you to nominate a brother I respect. It is my privilege to nominate Brother Tim McKinnon. Brother Mckinnon is currently chairperson of the GM Unit at Local 199 in St. Catharines. Tim is also the vice-chairperson of the GM Master Committee and an Executive Board member of Local 199. Tim understands the challenge we face at our work and our communities, and will work diligently on behalf of our union.

Brother Mckinnon comes from a strong union background; his grandfather and father being elected to various union positions within the Steelworkers. At an early age, they taught him hard lessons that are needed within the union movement.

Tim has been an active member in our community for many years. His volunteer work has not gone unnoticed. In 2005, Tim was named Volunteer of the Year in the City of Welland. His involvement has given him the ability to work with people in solving a variety of issues.

All of his accomplishments and activism make it very easy for me to speak on Tim’s behalf. Brothers and sisters, I proudly nominate Tim McKinnon to the position of Ontario Council member-at-large. Thank you.

KEN LEWENZA: Thank you, Brother. Are there any other nominations for the Ontario Regional Council member-at-large? Second time, any other nominations for the Ontario Regional member-at-large?

SILVANA JENNISON: Silvana Jennison, president of Local 323, Revlon Canada. I nominate Ken Cole as member-at-large. I recall the first time I came to convention, and I was scared. And, I recall he said to me, “Join our table.”

And, I came in, I looked around, and it was a good thing he was close to that table and near the door, because I would have walked out. And, he has taught me a lot. He has moved me in the movement. He has made me an activist. He is an activist. He is very dedicated and involved.

So, I nominate Ken Cole for the position of member-at-large.

KEN LEWENZA: Thank you, sister. Any other nominations for the Ontario Regional member-at-large? Obviously, we have two vacancies. Any other nominations for the Ontario Regional member-at-large?

Okay. We will start with the first nominee. Don’t see any. Tim McKinnon, would you accept your nomination?

TIM MCKINNON: I accept. I would like to thank Greg Brady, my nominator, my local union for their support, the National Union for all the support they’ve given me over the last few years, this council, and I would like to make special mention to Whitey Macdonald who couldn’t be
here. He has been of tremendous help over the last year. Thank you very much.

KEN COLE: With sincere thanks to my nominator, I accept the position for member-at-large.

I would like to say to you that I am very, very much looking forward to playing an inclusive role in this council. I have been active in my union for years. I have sat on a few committees. I would like to bring what I have learned from my union, the former CEP, into Unifor, into the committee. I want to learn from the others, from the former CAW. I am sure when we pool our thought resources that we will do a very good job at making sure that this conference improves every time.

The first conference that I attended here, I was very much impressed. The second one was better. This one is 300 percent better than that one, not 200 percent. So, thank you very much.

I look forward to playing an inclusive role, and to be very active, and to have a voice in this wonderful council in our great union of Unifor. Thank you.

KEN LEWENZA: Thank you, brother. So, I declare those three successful candidates to their respective positions elected. And, if they would come up, then we would have the oath of office, which is obviously mandatory under the Constitution of our union. So, if the three of you would come up?

And then if there is anybody else out there that would like to have the oath of office that might have been elected since the last time we have had our conference, you could certainly stand up, too. So, if you would come up here? Okay, come on up, folks.

Maybe we could all stand and provide support to the leadership team that was just elected. Give attention while I read to you the obligation.

KEN LEWENZA: 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.

KEN LEWENZA: Do you pledge to promote a harassment- and discrimination-free environment, and work to ensure that human rights of all members are respected?

ALL: I do.

KEN LEWENZA: 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.

KEN LEWENZA: 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 yourselves as becomes a member of Unifor?

ALL: I do.

KEN LEWENZA: Your responsibilities are defined in the bylaws, Constitutions 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 interests of the union. I trust you will faithfully perform your duties, that you may gain the esteem of your brothers and sisters and the approval of your conscience.

You will now assume your respected office. On behalf of all the delegates, congratulations and best wishes in building the best union in Canada.

DINO CHIODO: Okay. Well, thank you very much for that. We obviously have our Political Action Committee position filled and our Ontario Regional Council positions filled. And, we will look forward to working with those individuals with regards to putting our mandates forward.

And, I want to say thanks very much to Ken Lewenza, for putting some humour in getting us through that election process with no complications.

So, what I would like to do, before we get into our next presentation -- we originally were headed with regards to Recommendation No. 1. And, we had about six people that were standing at the mics.
RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

DINO CHIODO: So, what I would like to do is go back to Recommendation No. 1. If we could have those individuals go back to the respective mics, so we can continue the recommendation, and come to a conclusion on accepting or not accepting it? Speaker on mic 6.

GRANT ORCHARD: Yes, thank you. I’m Grant Orchard from Local 4268. I would like to begin by speaking to the two major free trade agreements that we’re bound into, that Ken Lewenza spoke about, the free trade agreement and the NAFTA.

And, I would like to recommend two books that are well researched on the issue. It’s Fight for Canada: Four Centuries of Resistance to American Expansionism by David Orchard. And, our top negotiator for Canada to the GATT. It is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades. The former top negotiator, Mel Clark’s book, Independence Lost: How Mulroney and Harper Gave Control of Canada to the United States. And, these books and other information, of course, are available on the website, davidorchard.com.

But, these agreements incidentally, Canadians did not vote for, 54 percent of Canadians voted against Mulroney and the free trade agreement. But, because of the electoral system, he won a majority.

But, we have seen under these agreements the rampant Americanization of our country, with a decimation of our manufacturing base. Close to 50 percent of the manufacturing over the last 20 years has disappeared.

Our oil is being sold to the United States at less than half the world price. As a result, we have got some $17 billion in a Heritage Fund in Alberta when you compare that to Norway who has got close to $1 trillion in their Heritage Fund from the sale of oil. That is one of the impacts of the free trade agreement.

Of course, there’s many more. Loss of our sovereignty. Our foreign policy now is just a mere shadow of the United States.

So, these agreements are the economic constitution of Canada. All major legislation is vetted through them for compliance. And, I am heartened by the discussion that the issue is being brought up. I would like to see more of this debate, as Angelo referred to.

But, I think that Unifor has to go further in its demands, that it needs to call for abrogation of these agreements, because they are used as models for every other agreement that is being negotiated. But, they tie us into the most powerful nation in the world, and we have to get released from that.

There is a 6-month cancellation clause that can be triggered by either party, either country. And, that is what I would strongly urge this union to push, is that abrogation clause be triggered, so that we can return to our own trade laws to govern us and start back on the road to independence.

And, it is unlikely that the United States is going to agree to reopen and take out Chapter 11 on investors’ rights clause. They are not going to agree to open anything that would set them at any kind of disadvantage. It should be easier for us to trigger the cancellation clause and get back on our feet as a nation. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on Mic 7.

BRUCE ALLEN: Bruce Allen, Local 199. I want to speak to the point in the document about an inclusion of provisions or clauses concerning labour rights. There is some history in that regard, with respect to the free trade agreements and such clauses.

The North American Free Trade Agreement had labour and environmental side agreements negotiated with it. Those labour and environmental side agreements were completely meaningless.

I can speak from experience with respect to that, because throughout the 1990’s, I was active in an organization call the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, which prior to the signing and implementation of the NAFTA agreement was one of the leading organizations in fighting NAFTA in the United States. And then subsequent to its passage and adoption, it turned its attention to fighting for workers’ rights and fighting for the upholding of labor laws in the Maquiladoras zone, along the U.S.-Mexican border. And, in the course of doing so, it intervened routinely in the
 proceedings set up as part of the labour side agreements to NAFTA.
And, it found that those efforts were completely fruitless. They did absolutely nothing. In fact, when all was said and done, those clauses, those side agreements, just turned out to be window dressing.

So, my message to you is this. is that I really don't believe in promoting labour rights clauses in these agreements, because I think more likely than not, they will be meaningless. They will ineffective. And, frankly, if they were effective, the corporations would never allow these agreements to go forward.

So, really, you are faced with a situation where it is all or nothing. You either allow these agreement to go into effect with all their anti-worker consequences or you fight these agreements and kill them. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. Mic 2.

RANDY KITT: Thanks, Dino. Randy Kitt, president of 79M, NEB. I don't have to sit here and tell you how evil these trade agreements can be. We have discussed it ad nauseam.

One of the things in the Trans-Pacific Partnership that really offends me is that this agreement could bypass Parliament and the CRTC regulations to eliminate Canadian content in Canada and also foreign ownership rules.

You saw the video with Jerry. One of the viral clips that they showed on Sun Media was us opposing the Verizon coming into Canada. And, these agreements mostly done behind closed doors completely bypass our democratic process.

But, one of the things that alarms me about this discussion, and I realize sitting in this room, is that we are an elite group. We are an elite group, because we are educated beyond most Canadians on these issues. Not only do we get to hear each other's stories coming to these conventions, most of us are plugged into alternative media, and we understand these issues on a greater level.

And, now, with the great work from the Unifor Research Department, we have an amazing policy paper. And, this policy paper cannot remain in this room. This should not be a secret that we keep to ourselves.

When this discussion started, I started Googling free trade. And, I am always trying to learn more and I am trying to figure out what are my discussion notes going to be when I get up and speak? Because, I am so passionate about the subject.

And, this is what I found about free trade. And, we talked about how ignorant the general public is on these issues, and that even our progressive party in this country is for free trade, is because the mainstream media and, I just want to go through some things with you -- are reporting these things.

CETA: “The EU pact is expected to add $12 billion annually to the Canadian economy.” The Financial Post. This is a good thing? That is the headline.

The Globe and Mail: “To deny Keystone XL is to deny free trade.” Like it's a good thing.

This is the Conservative government talking: “Trade agreements do cause disruption, especially in the labour force, since inefficient elements of any economy are forced to adjust or disappear. And, this is usually hard on workers. Thus, labour is always against these agreements.”

Stephen Harper: “Free trade and capitalism is a path towards world peace.”

In the States, “When complete, the Trans-Pacific Partnership will unlock opportunities for all American workers and family business owners, farmers and ranchers, by providing increased access to the fastest-growing markets in the world.”

This is what the mainstream media is reporting to the world and we have got to stop it. This is what we should be reporting to the world. This document right here, we have got to get this out. This document cannot live in this room alone.

We have got to get it on our websites. We have got to talk to our members at our membership meetings. We have got to educate Canadians, especially coming up to this election, about how evil these things are.

So, when we look at alternative media -- and I am going to read just a quite quote
from an alternative media outlet in the States called *The Nation of Change*. And, it is hard to find some of these facts, but this is what they say, “The TPP, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, was negotiated behind closed doors by government bureaucrats and more than 600 corporate lobbyists. And, it threatens everything you care about.”

Let’s not keep this document in the room. Let’s get it out there. Thank you.

**DINO CHIODO:** Thank you, brother. Speaker, mic 4.

**RON SVAJLENKO:** Hello. Ron Svajlenko from Local 222. First of all, I would like to thank the staff that puts together these great documents, Angelo and everyone else there. They are wonderful pieces of information.

And, there is no doubt, on the free trade argument, we win the empirical data argument. We can stand up right now. We can talk about numbers, for instance, from the Globe and Mail. The Globe and Mail, I love quoting them, because I think they look at the numbers and they go, “Oh, shoot.” And, they have to tell the truth once in a while and this is one of them.

Essentially, the GDP in Canada over the last 5 years has grown at about 2½ percent adjusted for inflated, whereas the median wage has grown at 0.6 percent. Now, one of the things we should be challenging as trade unionists, every time you see average in a number, we should challenge that, because average is a distortion; all right? Median wage in Canada right now is $27,800.00, but the average wage is almost $47,000.00. The top 1 percent of Canadians earn 11 percent of the wealth. So, we have to challenge that.

And, as much as I love math, because it works for me, I also know that we have to change gears on how we deliver the message. The morality is a more effective way to do it. And, I am not suggesting this paper is wrong.

What I am saying is if we deliver this message to the public, we are better off to take a picture of a bunch of disheveled workers, perhaps unemployed youth and put a caption down below that says, “They’re not competitive to China at $1.20 an hour. Stop free trade.” And, we can do those things by taking to people’s hearts.

And, it is the same way we are going to have to go after Stephen Harper because, essentially, he has done so many dastardly things. But, every time we get into a mathematical argument, they hire a whole bunch of economists who are very well-spoken, who are perhaps a little distortive in their numbers. But, in the end, they create an argument where the public goes, “I don’t understand,” or “I can’t tell who is right.”

When we get down to morality, we can do that.

So, imagine now an article or, if you will, a TV commercial where a big fat banker takes a stack full of dollar bills or $100.00 bills and uses it to light a cigar. And then at the bottom of that, we put down how much money has been actually put into the pockets of bankers, while the corporate tax rate from 22 percent was reduced down to 15.

Similarly, the process of attacking Stephen Harper on the basis of some of the other moral decisions he has made, we need to find way that we can take that on outside of the traditional media.

For instance, maybe a picture of an old vet standing in front of a closed veterans’ office, along with a young vet with one leg missing, and rattling the door and saying, “Stephen Harper.” And, those are things Jerry talked about, how we have to fight about Stephen Harper.

And, I am hoping that the House of Labour, as much as we have some divide right now, because of the OFL and the CLC, and the situations going on there. I am hoping that just like Americans because one of the things I notice about the Americans is that the Texans are always pointing fingers at the Californians and they hate each other, but fire a shot, and suddenly they’re all together.

And, if the House of Labour is not able to pull together in the same basic format, we are going to need money, because I am reading out there between the lines where the Conservative government has got $100 million ready to pound the hell out of everything they can.

And, we do understand that as trade unions or, for that matter, our ability to speak in the public, we may not be able to support an individual party, but we can pound the hell out of Harper. And, we need to do that morally, because people will make that decision. They will be
confused by math, but let’s pound them morally.

So, please, this room is a great group of people. I am privileged to be here. And, the opportunity, if you will, to continually take in information that you guys create is really a privilege and I thank you for it.

But, again, let’s focus on moral. Let’s pound them. We have got one more shot to fix this guy, because if he gets through the next election, we are not going to recognize this country. He has predicted it and he will deliver it. Thank you.

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

MIKE LOVRIC: Thanks, Brother Chair. Mike Lovric, vice-president of Local 444.

I come from the auto industry and I just want to talk about the Auto Pact.

The Auto Pact was developed in 1965 between U.S. and Canada, and that created thousands of jobs. Thousands of jobs. I know Windsor has benefited from it. They actually put in an assembly plant there. Toyota has benefited from it. Woodstock, I mean, and Alliston. It created thousands of jobs.

That is what everybody is fighting for, is these jobs that come through their community, because when you have an assembly plant like that, you are creating 9 to 10 jobs on the side, like teachers, healthcare, infrastructure in the community.

So, now, here comes this WTO, these bureaucrats that we don’t know who they are, saying, “This is unfair.” So, in 2001, it died. Now, as soon as it died, all these companies that want to sell in Canada, they don’t have to build in Canada any more. So, it created a lot of job loss.

And, now, with this Korean free trade deal that is coming up, they are able to sell cars in Canada with no tariffs. And then we are going to be losing even more jobs in Canada.

So, I am in full support of this recommendation. And, this is why unions are so important, more than ever. And, just so you know, unions are the political equalizers in society. So, keep up the good work. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Speaker at mic 6.

DOMINIC PASQUALINO: Hello. My name is Dominic Pasqualino and I am president of Local 1075. My local has proudly built all the rolling stock for mass transit for the great City of Toronto. Every subway car, streetcar and GO train has been built here in Ontario. Now, thanks to free trade, these times have changed.

The frames for our GO trains are now built in Mexico. The doors for the GO trains, they are built in China. The wiring harnesses for all the cars, they are built in Mexico. The new streetcars, most of those parts, are made in other countries. All we do now is just assemble them.

We have a 25 percent Canadian content rule, but with CETA, this could be wiped out. I suspect that if CETA gets their way, our plant could be closed in five years, that, in fact, the thousand jobs that are there will be vanished.

During the strike, my members had a choice to choose between the union or to vote in support of the company. They voted to vote union. And, we fought against the company, and now we are going to be needing the help of all the union members here once again.

And, we are going to ask them to support us, so that we can keep our plant open, so that we have a future, so our next generation can build the next generation of cars. And, I am asking you to support us to fight CETA, to fight free trade and make sure that Harper doesn’t get in next year. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Right on, brother. Mic 7.

STUART RYAN: Stuart Ryan, Local 567, Unifor, in Ottawa. I think this document is an excellent document. I agree with the principles there. But, I think we should bear in mind that we are going out by making this an election issue. As Brother DiCaro mentioned earlier, there was NAFTA, the Ethyl Corporation. That was brought to us by the Liberals, not by Mulroney.

I would also like to recognize the numerous free trade agreements we have had. One was with Colombia that was passed by a minority government when Scott Brison went down. It was vetted by President Uribe. And, of all of a sudden, the Liberals supported the Conservatives, and got that free trade agreement passed.

Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world for trade unions. There are
more murdered and assassinated there than in any other country. Second is the Philippines.

I think this fight, we have to rely on ourselves and all the other workers. The way to build this is to support the struggles of workers internationally. The people in Mexico are all saying “We’re losing.” In Mexico, there is a movement there to try and build strong autonomous trade unions. And, that is what we should support as well.

And, the way, I would say, to make sure we can do this is that one of those things we have to support politically is proportionate representation, so we don’t have to end up choosing between the worse of two evils. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. The last speaker on mic 1.

KEN LEWENZA, JR.: Ken Lewenza, Jr. I am a coordinator for the National, representing Unifor. I just want to say I want to thank my union, because they give me an appreciation for wanting to understand history.

When I went to school, I thought it was a subject that really didn’t relate to me. And then all of a sudden, you start learning about some of our forefathers and some of the struggles that they went through to make the progress, and the level of sacrifices that they had to make.

You know, there was a time when the world had incredible gross inequalities and injustices. And, working people and every day average citizens found ways to fight back, make a difference and make progress.

And, if you look at the ‘50s and the ‘60s and the ‘70s at a time when we’re negotiating wages and pensions and we’re winning publicly-funded healthcare, and corporations are actually being criticized for being rotten, ruthless butt-holes, which they are and were at that particular time, the corporate elite decided that they needed to get together.

They needed to change the conversation. They had to change the structures. They said, “We’re not willing to share our profits. We don’t believe in a world of equality and justice.” And, they were going to start to implement the type of structural changes that was going to weaken all working people.

So, when my father earlier talks about Bob White and Maude Barlow getting out in the ‘80s, it actually started before then. But, I think one thing that has to be emphasized in those earlier fights, Bob White and Maude Barlow couldn’t have had the success that they had, fighting those fights the way that they did, if they didn’t have a strong base behind them that were supporting their efforts and were pushing them forward, so that they can get that type of message forward.

You know we’re out of time when the distribution of wealth, once again, is so incredibly gross. And, the one thing we have to think about is how we can communicate with people. We shouldn’t feel like we’re in these fights alone.

The environmental community is saying that free trade agreements is undermining our ability to protect the environment. The democracy folks are out there saying that free trade agreements are undermining our democracy; they’re undermining again our public programs, and we are seeing that.

The reality is that these free trade agreements, we have had this discussion and we have talked about it. We have had it for 20 years. But, corporate power and free trade agreements really are the crisis of our time.

And then my only challenge is, again, when I look at Angelo’s paper, I think that, yes, it is an awesome paper. But, communities and people have to actually think about how we can add to the thinking of that particular paper, about how we can be creative, how we can explain it, how we can build the type of coalitions and relationships on the ground, so that people understand these particular issues.

I want to say it’s one thing to come here and talk about free trade, and you think of Angelo’s presentation. I think all of us have to think about in about a 3- or 4-minute presentation to how we talk to workers, as to how do we relay this particular issue.

Just imagine if we went to working people and said, “We think that we should be entitled to the same type of rights as corporations. And, if corporations are going to pass legislation that is going to undermine working people, then they should pay us for any lost wages that we could have made had they not made that decision,” because that is what free trade agreements are. It is
ensuring that corporations aren’t going to be treated in a way that is going to affect their type of profits.

So, again, the only point that I’ve got to make. Is one thing, it is great to come here to talk about how absolutely crucial this agreement of free trade is. But, you know, I love Rolly. Rolly, I love your energy, and Dino’s.

We really have to have conservations from community to community. We have to ask people, “What is it that you are doing? How are you being creative? How are you building coalitions? How are you having conversations around this particular issue?” because we can’t win justice if we have free trade agreements. Everything else that we are fighting for, we just can’t simply make progress.

And then I want to point to the United States right now. They demonstrate to us if we have any gem, any diamond in our pockets, they have actually demonstrated the trajectory of where their society is going, where their democracy -- where I think the Koch brothers just put $100 million into their elections, to purchase elections.

My father said the other day, he just read an article how the Republicans are now going to actually -- regardless of the law, they are going to actually think about how they can undermine the marriage equality, and start having those debates, and have people fighting against one another once again.

So, the reality is, if we don’t start to have a plan that takes us into the future that recognizes our values where we want society to go, the reality is if we don’t do something and we keep following this track, our communities aren’t included, we’re not included, our values aren’t included.

So, we have got to find a way to be creative. And, this has to be everything that the union does moving forward.

DINO CHIODO: Very well said, brother. Very well said. So, I know we are coming to the conclusion of speakers. I believe that is a point; is that correct?

So, what I would like to do -- I appreciate your cooperation for separating the recommendation. So, now, there’s no more speakers on Recommendation No. 1.

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

Thank you very much.

I would like to get you to cue up the video on Rainbow Camp. But, just before that, I wanted to add a component to the debate. But, again, I wanted to wait until it was completed, because it was more of a statement, and it is on numbers, because of the trade imbalance.

And, I understand that there’s a lot of great points that were talked about with regards to the free trade agreements, some of the challenges we’ll have with regards to that.

But, I mean, obviously, you know I come out of the auto sector and the auto industry. And, this is a challenge to major OEM manufacturing, Chrysler, Ford, GM, Toyota, and Honda. And, at the same time, it affects, obviously, our independent parts.

But, two important numbers that I want to share with you. The CETA agreement has a $14.5 billion trade imbalance already currently. And, the Korean trade agreement is a $2.6 billion trade imbalance. So, you are almost talking about $17 billion in unbalanced trade, and you have a government that wants to basically give millions of dollars by losing billions.

And, I mean, obviously, they don’t care about what we’re talking about. They don’t care about what we’re saying. And, you need to make sure that you put measures like this in place, to go in the right direction and to bring everybody together and understand the issues that we’re fighting for.

So, I just want to share that, because those are huge numbers. And, again, when we talk about trading more cattle, more pork, more cheese -- I mean, those are all great industries and sectors, and we have got to be able to do that, and we have got to support those industries. But, at the same time, there is still an unbalanced amount of money in the billions.
And, if you talk about a fair trade agreement or a reciprocal trade agreement, we could create hundreds of thousands of jobs. And, that is what people need to understand. And, again, I appreciate your indulgence. I thank you for getting involved in the debate, because it is that important. And, I appreciate the passion in the room and at the mics, because that is a very serious initiative and issue. Thank you very much.

Please cue up Rainbow Camp.

--- W hereupon a video was played

**WELCOM E FRIEND ASSOCIATION: RAINBOW CAM P**

**DINO CHIODO:** Point on mic 1

**STEVE OLSEN:** Steve Olsen from Local 1359. And, Rainbow Camp is located an hour outside of Sault Ste. Marie in Thessalon.

I would like to introduce Harry Stewart, the Chair of Welcome Friend Association. We’ve been having a booth out there, selling tickets for an iPad, raising money for Rainbow Camp. And, he is also asking for donations from locals that anyone can possibly give to this amazing cause. And, I would like Harry to say a very few brief words.

**HARRY STEWART:** Thanks, Steve. And, it will be very brief, because I am in tears because of that. It is great to see the impact that a camp can have on kids and the changes. Rainbow Camp is not a leadership camp. But, here you see a youth coming forward and being able to speak about his experiences.

Welcome Friend Association works very hard at raising funds all year round to paper camp registration and travel. We bring in kids from all over Canada and we support them. The age is 13 to 17.

I was telling Steve that one day, I had a call, and was in tears wanting some place for his son. And, he had no friends and nowhere to go. And, it was just amazing, the talk I had with him for about an hour.

And then after camp, another parent called and said, “The camp saved my child’s life,” because now he belongs or she belongs. It’s just amazing, the impact.

And, I want to thank you guys, because at the table, you have stopped in. You are interested and you are concerned. And, it is amazing, the warmth that you guys are showing. And, anything you could do to support us would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

**STEVE OLSEN:** So, buy your tickets for the iPad. The draw will be later on today. And, if you are not going to be around by the end of the day, make sure you write your name on the back of the tickets. And, any support will be greatly appreciated. And, I appreciate the council for allowing us this time.

**DINO CHIODO:** And, before you leave, I mean, you talked about the importance of the warmth that we’re showing. But, the reality is, it’s the warmth that you’re showing to the individuals that really need the support and need to have those experiences to understand that they’re not alone and there is a place to go. So, I want to say thank you very much to you now.

As an Executive Board, we have already passed $2,500.00 to go to Rainbow Camp. And, again, we want to encourage everybody in the room, all the locals who can participate or can contribute to please do so, because it is such an important initiative, connecting with young individuals that feel like they’re basically alone, that they have no place to go. And, you provide an amazing service. So, thank you very much for all your hard work and dedication.

**STEVE OLSEN:** Thank you very much.

**DINO CHIODO:** I’ve got a point on mic 3. The first time I called that mic. It’s the first time I called that mic. Way to go. I didn’t even know it was there.

**DURHAM REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNSEL**

**DAVE RENAUD:** I hope it works. Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity. My name is Dave Renaud. I am from Local 222 in Oshawa. I am also president of the Durham Regional Environment Council. And, I am very thankful to the executive of Unifor Ontario Council for the opportunity.

We are very blessed, because this council, the delegates here have really helped and supported us by buying lots of tickets for this basket of organically-made natural preserves from a
sister out of 1090 in Ajax. Her name is Wendy Grave. She grew them. She packaged them. No pesticides. No herbicides. And, they’re really tasty.

So, again, I want to say thank you again to the delegates, because you’re not going to believe how much money we have raised. It is over double than what we have ever done. We have raised $3,005.98. Holy smokes. I mean, come on, think about that. You guys bought tickets for preserves.

So, I want to thank our volunteers. And, when I mean volunteers, these are people from different locals that come out and help us.

We had Terry Howe here from Local 1090. Helped yesterday sell tickets. She sold $1249.00 worth of tickets. She is going to be busted when I tell her how much we did.

I’ve got Craig Waff here, from Local 222. Rebecca Keates. These are all new people. Rebecca Keates from 222, never been here before. And, of course, you may all recognize Steve Connolly from Local 222.

So, I am going to have Rebecca shake that can, and I am going to pull the winning ticket out; okay? Okay, you’ve got to hold it over my head, so I can’t see. I don’t want to look. Okay, it’s a number. No name. Has anybody got 659558? 659558. Going once. Oh, we’ve got a winner? No. 558, going twice. 558, going three times.

I sure hope this doesn’t take long. All right. Oh, we’ve got a name on this one. Teri Mac. Terry MacDonald? No kidding. Where is she? It’s 665, Terry Mac. I’ll give it to her.

Listen, I want to thank you guys so much for your support. You have been wonderful. You help us continue to do the good environmental work that we do in our communities. And, it is your mandate that you give us to do and in this place.

DINO CHIODO: That will teach everybody to put their name on a ticket from now on, because now everybody will be writing it out, for sure.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5:

DINO CHIODO: All right. So, going on to the order of business, we did have the Women’s Federation President, Alexa Conrad, speak earlier. So, what we would like to do is we would like to go to Recommendation No. 5. So, if you could take out your recommendation sheets, we will be going to Recommendation No. 5. And, I will have Katha come up and speak to the recommendation.

KATHA FORTIER: I recommend that the Unifor Ontario Council continue to support the struggle to stop violence against women in all its forms by:

a) Promoting and utilizing the data that will be released on December 6, 2014 - marking the 25th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, on “Can work be safe, when home isn’t?”

b) Supporting “Shine the Light on Woman Abuse” and “Light the Night against Violence” campaigns. Both campaigns call for the lighting of buildings and communities across Canada with the aim of raising awareness around gender-based violence every day.

c) Support further calls for action on the violence against Aboriginal women and girls, by joining The Native Women’s Association of Canada in its demand for a National Inquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, and that Aboriginal women are included in the design, decision-making process and implementation of this inquiry.

DINO CHIODO: Can I have a mover on the recommendation? So, moved. A seconder. Open for discussion. We will start at mic 1.

CANDACE LAVALLEY: My name is Candace Lavalley. I am president of Local 7-O in Thunder Bay. I am myself a First Nations person. I work in a local that deals with child welfare, mental health and health, and we work with Aboriginal families only.

I am tired of the racism when a sister, an Aboriginal sister or a girl, is abused or has faced violence or is killed. I hear it all the time that, “Oh, it’s just an Aboriginal person. They don’t mean anything.” To a lot of people in our community, they don’t mean anything, but that person is someone’s daughter, someone’s mother.
I encourage all of you to stand up for these Aboriginal women and girls, to join the Native Women’s Association of Canada and demand an inquiry into why are there so many murdered and missing Aboriginal women and girls. It is time that we stand up for all our sisters. And, I encourage the men to also join that association in the demand for an inquiry into this. Thank you so very much.

TULLIO_DIPONTI: Thank you, sister. Go to mic 2.

MAGGIE HARBERT: Maggie Harbert, Local 35-0, Ottawa, Ottawa Valley. In 1960, Aboriginal women got the right to vote, decades after all the rest of us. And, I don’t really know what the difference is between Candace and myself, but apparently it took almost 40-some years to find out that there was no difference.

We need a national inquiry. Stephen Harper and the Conservatives and their head-in-the-sand attitude on this issue is outrageous.

At Canada Council, we all heard the great Stephen Lewis speak and he called it racism, and I can’t agree more. Thank you.

TULLIO_DIPONTI: Thank you, sister. Mic 4.

TIM CARRIE: Thank you, brother. Tim Carrie, representative of the Education Department. Obviously, there are two issues in this recommendation that are absolutely crucial.

And, I will just start off in saying it’s 25 years -- just about 25 years since the massacre. And, recent events in the last few months have really shown us how far we still have to go.

I find it absolutely unbelievable, for example that our Members of Parliament in Ottawa have never thought about putting a harassment policy in place, have never thought about putting an investigative policy in place when harassment complaints are made.

We have been listening and I know I have been listening to a lot of discussion on CBC news on these issues. And, the other thing that is appalling is the lack of understanding of what harassment even is, in regards to educated politicians, supposedly. So, we’ve got so far to go.

And, now, we have other situations that are coming public in regards to Bill Cosby, Ghomeshi, all those things. And, you still hear some arguments. And, this, I can’t believe that you’re going to argue whether or not -- an example, what is happening with Ghomeshi -- whether or not consent is an issue, whether or not a woman would consent to being punch. Give me a freakin’ break. That is absolutely disgusting.

We know we have our issue around violence against women. But, what is happening to our Aboriginal sisters, what is happening to these young women, is also a major part of racism in our communities and racism in this country that are so alive and well, that you can’t recognize that these girls and these women are real people, with real feelings, with real families, and darn it, an inquiry is needed to figure out how we stop this atrocity in this country.

And, we need men to start speaking up. And, I am glad to see we’re getting some other men. And, usually, it’s the same men, which kind of bothers me. We need to start speaking up. Brothers in this room, if we’re silent, we’re saying it’s okay. We can’t be silent.

I am going to tell you, I go through this and I go through it from a personal perspective. And, those that know me, I have spoken of this before. I still remember as a 10-year-old boy, trying to jump on my father’s back while he was sitting on my mom, hitting her.

I still remember as a 12-year-old boy, watching my mother walk out the door, because she couldn’t take it anymore. There were no shelters. There wasn’t a place to get help. She had to leave her 5 children, because she almost died a few weeks later, the last one from the last beating.

And, those are things that should never, ever happen. And, brothers, you’ve got to speak up. It’s our problem, brothers, and we need to be a major part of the solution on this. We need to speak up in every avenue we can.

And, look, I come from manufacturing. I have been there in the cafeteria, guys. I’ve heard the guys. I’ve heard the jokes. We all have. But, darn it, it takes a real man to take it on. It takes a real man to say, “That it’s crap. It’s not funny and it’s going to stop.”

And, that, to me, is a person that is a man, that is a brother, and that is going to go and fight this. So, let’s not be talking about this crap in another 25 years. Let’s get it done. Thank
DINO CHIODO: Now, you know why he is in charge of education. Good job.

SANDY CARRICATO: Sandy Carricato, Retired Workers Executive Council.

Many of you have heard me speak before about issues of violence against women, and I am here again. Brother Tim, thank you so much. As an educator, you were there for me. Still are. Still fighting. Still speaking. And, you taught me how to do it.

One of the things that I want to say about this recommendation is that can work be safe when home isn’t? Part of my work was health and safety in the workplace. What does this mean about home?

Men and women have to be and have to realize that when they see a woman hurting at work, they have to speak out. When you see the bruises, when you hear the stories, listen and direct. Get the union rep. Get somebody there to help that woman, because she needs help. It could be a man, but most often a woman.

The other important thing that I want to say about this is that we talk about December 6th and the massacre. I write poetry as well. And, I remember writing a poetry about December 6th Remembered. The last two lines, I want to read to you and, they are, “What a shame, what a crime. All their dreams taken away by a man named Mark Lepine.”

Now, I was told that I shouldn’t mention his name, and that is why nobody wanted to put this in the newspaper. But, I think it is very important that we remember that that is what happened on that day, just because they were women, for no other reason, because they went to his room and they found that that is the reason that he killed all those people. It was because they were women, because they were in engineering, and he had wanted to be in engineering. Please remember that.

The other thing I want to say, you all know that I am an Aboriginal person, and I talked about my mother being abused before. I also wrote a poem about her. And, the poem was called Why Did You Stay? The last line of the poem was, “Because of you.”

She stayed in an abusive relationship, because of her children. And, I was the youngest of the first family that she had. And, she told me, “I stayed because of you.” She stayed in that abusive relationship, because of her kids. It just can’t happen anymore.

And, Harper, whatever level of government it is, whether it is municipal, federal, provincial, these people have all reduced the monies that go into the shelters for abused women. And, we have to make sure that that money gets back in there. We need a place for these women and their families.

The other part that I want to say about the inquiry, our executive council, the Retired Workers Executive Council at our retirees’ conference had a resolution and it was passed. And, the outcome of that convention was that we would write a letter.

And, we have written that letter to the government about having an inquiry about the murdered and missing Aboriginal women. And, I want to say, and I said it then, it is racism. It is nothing else but racism, and it has to stop.

And, the other thing that I want to say is that you don’t just write it as a form letter. Write it out. Go to a site, a website about murdered and Aboriginal women. You will get all the information you want.

And, please write those letters. We need it. And, it should be led by Aboriginal women, and they are the ones that should lead this inquiry. Thank you.

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

GWEN CAMPBELL: Gwen Campbell, Local 1285, member of the Ontario Region Women’s Committee.

The most common form of gender-based violence is that performed by a male partner against a woman. Unfortunately, it is frequently invisible as it happens behind closed doors. And, sadly, many legal systems and cultural norms still consider this a private family matter and a normal part of life.

Violence against women has been called the most pervasive, yet least-
recognized human rights abuse in the world. Gender-based violence perpetuates male power and control. It is sustained by a culture of silence and denial of the seriousness of the health and the consequences of abuse.

Studies suggest this violence appears to be rooted in the way men and boys are socialized. It is more a matter of how society views masculinity. For this reason, changes must come through societal visions of masculinity and must actively engage men as they are the policy-makers, and also engage parents and spouses.

Mass rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced abortion, forced pregnancy, it is all sustained by silence. Why do we have over 1,100 missing and murdered indigenous women? Women’s voices must be heard.

I was going to try and do 10 of my top reasons as to why, but I have got way more than 10. No. 1 though is, why do we have over 1,100 missing and murdered indigenous woman? Why do we not have a national action plan on gender-based violence? Why do we not have a raise of CPP? Why do we have no national childcare? Why do we not have affordable housing? Why do we still have a court system that further victimizes women and girls, and media that further victimizes us again? People that say why didn’t we report this?

Why is women’s work undervalued and underpaid? And, why? Most importantly, why? Why do we still stay silent? We must put an end to it. Thank you.

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

SHARON W ASILEWSKI: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Sharon W asilewski, and I am the first president of Local 7-0 in Thunder Bay.

I have worked as a counsellor since the 1980’s, and I have been working with Aboriginal girls and boys, I guess. I know we don’t know the statistics. We just don’t know. But, I’m going to tell you they would blow your mind.

I have worked with young women, beautiful young women, Aboriginal women who have been raped by multiple people and, on top of that, pissed on. And, this is not uncommon. It breaks my heart to know how prevalent it is.

My traditional name is White Eagle Woman. And, we need to soar with this, because it is happening so much that, literally, it is considered normal that a young Aboriginal woman will not get through to adulthood without being raped at least once, usually multiple times.

And, of course, you end up with addictions and all of the other things that come along with trauma and with societal prejudice. So, it is time. I am just about out of time. I’m at the end of the dawning of my career, and the sun is going down for me.

But, this is the time to rise up. So, stand up, every one of you, and don’t let this continue, because they are our future. And, First Nations people are the most rapidly growing percentage of our future, and we better come to accept and know that they need to be protected or we are going to have a very, very angry next generation.

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

RUTH PRYCE: Good afternoon. Ruth Pryce, Local 1106, vice-president, and on the National Executive Board.

I rise in support of this recommendation. And, as Dino said in his remarks yesterday, we should be taking back these recommendations to our executive board, and at least discuss and have it in our local and support these recommendations.

I know that I have stood here several times speaking about the missing Aboriginal women, and I have pled with a lot of our members here to support, get involved, that at least we can put the pressure on the government to have the inquiry done on the Aboriginal missing women and girls.

I also said earlier on, I think a couple of years ago, how would you feel if that was your sister? It could be your daughter or it could be your grandchild.

I was reading in the CBC news where it says, “The Public Safety Canada Study
sheds new light on how women and girls are forced into the sex trade by pimps acting as boyfriends, small, loosely defined gangs and even members of their own families.”

I am also supporting the Violence against Women. I recently learned back on the island of Antigua where I’m from that one of my family was killed by their own family, and it was abuse. So, it’s not just alone here. It is all over. And, this is the reason why we need to put the pressure on the government to stop the violence against women, and also look into having a national inquiry started on the missing Aboriginal women.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker at mic 3.

GARY PARENT: Thanks very much, Dino. Gary Parent, Local 444, and a proud member of Unifor. But, I am also standing here today ashamed as a man, because here we are 25 years later, after the worse massacre in history, when we look at the women, when we look to what is happening to our Aboriginal indigenous people, women, we don’t have enough men that are willing to stand up and take the responsibility, that we can put a stop to what is happening against our women. Brothers and sisters, I was a little bit younger when December 6th came along. And, Brother Carrie was right. There were a lot more men then. They were at the mics. And, I challenged the men in this room; my brothers, that you should be at the mic, because it’s the sisters in our union, it’s our wives, our partners, our children, our grandchildren, that we have to show example to. And, how can we show example to if we don’t get up, stand up and show support to a very grave injustice in this society?

My feeling is all the politicians that have voted to take away money from women’s shelters should absolutely, absolutely be thrown right out of office and thrown in jail, because it is that type of mentality, sisters and brothers, that is leading our country.

We have to stand up and say that’s wrong. That inquiry should have happened over 2 years ago into why the abuses are happening with our native people.

Sisters and brothers, and particularly brothers, I challenge you, if you have remembrances in your particular community, to stand up to be part of joining shoulder to shoulder with our sisters to stop this abuse. And, for men to start speaking up a lot more loudly against the abuse that is happening within our society today.

And, again, let us put the politicians’ feet to the fire and make that part of our political aspect, too, the women’s shelters. The inquiry should take place. If you want my vote, then you better darn well support me and the indigenous people of this country and the women in this province, in this country because, sisters and brothers, it is only going to take us standing up and fighting alongside of our sisters and brothers that is going to make that difference and get the politicians off their butt and make sure that this abuse stops, so we don’t have to start coming here or keep coming here on December 6th and remembering what happened, and to try and stop this violence. Thank you very much, sisters and brothers.

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

SUE MCKINNON: Hi. Sue McKinnon from Local 444. I rise in support of this recommendation. There is about 100,000 reported incidents of spousal and dating abuse. Every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by a person she is dating or whom she is married to. There are over 1,100 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. Every night, about 3,300 women along with 2,500 children sleep in emergency shelters to escape violence.

We need to fight for good-paying jobs, improved pensions, a national child care program, a national action plan holding a national inquiry for missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. We need a concrete national action plan to end violence against women.

Hiatus House hosted an event on domestic violence in Windsor and Essex County conference. There was over 200 in attendance. We had our Local 444, Dave Cassidy, financial secretary. He actually spoke about men’s violence against women. He spoke about Shine the Light on women’s abuse.

November is Women’s Abuse Prevention Month. Purple symbolizes our fight against domestic violence. We raised over $2,000.00 for Hiatus House by selling tickets here and our scarves. This was an amazing job. I would like to thank everybody here for supporting this.

We also had our Caesars Windsor and Hiatus House for the entire month of
November light their facility up all in purple.

So, we need everyone to speak up, not just our men, but our sons, brothers, fathers, grandfathers, about violence against women. So, let’s start it today. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic 5.

CHRIS MILLER: Chris Miller, Local 100. In response to what my brother, Tim, was saying, I feel morally obligated to address this issue myself and support the recommendation as the son of a victim of child physical and sexual abuse, as a brother of a woman who has been sexually harassed in the workplace, as a union rep for people who face harassments in my workplace, whether it’s direct or indirect. We have kind of touched on it.

Tim spoke about this Ghomeshi situation. And, there has been a lot of talk, which is very encouraging. One of the things that keeps coming up is victim blaming. It reminds me of John Tory, our mayor-elect, got himself into some hot water with some comments he made, I think a couple of years ago, talking about being a manager and seeing that women were being paid less.

And, how he chose to address it was to say that the women that he dealt with who were underneath him in his corporation and, just in his general observation, he could tell that they have asked for raises less often. They were less direct about asking for more money, about directing towards more promotions.

And, he made some comment to the effect that women, as far as he is concerned, should play more golf. It’s a better network or some such thing. And, they were those remarks that got him in hot water. People were obviously upset about this.

But, the part that really stumped me was that he was publicly saying, “I was a manager” he was a CEO of Rogers and in such a high position of power saw something that was very wrong. And, he is saying publicly and making comical comments about how he sat there and didn’t anything about it. And, that to me, is all part and parcel with this victim blaming. The expectation that people were victims and people who lack empowerment, that’s on them, that they are the ones who are supposed to step up.

And so, when I hear about Aboriginal women vanished and murdered, and a refusal to have a public inquiry, or to bury our heads in the sand, that is what I hear, an expectation that “Oh, they kind of had it coming” or “Maybe they shouldn’t have been living that sort of life.”

It’s this victim blaming. It’s this expectation that those who are under-privileged, that if they really wanted it, they could get out of these situations, that if women made a clear priority that they didn’t want to be abused, that they would leave their husbands.

It’s this sort of thing that makes me feel that it’s not just a moral element of import for me. As a union, it has to be a priority, because our belief is that in the people in power, they’re the ones responsible for making these changes, that your manager doesn’t say to you, “Oh, have you avoided the person harassing you?” They’re supposed to take action. And, I expect that our political figures ought to do the same.

So, I think that it is imperative that we make this a major agenda. And, if it takes shedding light on missing Aboriginal women, if it takes commemorating these issues, the Polytechnique Massacre on a day, if just bringing these conversations to the forefront for these reasons, we can start a broader debate about who is responsible for fixing the wrongs in our society and holding people accountable who instead try to turn a blind eye. So, thanks very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Is that point of privilege? Speaker mic 1.

LUC RIVET: Hi, everyone. Luc Rivet, Local 1359. And, I, too, am proud to stand up here in support of this motion. But, I want to say something just from my experiences. When something like this comes up on the floor like this, we all get motivated. We all get emotional. We all want to pledge our support.

But, then, when we leave here, okay, we sit on our chair and wait for the next rally, the next walk, the next opportunity to show our support.

And, I pledge to the sisters in this room and to all the sisters around the world that I am not going to sit by and wait for the next rally, and I am not going to sit by and wait for the next walk.
I am going to make it a point that if I see anything suspicious, any type of abuse, then I will take action. If I see any injustices such as Aboriginal women disappearing, and so on, then I will just go ahead and write that letter to the Prime Minister.

And, when I see any kind of stuff like that, then I will take action, because this is not just something that we can walk for or we can rally for. This is something we have to do in our daily lives.

And, to my sisters here in Unifor, I want to tell you that I am with you every step of the way and I will take this on in my daily life. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: And, I want to apologize to Sarah, because I have left her. I guess I bypassed her a few times. And, Sarah, I apologize for that. Speaker on mic 2.

SARAH BLACKSTOCK: That’s okay, Dino. It is humbling to follow all these incredible people. My name is Sarah Blackstock and I am the Director of Communications at Unifor. And so, there has been a lot of talk this afternoon and yesterday about how do we take these resolutions back to our communities and back to our workplaces? So, we in the Communications Department had the opportunity to work with the Women’s Department to think about December 6th, and what do we do with this, given it is the 25th anniversary?

And, our conversation started by acknowledging that the thing about December 6th, it was a massacre and it was totally out of the ordinary, which is why it got everyone’s attention. But, the thing about violence against women and about sexism is that it happens, as you heard, every day. It happens in our homes. It happens in our communities, our workplaces and it happens inside this union. And, we need to confront that. And, the sexism is really at the root of the violence.

When the Jian Ghomeshi affair, abuse emerged, there was a lot of concern about women being believed when we come forward with stories, and it is really important that women are believed. But, it is equally important that we do something. What is most shocking and horrific to me about the Jian Ghomeshi stuff, and the Bill Cosby stuff, and the missing and murdered women is that so many people knew and did nothing. At Western University, they had decided that there was enough evidence that they weren’t going to send their interns to CBC. Hundreds of people have come forward to say, “Yes, I knew Jian Ghomeshi was a bad date.”

And, the same thing applies around our workplaces, our communities and even our labour movement. We know sexism is being perpetrated in many different ways all the time, and we don’t speak up enough.

So, what we did in thinking about December 6th is, how do we acknowledge that the sexism that enabled December 6th to take place -- how do we acknowledge the sexism that is at the root of the violence that so many people have spoken about begins to be addressed?

So, we have created these little -- they’re essentially a comic and it says, “Spot the sexism.” And, they’re being distributed by email and through social media.

And so, my challenge and my invitation is, when you’re talking about the resolutions, to take these back to your communities and your workplaces, to your dinner tables, and have the conversation about the sexism that is being depicted.

And, I hope that that will fuel conversations that will really help us begin to change the sexism, to challenge it, both in our families, in our movement. And, maybe next year on December 6th, a bunch of men might hold a panel here in this room and talk about the sexism that they spotted every day and what they did, as Tim and others have invited the men in the room to do.

What did you do when someone made a joke about a woman, or passed someone up for a promotion, or just made a joke about violence against women and told her to laugh it off? Because that sexism is so crucial to this work.

So, we hope you will use that tool in your efforts to make these resolutions live in our communities and have the impact that we want them to have.

DINO CHIODO: I don’t see any speakers at the mic, but I do want to make a point, because I think it’s relevant and I think it’s important.

And, the reality is I have listened to a number of passionate individuals talking
about how we can stand up and try to make things better, so we actually stand up for the people around us, for the women that are being challenged and having difficulties with regards to some of their male partners.

But, the reality is, if we’re not comfortable here, speaking on the issue amongst our friends, our family, then, certainly, you won’t be able to get up in a controversial setting and say something.

And, I know we can sit here and say, “Hey, I would stand up and say something against it,” and you might feel that way right now, but if you’re having second thoughts about going to the mic, then you really need to think about what you would be able to do to get up to the mic or, I’m sorry, do it out in public in a controversial setting.

And, I just express that, because I think it’s so relevant, because, again, if people are sitting and inherently thinking that, you know what? It’s nerve-wracking to go up there right now and talk about this contentious issue, then it is not going to be easier in the workplace.

So, I just leave you with that thought, because I think it’s an important one. And, in saying that, I just want to thank all the people that expressed their views and ideas and spoke on this very important issue and topic.

In saying that, I don’t see any more speakers at the mic. So, I will ask how many people are in favour of Recommendation No. 5 on violence against women and missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls?

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

Thank you very much.
Okay, back to our agenda, getting back on track, going to our presenter, Rolly Kiehne, who is here from the Political Action Group talking about federal election strategy 2015. Please welcome Rolly Kiehne.

PRESENTATION: FEDERAL ELECTION STRATEGY 2015

ROLLY KIEHNE: Thank you very much, Dino. Sisters and brothers, wouldn’t you agree that the failure of the Harper government to call an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women is motivation enough to work incredibly hard to ensure that Harper and the Conservatives are defeated in the next federal election? Is that not motivation enough, sisters and brothers?

So, following Michael Harris’ and Jerry’s remarks this morning on stuff that Harper did, are you ready to work hard to be Harper’s worst nightmare? Are you ready to work hard to be Harper’s worst nightmare? So, if this morning’s remarks didn’t do it for you, perhaps this short video will. Roll the video, please.

--- When a video is played.

ROLLY KIEHNE: So, sisters and brothers, just to bring some context to our federal election strategy, let me emphasize from the get-go that our strategy really is a work in progress. And, I am hoping for some robust debate at the end of my remarks.

But, I think in terms of outlining that federal strategy, we really do have to go back to the recommendations that were adopted at our Canadian Council in Vancouver. And, again, just a show of hands, how many people in the room were at the Canadian Council in Vancouver? So, a fair number.

So, in front of you this afternoon, you will find those recommendations that came as a result of a policy paper that we adopted at the Canadian Council called Politics for Workers, Unifor’s Political Project.

And, again, I think it is important that we review each one of those recommendations because, really, it is what guides us in terms of our federal election strategy. So, if you can take those papers out and put them in front of you? And, we will just go through these point by point.
The 2015 federal election will be a defining moment for Unifor, for Canada’s labour movement, and for our country. After a decade of Conservative minority and majority rule, it is time to take our country back and to restore labour rights and social progress.

I recommend that the 2015 federal election be over-arching priority for Unifor, its councils and local unions. There is no more important task before us than to ensure the defeat of the Harper government.

Unifor’s goals and priorities arise from the fundamental interests of our membership, the rights in the workplace, their jobs and social security, and the health and sustainability of their communities.

1) Unifor will focus its political work in 2015 on the issues that directly affect its members, including labour law and restoration of labour rights in the Canada Labour Code and Public Sector Staff Relations Act, and to have Bill 377 formerly withdrawn.

A comprehensive job strategy, including support for manufacturing and public services, opposition to curb proposals for free trade agreements including CETA, Korea, the TPP, China and FIPA. A renewed Canada Health Accord, a national childcare program, restoring full OAS at age 65, enhance CPP and support for defined benefit pension plans.

We want to see the restoration of EI coverage for unemployed workers. We want to see support for Canadian culture. We want a national transportation strategy, including support for mass transit and high-speed rail. We want to see coastguard services restored. We want to see sustainable development action on climate change.

2) Unifor will work with Canada’s opposition parties to secure commitments on our core issues, including commitments to reverse measures by the Harper government to ensure that Canadian laws and social programs reflect Canadian values.

3) Unifor’s primary goal is to replace the Conservative government, and towards this goal, we will focus our resources in key ridings with significant Unifor presence, where Conservative incumbents and challengers must be defeated.

4) Unifor recognizes the strong possibility of a minority government and will work to create circumstances that will ensure the replacement of the Harper government by a progressive minor or coalition government under all circumstances short of a Conservative majority.

5) Unifor welcomes the wise vote strategy of the FTQ and will work with the Quebec labour movement towards the defeat of Conservatives in Quebec.

6) Unifor will work with the Canadian Labour Congress in a national strategic effort to defeat the Conservatives and to elect New Democrats. Unifor will support the re-election of NDP incumbents and support New Democrats in other selected priority ridings consistent with our primary goal of replacing the Harper government. The possibility of electing Canada’s first NDP government or NDP-led government is an historic opportunity for Canadian workers.

7) Unifor will develop a detailed organizational plan, including with Research, Education, Communications and Membership Mobilization components, and present this plan to the Canadian Council Political Action Committee and the National Executive Board, and we have done that.

8) Unifor will hold regional political action conferences in B.C., the Prairies, Ontario, the Atlantic and Quebec, to further implement a federal election strategy.

So, what are the goals of our federal election strategy? Well, our primary goal is to make a contribution to the defeat of the Conservative government. We want to engage members and local leadership on the relevant issues. And, obviously, and most importantly, we want to mobilize our members.

What are the secondary goals? To strengthen Unifor’s identity and profile as a politically-active and influential union; to increase Unifor’s capacity to effect political change, our political relationships and, again, have the ability to mobilize our members.

So, how are we going to achieve these goals? We are going to partner with an organization called Project 2015. And, what Project 2015 is going to do is lead in a professional air war.

They are going to frame messages around why Harper has to go and are going to deliver those messages into 100 key ridings, close ridings across the country. And, they won’t be delivering those messages once, not just twice, but up to and including five separate times in each of
those ridings to make sure that people clearly understand the kind of crap that Harper has done to destroy our country.

In terms of election initiatives of our potential partners, we are going to work closely with the Canadian Labour Congress. We are going work with Leadnow.

We are going to work with the health coalitions and other unions, and some of those organizations that Brother Ken Lewenza, Jr. talked about, making sure that we reach out to other community partners in terms of our overall initiative in getting that message not just clear to our members, but indeed, to the people that live in the communities in which we work and live.

With respect to the ground war -- and, to me, this is the most important part of our strategy. So, we can have a significant air war but, in fact, if we don’t mobilize our members on the ground and mobilize people in communities, then we will not be successful.

And, I completely get that I am singing to the choir here in this room. I know each and every one of you are going to go back to do what you possibly can, to mobilize your members. So, we want to be able to provide you with the tools to be able to do that.

So, in terms of the ground work, we obviously need to organize our membership data. And, I know that there are departments within our union working incredibly hard today to populate our centralized database because, today, I think we have only got the names, telephone numbers, postal codes and addresses of probably 150,000 of our members, half our membership.

And, if, indeed, we are going to be successful and really contribute in a way that is meaningful, we need to reach each and every one of those members. So, we are working hard to improve our membership data.

We need to identify key ridings where we can defeat a Conservative and pick the ones with most connection to our membership base.

We need to recruit and train boots-on-the-ground activists and we are going to do that through one-day workshops that are now in developmental stages. We need to have concrete instructions for our locals and activists.

We are going to establish regional working groups composed of the regional directors, the regional chairs, members of our Political Action Committees, key staff and local union leadership. And, for those working groups, we are going to appoint provincial coordinators to help us with the ground campaign.

And, it really is going to be a process in which the regions are going to have some autonomy to be able to understand what the key issues are that mobilize our members, so that we can communicate those issues not just to our members, but in the broader community and the significance of those issues.

So, it really is going to be a program that is led regionally, sector by sector, where the messaging will be clear and succinct. And, folks in the former CAW will remember in some previous federal election campaigns, we used to send out six or seven pieces of information that were sometimes greater than 3 or 4 pages. And, what would end up happening was they would sit in boxes in the unit chairperson’s office.

We are not going to do that anymore.

We are going to make sure that we have messages that are succinct, easy to understand with some clear actions, and we are going to get them into our respective workplaces across the country.

We need to plan for a national war room, to coordinate our actions immediately before and during the campaign. And, we are considering the utilization of telephone town halls.

We are going to work closely with the Canadian Labour Congress. They are in the process now of finalizing some political action conferences right across the country. And, we want to ensure that we fully engage our leadership and activists within our own respective local unions across the country, to have them fully participate in those political action conferences.

And, there will be a letter within the next couple of weeks, coming from Jerry’s office to every single local union in the country, encouraging maximum participation.

And, I get that we have got meeting fatigue in this room. But, boy, if we ever needed greater participation in meetings, it’s participation in these Canadian Labour Congress political action conferences.
In terms of the importance of communicating our message and the strategy, we are going to do that at every single Regional Council meeting. We are going to do it at the upcoming Presidents’ Conference in February. We are going to talk about the strategy at the Skilled Trades Bargaining Convention. We are going to talk about the strategy at all Industry Council meetings. We are going to talk about the strategy at all Unifor conferences. And, indeed, we are going to talk about the strategy at all Unifor education events.

In terms of our messaging and communication vehicles, we are going to overlap our communications with that of Project 2015 messaging. We are going to identify key issues of concern to Unifor activists, and I just talked a little bit about that. We are going to develop shareable spin-offs from Harper’s economic critique. And, our Research Department and Jim Stanford are going to provide a critique of Harper’s economic record, and we are going to share that.

We have to find careful nuanced ways to communicate our position on how people should vote. We know we come under some criticism when we reference and try to talk to our members about the importance of strategic voting. We know the media eats that crap up as do some of the other parties. So, we need to find nuanced ways in which we communicate on how people should be voting.

And, last, but certainly not least, in terms of Quebec, Unifor in Quebec will adopt and use some of these initiatives, as well as Quebec’s specific approaches, inline with QFL’s Smart Vote Strategy and their focus on 11 ridings.

So, that is my report. And, we can move to the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2

DINO CHIODO: Okay, Rolly. Thank you very much for the report. I see that there is a lot of work that has gone into that and I thank you very much. Actually, I am happy to hear coordinated efforts are going to be a huge opportunity to bring all efforts together in defeating a guy like Harper.

I’ll have Katha come up and read the recommendation before we go to the floor.

KATHA FORTIER: The 2015 Federal Election will be a priority for Unifor. This is an important task before us and we must work to ensure the defeat of the Harper government. Therefore, I recommend the following:

A. That local unions work actively to implement the Canadian Council recommendation on the upcoming federal election;

B. That local union leadership and activists fully participate in the CLC regional political action conferences as well as the Unifor caucus meetings, which will be held prior;

C. That local union leadership and activists fully participate in Unifor’s one day political action tools-based workshops held across the region;

D. And that an Ontario federal election working group be established that will include participation from the Ontario Political Action Standing Committee.

DINO CHIODO: Could I have a mover on the recommendation? Seconder?

Open it up for discussion?

Speaker on mic 2, Ken Lewenza.

KEN LEWENZA: Ken Lewenza. First of all, let me congratulate Rolly for an excellent presentation and the delivery of the presentation was just as great.

The reality is you don’t have to go too far to understand why we must make sure a Conservative/ Reform/Tea Party government doesn’t get elected in Canada one more term.

You know, I’m kind of proud this morning, because I pick up the Toronto Star every day versus the Financial Post, because there’s not too many articles that are written from a progressive perspective. But, we’re lucky. We have a Unifor member by the name of Thomas Walkom who is an excellent writer and gives a different perspective than most major journalists throughout the
country.

And, I invite you to read his article today in the Toronto Star, and the accuracy of his particular article. But, what scares me about it the most is in the left-hand corner, very small corner, it says, “Tories neck in neck with Liberals going into the next federal election.”

Brothers and sisters, up until 3 or 4 months ago, most people were saying it was inevitable that Stephen Harper and his Conservative government would get elected or get defeated, not because of his policies in isolation, because most people are saying it’s time for change.

Most people are now facing the unfortunate consequences of multiple public policy initiatives that have pit one worker against another worker, one human being against another human being, one nation against another nation.

Stephen Harper is an excellent communicator on wedge issues. And, just recently, he went into Thunder Bay. And, what did he say in Thunder Bay? He didn’t talk about jobs. He didn’t talk about healthcare. He didn’t talk about youth unemployment. He didn’t talk about infrastructure. He didn’t talk about preparing Canadians for the next future of work.

He talked about gun control and how he is going to strengthen gun control, eliminate some of the impediments relative to the control of guns. And, do you know why? Because that builds wedge issues.

He talked about gun control and how he is going to strengthen gun control, eliminate some of the impediments relative to the control of guns. And, do you know why? Because that builds wedge issues.

And, what I don’t understand, brothers and sisters, and I could say it more candidly than ever. I remember that debate. And, in a lot of ridings throughout the country, Stephen Harper got elected on his support for getting rid of gun control.

And, in those same communities, they closed hospitals. They cut down CCAC support. They closed schools. They don’t build infrastructure. In fact, in Canada, we are building jails and closing schools. There is a consequence to these particular policies.

But, let’s also now be clear, because Walkom says it right. Let’s be honest in this room. Walkom says, “The trade union movement is out there constantly supporting the New Democratic Party.” The trade union movement historically has supported the New Democratic Party and the CCF before that.

But, what they are forgetting is our members are not following us. What they’re forgetting is the majority of working men and women are no longer supporting the policies of the New Democratic Party blindly.

And, that is why our union has taken the decision to talk about issues, to educate our people on politics, because what our labour movement has got to get is, regardless of who is in power, that we think in the best interests of our nation. We think in the best interests of our citizens.

We restore democracy where people have an opportunity to advance their political goals, their social goals, their economic goals, things that make life better for households, communities and our country.

So, let’s not always pat ourselves on the back. I have said many times I come to these conferences to be inspired. I come to these conferences, quite frankly, because there are days that you look in the mirror and you say you’re working your butt off, but you’re not making any progress. You’re working your butt off, yet you’re seeing every electoral opportunity slip through the cracks.

And, at the end of the day, it is because we are not talking to our members the same way we care for each other in this room. We are not bringing the message to our members.

And, my last point is this. Everything we talk about in our union, in this progressive organization, is about politics. It is not a matter of the auto industry surviving. It is a matter of when is the auto industry going to be gone?

And, if Stephen Harper gets elected to another term, the auto industry will be gone because, quite frankly, if you expand trade and you allow global automobile companies to sell in our country without investing in our country, you lose jobs.

If you think our natural resources are owned by Canadians today, think differently, because he has given corporate power the power of our natural resources. He is reducing our ability to improve our environment, our clean water. Did anybody ever think that there may be a day we’ll be talking about food and the need to have healthy food and have food stability in our country?
Brothers and sisters, we cannot just keep talking to each other. Windsor, Ontario, a high-density labour town. At one time, was the highest per-capita earning of any community in the country, consistent with Oshawa and other communities. I've got the stats. It was socially one of the most deepest and most responsible communities around ever.

And, the reality is today, highest unemployment, highest level of poverty, no opportunities for jobs, our public sector is being decimated, whether it's in education or whether it's in healthcare.

And, just recently in a municipal election, the incumbent councillor ran for mayor on the status quo, and he got overwhelmingly elected in a town that takes pride in picking people up versus kicking them down.

We've got to change the mood, brothers and sisters, and it starts with this policy, but it also starts with an honest look in the mirror.

If Stephen Harper gets elected to another majority government, take my word for this, brothers and sisters, we will be at the mic talking about plant closures, workplace closures. We will be talking about losing our natural resources. We will be talking about losing our Medicare. We will be talking about losing public services, because Harper is all about corporate power, and giving to the most powerful, more power.

And, if we don't take back our country, we lose, and it starts off by defeating Stephen Harper. Stephen Harper has a got a chance to win. And, do you know what he is going to use? Law and order. He is going to say, I'm the best person to protect our country.

Look what happened in Ottawa. Look what happened to those soldiers. He breathes off this stuff. But, at the end of the day, the only way that we can protect our soldiers, the only way we could have good law and order is we've got a social economic policy that gives everybody an opportunity in Canada, to succeed in Canada. Let's beat Stephen Harper. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks, Ken. Speaker at mic 4.

KEN BONDY: Ken Bondy, national coordinator. I certainly agree that we are probably not going to have much conflict in this room, that we all agree Stephen Harper needs to be stopped, and we need to replace this particular government.

The concern I have is how we get that message out to the broader community and to the voting citizens of Canada. I, like probably most of you, am absolutely amazed at what we just witnessed in the United States, where the American citizens put Republicans back into power in those government systems that the U.S. has. This, after seeing the absolute joke that the Bush Administration had become to the rest of the world; this, after seeing the constant kicking in the face and disregarding of people of poverty and people or racial inequality in that country.

And, yet, somehow, they still don't get it. And, they put the party that oppresses them back into the Capitol. It makes no sense to me. But, what it does say to me is that somehow the education of what a good party for working people is, is not getting out there, because just like the United States, in Canada, there are far more working people than there are the elite people that continue to pull in those millions and billions of dollars that we heard about.

So, I am concerned about how we are going to get that message out. And, I have been thinking about what we were able to do in some previous campaigns.

There was a short-lived campaign some years ago called Fire the Liars. And, I think we need to look at reinventing that particular campaign, because that is really what the Harper government is, is a group of liars that continually lie to Canadian people.

And, although people may see that from time to time on the television, they need to be reminded of the list of lies that have happened. We have heard of a lot of them here today.

For instance, again, taking back $13 billion that was set aside to assist veterans, and saying that there was nowhere to use that money while they closed those offices. And then having a Prime Minister stand up and use the opportunity of the murder of a soldier, Corporal Cirillo, and say that he respects all the fighting women and men in uniform in Canada. W hat a bunch of crap. How could he get away with saying that?
And, just the other day on TV, while I was watching the brave young woman, Brigette DePape, that stood as a page in the House of Commons and held that Stop Harper sign up, not knowing the consequences of that would be, being handcuffed and dragged into a paddy-wagon out in B.C. as she protested the Kinder Morgan Pipeline, because that is how they’re being dealt with, is to drag people away in handcuffs when they don’t agree with the Harper government.

These are things that need to be brought forward to people and they have to understand. We can do this. We have seen a very successful campaign a couple of years ago, by the way, that was developed against the issues of the auto industry, saying that workers were overpaid. And, Jim Stanford challenged the people that were saying that, and put a list out of all of the things that were not true.

And, we had not just one, but all of those auto analysts, Dennis DesRosiers in particular, that continually talked negatively about labour and particularly about organized labour, shut his mouth after that presentation, because he could not defend what Stanford had put out there.

So, these are things that I think that we can do, that can get the message out to the public and make them understand that this is not a special interest group. This is not just a labour issue. This is working-class issues in Canada, and we have the ability to make that change.

So, Rolly, I take that challenge. I will go further than just talking about this here in this room. But, I will enter into those debates in my community, and we will beat the Harper government. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Ken I know you had a question in there with regards to communication. And, for all intents and purposes, there is a collaborative and strategy session that is going to be put forward, to make sure that there is concise information on messaging and how we get that messaging out. And, there is a planning committee that is and will be working hard to provide that information, just like you asked. So, they will be working through that dynamic.

Speaker on mic 5.

PETER PELLERITO: Peter Pellerito, Local 444 and also Chair of the Windsor-Essex-Chatham area, Council of Retired Workers.

I wanted to get up here, because I can understand where Rolly is coming from, where our union wants to go, and all that. And, I think it is a great recommendation, a great policy, and hopefully we can get rid of this guy, Harper.

But, I have got two things that I would really like to talk about, where the retirees are really getting active on. And, with the help from the National Union this year, we were able to kick off October 1st, they Day of the Older Persons, which was mandated by the United Nations, and Harper finally decided to notice us in 2011. Back in 1990, the United Nations recognized the contributions that seniors have made to our country and to all of us in general, what seniors have done.

But, first, I want to thank the National Union, because I know I harped on this for quite a while. And, I held a flag in front of me, and I put a flag in front of Rolly, and I wanted to make sure that the message got out.

But, October 1st, we did a pretty good job, I think, in Windsor. Rolly was there and so was Sister Dolan. And, I think we did okay. We had a number of organizations, different senior organizations, where we had a flag-raising ceremony at City Hall on October 1st, the International Day of Older Persons.

And, we had some debate with a certain organization that wanted to fly their flag. And, I told them wasn’t going to happen. We’re going to fly the international flag from the United Nations, for the Day of the Older Persons. And, we were able to do that.

But, with the help of the union, with the National Union, we got a statement out of the President’s office. And, a couple of days later, I don’t know Rolly or somebody had something to do with it, we got a statement out of the CLC that finally recognized the contribution that seniors have made.

So, I think that is a step forward. And, to make it short, I mean, our whole campaign is to make sure that people understand in 2015 that Harper has got to go. So, we have been working with other different groups, with CARP from the Congress, and USCO, the National Pensioners’ Federation.
I mean, I brought that flag. Everything I went to, I brought that flag with me, to make sure that seniors understand what this Harper government has done to not only our seniors, to our vets, healthcare and everything else.

When I look at the recommendation here and I see all the issues pointed out in the first number one recommendation here about healthcare, about pensions, these are about a dozen resolutions that we had passed at our conference in Port Elgin in September.

So, seniors are aware of these things. We talk about these things at all our membership meetings. So, it is important that seniors be part of this. And, I want to also thank you for allowing me to be here this week, because the tradition is still alive. Seniors and retirees from our union are still able to go to the mic and make some comments.

The other thing is, first of all, October 1st next year, we’ve got to get a bigger commitment, not only from our union, but from the other affiliates as well, that we make sure we get out en masse, because I am not too sure that Harper is going to call that early election. I hope he does it.

On October 1st of next year in 2015, I want to have thousands and thousands of seniors at those flag-raising ceremonies to make sure that we send a message. And, if they want to do something else between October 1st and the 19th, seniors will be there to help out.

The other thing that I would like to talk a little bit about is the re-launch that Hassan talked about yesterday of the Retirement Security Pension Campaign. Hassan is going to be in Windsor on December 11th at the Caboto Club.

So, I am telling all the members from the Windsor area to make sure that we pack that hall. And, we are going to re-launch the Retirement Security Campaign for December 11th, 5:00 p.m., at the Caboto Club.

And, I would also like to say -- I wanted to get up while the debate was going on -- about the Violence against Women, that on December 6th -- and the folks in Windsor will know where that memorial is. It is across the street from the centre gate at the Chrysler plant, dedicated to one of our members that was killed by her partner.

So, on December 6th, at 11:25 a.m., we would like you to be at Chrysler Centre, and be there for that dedication as well. Thank you very much.

DINO CHIODO: Thanks, Peter. Thanks for the announcements. Going to speaker on Mic No. 6.

RON SVAJLENKO: How are you doing? Ron SvaJlenko, president of Local 222. One of the particular parts of that information that was just presented to us that I find just slightly disturbing is our concern to stay strictly with the NDP.

Now, I know we’re an NDP organization. My roots are NDP. I want the NDP to be the government. But, if we are foolish enough to go in and bet all our horses on one here, we’re going to end up losing.

Now, here is a little lesson, because we just had a by-election. My old MPP was Jim Flaherty. So, we had an excellent candidate by the name of Trish McAuliffe, NDP. Came in second last time.

But, the game has changed, and M r. Trudeau has changed that game. So, when we got down to the final days of the campaign, we found out that we were at about 15 percent, and the Conservatives and the Liberals were in a statistic tie.

Now, I sent my Union in Politics Committee out, some very, very active young -- and myself. I even canvassed door to door and talked up Trish. The reality is, when it was all said and done, 49 percent -- and, that was a significant reduction from what Jim Flaherty got. Forty-nine percent went to Conservative, 42 went to the Liberals.

Now, I get to hear a lot of what the Liberals have done myself. I have listened. I have watched the governments over the years and some of the decisions they made. On the darkest darn day that the Liberals have governed this country, they are no comparison to the Conservatives.

So, when we come to choose who is going to win the race here, we have to be careful, because when we stood up and we supported that NDP candidate, a great candidate -- and, by the way, and towards the last few days of that campaign, I blogged out that hopefully some of our NDP
supporters will support the Liberals and knock out the Conservatives.

So, right now, I’m Public Enemy No. 1 with a number of people who were in that campaign and they’re mad at me. But, that is the principle of our union. We are after this Conservative government.

So, there is going to be ridings where we understand that the NDP has the best chance. But, we have to watch carefully as we go down through that whole process, because if we don’t, Stephen Harper will be back in power with a majority, and we are going to be oppressed like we have never been before.

It is challenging, but we are going to have to open our minds, if only for this one election. And, hopefully, after the Conservatives are decimated and, I hope that can happen. They do something similar to what has happened in Ontario and they look for a more moderate leader. And, maybe they become the Progressive Conservatives of the past.

But, if we leave this simply up to doing what we have done before, similar to what a famous physicist once said, “If you do the same thing over and over again and expect different results, you will be not rewarded.”

So, I ask this council, I ask the communities around us, to be very serious about choosing the right candidates and making sure that we can beat the Conservatives, because this is critical. This is my Canada and it will change forever if we lose this fight. So, please, let’s be smart.

DINO CHIODO: So, just we’re clear. Unifor did endorse the Whitby-Oshawa candidate first off. And, the second part of that, when you look at the recommendation, it does not state that we are only supporting NDP candidates. So, I want to be clear, because those are two misconceptions that were spoken on, and that is not the case here at all.

Going to the next microphone, mic 7.

JAMIE WRIGHT: Good afternoon, sisters and brothers. Jamie Wright, Local 88, and also vice-chair of the Ontario Regional Council, Health and Safety and Environment Committee. During our meeting this Thursday, we had a great discussion on -- maybe some of you aren’t aware in the realm of the federal health and safety. As of November 1st, the right to refuse was greatly changed, sending us back 50, 60 years back in history.

Some of you might know the history when we look at health and safety laws, especially here in Ontario and the Royal Ham Commission, back some 35 years ago. Workers were killed. The labour movement fought back. And, through that Royal Ham Commission, we gained the right to refuse, the right to know and the right to participate.

The right to refuse is absolutely critical in the workplace when we look at saving workers’ lives. Even since the Royal Ham Commission came into effect, 35,000 workers have been killed in the workplaces across Canada.

So, what did the Harper government do under Bill C-4, the Economic Action Plan 2013 Act? And, this was a very large omnibus bill that was about the size of a telephone book. He put it through the legislature and they passed it, basically stripping the rights of workers in the federal jurisdiction to do a work refusal.

Yes, they can still refuse after they fill out the paperwork, after the employer agrees with it. If the employer doesn’t agree with it, we’ll put a stamp on it and we’ll mail it off to the Federal Minister of Labour. And, if he doesn’t think you’re messing around and thinks maybe it’s safe, he might investigate it.

Now, that is not the worse part that he did. The actual worse part is we look at the definition of what allows you to refuse work. We look at if you have reason to believe; it’s very subjective and it’s in favour of the worker.

What the Harris government did, they changed that definition to be imminent danger; in other words, your hand has to be in the machine, the blade has to be coming down, then you can refuse. Absolute crap.

So, we look at, was there consultation made on those changes? Absolutely not. Absolutely not. We know back in the days of the Harris government here in the Province of Ontario -- I am from the auto sector. We negotiated into our contracts protections against any change to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, because we were that afraid.
On Wednesday, we met with the GM and Ford Council, the Health and Safety Committee, and again, those same concerns are coming up that on the federal level, this is what they got away with. It won’t be long before the provincial level, this is what they come up with.

So, we spent a lot of time discussing this at our committee this week. And, we put together a working group of some of the peoples of the committee. We have reached out to the PAC committee, to W illie. And, you have our full support on this.

We need to make this a very moral issue.

I think, Ron, you mentioned. We have got to start addressing this government on the moral issue, letting the people know in Canada, Harper doesn’t care about you. All he has done is paved the way for his corporate international buddies to come to Canada and make you work in unsafe conditions. And, he doesn’t care if you make it home safe or not.

We do. We’ll make it a moral issue. And, you have the full support of the Health and Safety and Environment Committee. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. In the auspice of time, the speakers are going to be heard that are at the mics. And then we will be testing the House. Going to mic 1.

KEN LEWENZA, JR.: Ken Lewenza, Jr., Unifor. So, again, Rolly, thanks for the great high-energy conversation putting it forward.

I just want to say I was happy to hear that you were saying that it is one thing for us to have an air war, but where it’s really at is a ground war. And, I just really want to echo with you. I know we have had a lot of conversations.

But, it is so important that when we start having these strategic conversations about how we can put forward a plan to defeat Harper that the grass roots in those mechanisms that we are providing in our Political Action Committees have some input in being able to define and develop part of that strategy, because we know the only way that we can have a successful campaign is if people feel empowered, they feel ownership over that particular campaign and that they can move forward.

And then, again, we have also had talks about the need for a longer-term vision. This feels like Groundhog Day all the time. Three months before an election and we are talking about this type of urgency as to how we are going to organize.

And, I just want to give an example. We have had some conversations, and I am glad you mentioned, for example, all of our partners that can help us. We have had a discussion in Windsor-Essex about using Democracy Watch. And, again, thanks for your support, Rolly, Dino, Chris and all the local leadership.

And, if you look at, for example, Windsor-Essex, I mean, here is a perfect example. We have had all the discussions about strategic voting and so on. We have known how bad the Harper Conservatives are. And, if you look at the last election, Jeff Watson got 24,000 votes, the NDP got 19,000 votes, the Liberals got 18,000.

So, if you look at 50 percent of the population didn’t vote, one of the things that we are looking at is being able to sign onto a vote promise pledge. We need to talk to the other 50 percent of the people to actually get out to vote, knowing that a lot of those new voters aren’t going to support the Conservative base.

It also starts to feed into the messaging around how difficult Harper is trying to change the Unfair Elections Act, how many times he has cheated with the robo-calls, and so on. So, we really need to start to think about a strategy, and even the Obama strategy, where we need to start talking to our members. We have some of our members that might not ever be interested in coming to a membership meeting, but they might be interested in delivering 100 leaflets in their neighbourhood, signing people up.

And, the concept about that vote promise pledge, too, is also to ask people, “What is it that you care about?” How is it that we can actually make politics personally meaningful to them? Because without question, Harper has alienated and hurt every segment of society.

And, we have just got to figure, again, about how we can work with our social partners on the ground, so that we can have those types of communications with people, so we could make this election personally meaningful to them.
And, my last point is, I think it is so wonderful that we are so proud of our union and the enormous contribution, the role that we play in Canadian society. There also comes a time where we need to think about how we can be humble about thinking about maybe it is best that we can use some of our resources to facilitate other groups that are getting out there and saying very powerful messages.

If we look at Michael Harris’ presentation, or I think it was Allen Greg that made a presentation, again, Conservatives. So, there’s a lot of high-profile Canadians that have been highly critical of the Conservative government. We have got to find a way to get that message out.

And, the other part is, we also have to be sober. And, the reality is, we cannot win this fight against Harper with our existing base, if we don’t start doing things different, building the relationships on the ground and thinking about how we can partner with the groups, find points of convergence, and do whatever it takes to defeat the Harper government.

And then the very last point, we need to make this election really about starting to build that long-term infrastructure, so we are not just always chasing politicians.

We have got to find a way to start putting progressive values and a progressive agenda on the table where, again, our union is not playing defence. We are not being reactionary.

We are putting the type of strategies on the ground where they have to chase us, and we have the potential to do that as this organization.

DINO CHIODO: Speaker on mic 2.

WILLIE LAMBERT: Willie Lambert, Local 1256, and I am on the Political Action Committee provincially. And, I appreciate the support to be able to fulfill in that role.

And, want to speak, very enthusiastically in favour of the work that you have prepared and presented today, Rolly, as per usual, and the extensive aspect of what you have presented, because when I am thinking back to the themes of how Jerry Dias spoke to us this morning, I am thinking of how he spoke about setting the sail and how the wind blows.

And, quite frankly, Liberals and, unfortunately, right-wing social democrats tend to follow the electorate rather than lead them; right? And so, in that sense, they do not set the sail. They sort of just follow as the wind will blow and how the electorate will, in a very numbed way, propel them.

And, ultimately, in politics, just like in most things, I would say, it is the extreme that pulls the middle along, and it always has been like that. And, ultimately, some people can become very uncomfortable with that, but it is the element of how things get done.

When you look at the extensiveness, as I said, in what you prepared there, Rolly, you are looking at, invariably, a platform. You are looking at almost, I would say, without getting too -- well, that’s old school.

It’s almost a manifesto in the sense that it puts on the table a political program that really can invigorate the electorate and place greater pressures on the so-called opposition that isn’t really the opposition in the thick of it that it ought to be, because when you see the positions on trade that the NDP are even orienting to, they’re swallowing the corporate agenda. They’re swallowing the corporate agenda.

When I hear that the Liberals are slightly better than Conservatives, I kind of always giggle on that. I know you can put pressure on a Liberal and you can get a Liberal to kind of be nicer, but in the end Chretien and Martin adopted NAFTA. And, Martin went with a meat axe at the rotten decade. Lousy music. It was just no fun at all.

The fact is -- and the ‘90s really did suck. But, the fact is, once you get a little bit older, you have such an inventory and a repertoire to pull from. There are so many people in this room that over the years, I had an opportunity to argue with, sometimes more times than not, but other times speak to.

And, you know what? The capacity to understand what we have got to do in this period is so great. The confidence that you can almost feel, if you go just a few depths below the surface, is that if we do the kinds of things that we are very, very capable of doing, because we have done them and we have such a vast experience of doing them, we can pressure these really unfortunate
political types that are there apparently to oppose Stephen Harper.

Stephen Harper has done enough to shoot himself not just in one foot, but two. But, at the same point in time, you have to have a competent capacity to put him out of office and replace him with something.

But, ultimately, maybe the very best offering that we have is what you presented because, ultimately, both the Liberals and perhaps the black -- I don’t know what they’re going today, but the NDP federally can look at that say, “Hey, you know what? Maybe if we don’t have a sail, we’ll pretend we have one. We’ll tend to orient to that and see what we can do.”

But, ultimately, I really sincerely believe that our union and our capacity to reach out to those of a like mind that have commonalities with us is vast and it’s great. And, we are going to defeat Harper.

But, what would be wonderful is if through the public dialogue of that election or parts of it, we talk about re-finding Canada, reclaiming Canada, having a domestic economy again, having opportunities, jobs and social merit as the focus of what the Canada was that I grew up with, because I think we can do that with what you have laid out, Rolly. And I am excited about your possibilities, because I know we could do it.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much Brother. I have five more speakers. And, they are at mics 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Those are the speakers that we have left. And then we will call the question. Speaker at mic 3.

CHERYL ROBINSON: Thanks, Dino. Cheryl Robinson. I am president of Unifor Local 2002, National Executive Board member. I am pretty excited about the strategy that we have got going forward for the Federal Election in 2015.

I want to draw folks’ attention to something that concerns those of us that are working in the federal sector right now, and that is the proposed federal framework for a target benefit pension plan. Back in the spring this year, the Harper Conservatives decided that they were going to draft this framework that will allow Crown corporations and employers in federally-regulated sectors to offer single-employer target benefit pension plans.

This would allow for the conversion of existing defined benefit plans to a target benefit pension plan, not only for future service, but also for any past defined benefit pensions may also be changed.

This is the handiwork of the Harper Conservatives that we are up against. And, this is absolutely why we need to get on board with this election strategy and make sure that we get rid of the Conservatives once and for all.

This is about a race to the bottom. I know not everybody has a defined benefit pension plan. But, if we let this slip out of our hands, it is a very quick race to the bottom.

It worries me for the future. My son has actually joined me here today. And, I worry about him not having access to retirement security. He is 20 years old or will be 20 soon. And, the conversation will change, should this legislation be enacted.

And, the Conservatives are working at this quickly. So, we need some help on this. We need to send a clear message to the Harper Conservatives; more specifically, to Kevin Sorenson, who is the Minister of State, and let him know that those defined benefit pension plans are to be left alone. We absolutely do not want target benefit pension plans to replace any defined benefit pension plans.

I am going to pull a page out of a book that I learned from my sister, Jenny Ahn. How many folks in the room have a smartphone right now? Come on, it’s 2014.

Okay. So, I am going to ask you to pull out your fancy-dancy smartphone. And, with this wonderful pen that we were given, a stylus, I am going to ask you to send an email. The Air Canada members have sent 950 emails as of Friday to Kevin Sorenson, to send a message.

And, we need a boost from the folks in this room to send Kevin Sorenson a strong message that those defined benefit pension plans can’t be rolled back. There has to be a future for my son. There has to be retirement security for my mom and dad and for your folks as well.

So, if you could pull out your smartphone and send a message to the Minister of State? And, I know that this is working, because we did a cross-country proposal tour with our Air
Canada bargaining unit. And, we not only send the message to Kevin Sorenson, but we also send the message to one of our friends at Air Canada, Scott Morey. Not really a friend. That was sarcasm at best.

And, within minutes that Jenny introduced this idea to folks, we got a call. So, we know that they’re paying attention. We know that these messages are being received. They tried to block some of it. But, with your support, I think the message will get very clearly to Sorenson and the gang and Harper.

The defined benefit pension plans that we currently have in this country, for those in the federally-regulated sector, are not to be touched. Hands off our defined benefit pension plans. We do not want target benefit pension plans to replace those.

So, if you could send a message to Kevin Sorenson? His email address is: kevin.sorenson@parl.gc.ca.

If you could send him a quick message that we need to hear our voices heard on this issue and the defined benefit plans that we enjoy today are not up for grabs?

The Alberta labour movement, the Alberta government tried to introduce this a while back. And, the labour movement out there said absolutely not. And, they decided to remove their proposed legislation.

So, I think we have got an opportunity to send a clear message to the Harper Conservatives that we are getting ready to take those son-of-a-guns out. Thanks so much.

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

MARY STRAUS: My name is Mary Straus. I am with the Retired Workers Executive.

I come from a small area, Stratford, Ontario. And, I want to tell you that it doesn’t matter how large or small your local is, or your Retired Workers Chapter, everybody can do their part by talking to their kids and grandkids, friends.

From now until the election is called, you have the opportunity, every time you hear something on the radio, or TV, or somebody is passing on something that Harper said, or one of those Conservatives said, and you know darn well it’s a lie, take it on. Tell them that it’s wrong.

That’s why this guy is still there, is because nobody is taking him on, on a daily basis, in our communities. It is in the community that we are going to beat him. Obviously, even the CBC is trying to make him look good sometimes, and I don’t understand that.

I can tell you, Rolly that 1325 will be with you in this campaign. And, the way I know that I’m not chairperson there. I am just a secretary and I usually let the chairperson make the important decisions. But, because we fought the Conservatives for the last 35 years, I know she will be on board with this one, too.

So, we are behind you, but I want every person in here to talk to their kids and grandkids at every opportunity you have, because it doesn’t matter what the question is, the answer is political. And, it is not only Harper that we have to defeat. It is the whole darn bunch of them.

And, it may not be Harper by the time the election is called, which I believe will be sooner rather than later -- and Peter Pellerito and I have a bet on, $20.00. And, I believe we are headed for an earlier election, because I don’t trust that man on anything.

But, I just want you to know that we’re there. And, I hope if you have retirees in your area, you ask them to help you, because there is a big possibility, this is the one thing that they will hang onto and work for. So, help me get rid of this bastard.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic 5.

GWEN CAMPBELL: Committee. I stand in full support of this recommendation.

I think it was Brother Jamie Wright behind me that said Harper doesn’t care about us. He for sure doesn’t, but he, in particular, doesn’t care about women. By attacking unions, it means he is attacking women. Unionized women are 39 percent more than non-unionized women, so it is a real attack on us.

He threatened women with Motion 312. That was whether a fetus should have legal rights. And, I believe he will be bringing that back in some sort of way. We have no data. He
stopped the long-form census, which means no equality.

He has broken promise after promise. He made a promise in '06, the '06 election, to refuse to take the issue of pay equity any further, and broke that as soon as he got in.

What else has he done? That income splitting we heard earlier, it will do nothing for 86 percent of Canadians. He stopped the long gun registry. He muzzled scientists. He cancelled the national childcare program. We almost had that with the Liberals, and then instead, brought in $100.00 a month that does nothing.

He shut shelters. He closed 12 of 16 regional Offices of the Status of Women and has taken funding off of all kinds of places that help women. So, we must stop him. It is imperative.

Thank you.

DINO CHIODOS: Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic 6.

DENISE MCMORRIS: Denise McMorris, national coordinator.

Thank you, Rolly, for those well-thought out recommendations going forward for the upcoming election. And, your recommendations remind me of the campaign that Obama ran. He ran a community-based campaign, and that is exactly what you are doing. You are reaching out to the community. You are reaching out to the workplace. It will be a grassroots campaign.

And, we have to be very careful as a union, because I can remember a few years ago, we had a National Task Force on Politics. And, our members told us quite clearly, “Don’t tell us who to vote for. Give us the information.” So, going forward, Rolly, I actually would be very mindful of that, because make no mistake, a lot of our members do not vote NDP. A lot of our members vote for other parties.

And, I think if we follow through with those recommendations, we can appeal to them. We can appeal to their conscience. Conscience as each and every one of four places have been touched by the cuts of this Harper government.

And, we have to remind them that going forward, 2015, they have to get involved in politics, because it will, in the long term, divide us as a union, divide the workplace, take jobs out.

I mean, just hearing today all the bad things that Harper has done, the author of the book has literally raised my level of obsession to take Harper out. Harper has to leave, because if he doesn’t leave, brothers and sisters, make no mistake, we will not be standing here in 2016 on the level to speak about politics that we are now.

And, going forward, the NDP as a party and as a member, we have to improve many things we do going forward. We have to take lessons learned, because look at the Whitby elections just a couple of days ago.

When Trish first ran, she had 22 percent of the votes. She ran this time, she had 6 percent in all the town. We need to take that as a lesson learned and build on that for the next federal election, because as far as I can see, the NDP does wonderful provincially.

But, federally, we have to work on that, to raise the awareness that this government is dangerous. And, unions are a prime target for Harper. And, we need to take it on and make sure that all 300,000 odd members will support us with a recommendation. Thank you.

DINO CHIODOS: Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic 7.

GRANT ORCHARD: Grant Orchard from 4268. I want to refer to and carry on, perhaps, from the speaker who spoke so eloquently on mic 6 about the split vote. That is a big issue in this country. There are some 30-plus ridings that would win if the vote was not split. As Brother Lewenza said, Harper is a master strategist on wedge issues and that guy knows how to win.

So, I applaud Unifor for its discussion of strategic voting. That is very important. But, that is putting the onus on the voter.

I think a fire has to be put to the heels of the opposition parties, all three of them, NDP, Liberal and the Greens now, to put country before party and work together. Now, make it work.

They don’t have to merge. They don’t have to form a coalition. They could have a work arrangement based on a few principles that they would not run against each other in a certain number of ridings in the country. That would be enough if they’re serious to bring the Harper government down.

So, that is an important issue. I think we need to put the fire to them as well.
And, there is another issue. And, that is voter obstruction across the country. A lot of people have been prevented from voting, because of the stringent ID requirements. Now, we are supposed to supply a street address. Many of us -- I'm not, but I have been. Many of us in rural areas only have box numbers.

Now, for one example, there is one riding in Northern Saskatchewan, a small poll. Fifty Aboriginal people were turned away, because they didn’t have a street address. Those people are not likely to vote for Harper. So, that is a problem. There has to be some way of people being more able to vote and have access to the polls.

There is an excellent article written by Professor John Ryan, a retired professor at the University of Manitoba, on the need for a Liberal-NDP working arrangement. He has got all the stats here. You can find this on globalresearch.ca. So, I just want to leave that with you. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Well, thank you for that wonderful discussion and debate. Coming to a conclusion, because there are no more speakers at the mics, we would like to put that recommendation forward, Recommendation No. 2, with regards to 2015 federal election.

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

Thank you very much. Job well done. Way to go.
Can you feel the power? Can you feel the power? Can you feel the fight coming on? Because you guys just put it on, and he wants a war and we’re going to bring him a war, because the strategy is coming forward, and the strategy is coming forward from Roland Kiehne’s group. And, I think it is going to be well done and put together.

And, we’re going to have a great election with regards to making sure we can get rid of the likes of Stephen Harper in 2015. And, it is on our shoulders, our community partners’ shoulders and the work that we are going to put on in our community.
Point on mic 3.

RAINBOW CAMP DRAW

STEVE OLSEN: Thank you. It is time for the iPad draw for the Rainbow Camp.
I’ll jumble it up here. Can I get maybe someone to come and pick up the winning ticket?
The winner of the iPad is Susan Makus. Is Susan in the room? She could
DINO CHIODO: Makus or Markus?
STEVE OLSEN: Markus. I can’t read. I’m sorry.
DINO CHIODO: You can’t read, but you can sing.
STEVE OLSEN: We also have a quick secondary prize. We had a parcel donated by Proud FM that arrived yesterday, so we are going to give out one more prize. No name. The number is 0122785. 0122785. So, that number, you can meet us out in the lobby at our table.
And, thank you all for your support.

RESOLUTION NO. 3

CANDACE LAVALLEY: Okay, Resolution No. 3, Locals 4268 and 4266. The Committee recommends concurrence with amended resolution. Raising work standards in the Ontario school bus industry.

WHEREAS Ontario school bus drivers perform a vital community service, transporting 800,000 students safely to and from school each day, across 18,000 designated routes; and
WHEREAS school bus drivers are among the lowest paid transit workers, and fear a further downward pressure on wages and working conditions as the provincial government moves forward with plans to intensify competition and lower student transport services costs through a new Request-for-Proposal system instituted by the Ministry of Education and
managed by various regional school transport consortia in Ontario; and
WHEREAS Unifor is deeply concerned that an RFP model, focused on
cost-cutting, will further deflate wages, result in more industry job losses,
steer money away from training and on-bus safety investments, and
undermine the union’s efforts to raise standards in collective bargaining
for its 1600 members; and
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Unifor Ontario Regional Council
and all representative local unions support and endorse the campaign
efforts of school bus industry members, as outlined in the policy
document Steering Clear: Avoiding the RFP Trap; and
THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Unifor Ontario locals will
assist in raising these concerns, and campaign demands, with local school
boards and newly-elected school board trustees in their home
communities; and
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that Unifor local unions and other school bus
driver local unions be requested to provide information on RFP proposals
in Ontario.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much, Candace.
So, what I want to do is, we’re supposed to have an adjournment for 5:00. But, there’s only two resolutions left. So, I would like to, with your indulgence, continue forward until we can complete everything that we had set out, and complete our entire agenda with regards to making sure these last two resolutions get completed.
I don’t think there’s any concerns or questions with regards to that. We’ll take the mic 6.

DEBBIE MONTGOMERY: We stand in support of this resolution. What has happened to the school bus industry I don’t want to say how many years, but it was a long, long time ago when I became a school bus driver as a young mom with a small child in a very new, big city where I didn’t know anybody.
And, I made a choice to perform that work and I grew to love it very much. And, it was difficult. It was a lot more responsibility than I thought it would be. I wasn’t just a cab driver. I wasn’t just, I don’t know, a PTA mom, taking kids from Point A to Point B.
There was a lot more to it. I had to have a commercial licence. I had to have intensive training. I had to have annual medical exams and monthly workshops for safety.
And, I was responsible for everyone else’s children as well as my own, transporting them to school under all kinds of conditions, 40 Celsius when everybody is hot and sweating, and throwing water and Kool Aid and juice boxes around the bus to keep cool, and in freezing temperatures in the winter where I had to bring extra blankets for the kids, in terrible traffic, in good traffic.
But, all that said, I was very fortunate to be a union member for the majority of my school bus driving career. And so, I had the right to bargain. It was always difficult. We finally, I would say, around maybe 5, 10 years ago, started making some headway in bargaining. We started to get our heads above a minimum wage. We started to demand some respect.
Right now, with a skewed process for the contracting of school bus driving work and a non-transparent standard for that, school bus driving has become precarious. We become vulnerable workers, because we are involved in a race to the bottom. I don’t know how much lower it can go when your head is just above minimum wage.
We’re challenged in bargaining. That is why we feel so strongly about this. And, you know, I’ve got to say to you that we’re mad as heck and we’re not going to take it anymore. And, we want everybody to join with us, being made as heck, because it is just wrong.
We have, just outside the door, a table with buttons and our campaign materials. It is on our national website. We have a petition. I know that everybody has so much to do. We have so much to support. And, we are asking that you bring this back to your locals and help us with our campaign, help us lobby the government, because here is another reason why we’re made as heck.
We write a letter. Our National President wrote a letter to the Minister of Education, Liz Sandals, and she is ignoring it. We have a real problem with that. So, we are joining forces. We are signing a petition. We need everybody to help us do that. They are not going to ignore Unifor. We are not going to stand for it.

There are some members with me today that would like to talk about how they feel about their job. But, please, if you can’t do it tonight, and I really wish you would, go to our national website when you get home. Fill it out. It takes 2 minutes to sign our petition. A copy will go to every MPP. Very important. Bring it back to your local unions. Support our vulnerable workers, please.

LINDA MARTINS: My name is Linda Martins, Stop Toronto East, Chairperson, Local 4268. And, I have been a bus driver for almost 15 years. And, I love the job. I do it for the kids. They’re my kids. I love them. They’re our future. I put my heart and soul into the job, because they are our future.

So, if we don’t have the rights of this proposal, no one will accept this. They think we’re in the way. And, I just want to let you know that we’re not. We’re there for the kids, because they matter. Without the kids, there is no future.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chairperson for one division of Stop Transportation. I will make it short. What I would like to say, I’m a driver for 10 years. If I compare myself as an example with a TTC driver, I have more responsibility about my passengers. My passengers are your kids, the other kids for other parents.

I have too much difficulty to drive, with taking care with the kids with me. They take my attention. I am under -- maybe I will make collisions. But, I control myself as much as I can. The rate is not enough, of course. The respect, care from the company, or the board, or government is not too much for a school bus driver. The only thing to say about these kids, that I love them. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Anybody else at mic 6? We want to say thank you very much for being here and expressing some of your concerns obviously and your support for this initiative and, obviously, taking care of our children. Brother at mic 5.

JACK CHRISTIE: My name is Jack Christie. I am the Chairperson for Local 4266, First Student in Cornwall, Ontario, an amalgamated unit for Ottawa, Cornwall and Kingston bus drivers.

I have to agree with a lot of what Sister Montgomery said, and I am just going to add a little bit extra about the RFP. There was a report done a couple of years ago by a judge. I don’t have his name right now. But, like he says, drivers are a dime a dozen. School-crossing guards make more than bus drivers, in spite of the responsibility of bus drivers.

They also said that this RFP was going to costs a heck of a lot more to implement than what the current process was. And, the list just keeps going on. This is a report that was done by the government.

And, also, on that there, there was also $10 million put towards supplementing wages for the drivers to ensure that they don’t drop that they get them up to par. Nobody knows where the $10 million went. But, apparently, the Wynne government is supposed to be putting a little bit of an investigation into it. We’ll have to wait and see on that.

Then, consortiums that run this RFP don’t know what they’re doing. They have no accountability or transparency to anybody. You can request quotes for the bids and everything else, which you should be able to get, but they don’t have to answer. They are in a grey area of the government.

Now, since being implemented, the morale of those school bus drivers has gone down drastically. And, the question most often asked is, “Are we going to have a job next year whenever the new contracts come up?”

And, it is showing right now a lot of the buses are getting into disrepair, because the bus owners are not putting money into the buses. So, it is a safety concern for the long run.

And, the amalgamated Local 4266, Cornwall-Ottawa-Kingston, we are going into contract negotiations. We have the RFP against us, and we know that they are going to be coming after us for concessions, because what Sister Montgomery said was it’s a race to the bottom, whereas most
of your bids for these runs, they're all going at about 20 percent less than previous years, and they're taking that out on the drivers.

And, that is all I have to say. And, I do recommend that the proposal be accepted. We do need the help of everybody, because this RFP is going to create a dangerous situation for the youngsters, the kids that we are transporting to school, and also for the drivers. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: On the resolution, on No. 3? Mic 3, please.

PAUL MCKEE: I'm Paul McKee, Local 4268. I am going to steal a little bit of Ken Lewenza’s thunder here. He said if he was up speaking, he would grab Paisley here and talk about what was going on. So, essentially, I am up here just to speak a little bit about it.

For people in the GTA, you need to understand that the individuals that are driving these buses are looking after the likes of Paisley, the likes of the kids that are coming up here. So, you know what? For $58.00 a day, that is what they're earning.

It's not right. Not right when my daughter, she would babysit and she would earn more money babysitting than what they would. They don't have to do the physical. The same physical job. They don't have to do their medicals. They don't have to have the same sort of training. So, just so you know what that is about. That is what it's all about.

DINO CHIODO: We have got the last speaker on mic 7.

LEN POIRIER: Len Poirier, staff out of Kitchener. I can't let it go without remiss of how much work the National Office, and the Research and the Education Department did on all the policy papers that are in front of you. They have got an excellent pamphlet on what this RFP process has done to the industry. We think this is a policy paper that is not only going to speak for our thousands of Unifor members, other union members but, more importantly, for thousands of non-union members in this sector.

So, we need to, like these speakers before, implore you to fill out the online survey, take the information back to your communities, and have the opportunity to talk to your school trustees. People have to understand that the millions of dollars in educational transportation has to be spent appropriately, and it can't be savings on the backs of the workers.

And, you have to know the two largest companies in Canada are multi-nationals owned by corporations from Europe that are taking away the profits that should specifically be going to our workers.

In one of the little highlight sheets, there's two graphs here that you've got to look at. These were questionnaires that went out. Has the number of paid hours of work increased, decreased or not changed significantly in the last five years? Fifty percent said the quality of work has decreased by 50 percent.

Has the pace of the work increased, decreased or not changed significantly in the last five years? Sixty-three percent said it has increased. More and more is asked of these drivers. A lot of times, these corporations want them to volunteer times, look after the things that they deem as unpaid time, which we all know is crap.

We need to get this corrected and we need to do it with the full force and the support of everyone here. Please support this resolution. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Seeing no more speakers at the mics, looking at Resolution No. 3.

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

Thank you very much.

RESOLUTION NO. 4

DINO CHIODO: We are now looking at Resolution No. 4. It was already read out. This is with regards to the pay equity resolution. And, the Committee recommends concurrence with the amended resolution intact. Any speakers on the resolution? Speaker at mic 5.
THERESA FARAO: Theresa Farao, president of Local 240. I am proud to stand in support of this very important resolution. This is a great start and we will need to go further as we continue to fight. Our work doesn’t stop here.

What do we know about pay equity? We know the purpose of pay equity was to redress systemic gender discrimination and to be used as a tool to help eliminate the wage gap. We know even though we have pay equity legislation, the wage gap exists in every sector in Ontario. We know the wage gap has increased, not decreased.

We know 80 percent of single-parent families are headed by women and 54 percent of women make up the workforce. We know that more than twice as many women are in part-time employment and precarious work than men. We know that women’s economic independence aids women in leaving violent, domestic relationships.

We know that unorganized women will learn that their rate under pay equity through organizing material will help them aid in organizing the workplace. And, most importantly, we know that as leaders, we have a legal responsibility. We have a legal responsibility along with the employers.

So, how do we fight and bring back equality? We do it through pay equity. Some of the examples of pay equity where we have achieved pay equity is in tourism, CAA. Three female job classes received wage increases from 24 cents an hour to $3.99, a 5-year retro of $65,000.00.

Manufacturing, Maple Leaf Foods, one female job class, a wage increase of 48 cents an hour, 4 years retro, $44,621.92.

Retail, Hudson’s Bay, four locations, four female job classes in each one of those locations, from 17 cents an hour to $105 an hour, that is a quarter million in retro, 11 years.

Healthcare, South Huron Hospital, one female job class received a wage increase of 22 cents an hour, 1-year retro, $26,598.00.

Healthcare, St. Thomas Hospital, 4 female job classes received wage increases from 26 cents to 43 cents an hour, 11-year retro, just a little under $200,000.00.

All payments were made to full time, part time, active, retirees, laid off and severance employees. And, not one job lost due to pay equity wage adjustments. I will repeat that. Not one job lost due to those pay equity adjustments.

There is a myth, a fear that because of pay equity that we will lose jobs. Well, I have to tell you, when have we as a union become afraid to fight back to make wage improvements to female jobs?

So, I ask the question, why has the wage gap increased? Because we as a union are not doing enough when it comes to pay equity. But, not after today. Not after today.

We have 796 locals in Ontario. I would ask the question, how many of those locals know where they’re at when it comes to pay equity? How many pay equity plans are there and are they being maintained? I wonder what the answer would be?

We have a unique opportunity to take stock to our pay equity obligation, create new strategies to achieve, maintain and enforce pay equity agreements in Unifor bargaining units in Ontario.

The Unifor Education Department has developed a week-long pay equity course, which will provide hands-on knowledge to assist bargaining representatives with a better understanding of our union’s obligation and potential liabilities under the Act. The week-long course will provide our leadership with the skills, knowledge and confidence to learn how to achieve and maintain pay equity.

How are we going to do that? We have WSIB reps. We have Health and Safety reps. Each local should have a pay equity rep. And, once you have that pay equity rep, they will go into the different workplaces that you represent and will learn whether there is pay equity in compliance or not.

And, where there is locals who can’t, unfortunately, have the finances, I am sure our National Union will help give them those tools, so that their local doesn’t get left behind.

And, we need to put a mechanism in place in order for us to be sure the union can say, when we’re asked, “Where is Unifor on pay equity? Do all workplaces in Ontario that we represent have pay equity plans and are they being maintained?” We can say yes and as a union, can
be the ones leading the way when it comes to pay equity.

They may or may not know this, but the Pay Equity Commission is now auditing all different workplaces. They are sending letters to those workplaces, asking the question, “Has the pay equity plan been done? Has it been maintained?”

And, they are also providing a notice that the employer is required to post so our members know what their legal rights are under pay equity.

So, I leave you with this. When we fight for our rights that we have today, we need to continue to enforce them; otherwise, we will lose them. Thank you.

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

JIM ANGUS: Jim Angus, Unifor 1240, Windsor, vice-president. I rise in support of the resolution. I am proud to say it originated in Windsor from two great local unions.

Brothers and sisters, I would insist that the time is now to press the needle forward on pay equity. It is fundamental to fairness. It is as simple as equal pay for work of equal value. And, having said that, it is a simple concept. It is not a simple process. It requires work, commitment and the best of our negotiating skills. But, that is what we do in Unifor, and that is what we do every day for equality inequity.

A very important feature that we also have to remember about is it pays. Theresa referenced Hudson’s Bay. It is in black and white on page 214 and 215 of the staff reports.

$250,000 in awards. 250K, that is real money. And, what’s more, it is our members’ money.

My workplace, the Windsor Star, 2006, 15 female job classes, increases from 72 cents to $3.92 per hour, nearly 700K in retroactive payments. Yes, give it a hand. 700K, that is a lot of flipping money. And, we do maintenance.

We gained an additional $1.32 per hour in retroactive payments on a job that was re-evaluated just this year. Everybody got paid, as Theresa said, actives, laid off, retirees, early retirement folks; brothers as well as sisters got paid.

We have heard the term ROI from employers, return on investment. They throw it around at us all the time. Let’s turn that on its ear. Pay equity is ROI for workers. Let’s show them the money.

At the outset, I said, brothers and sisters, the time is now. Our prospects economically have improved. Every employer, as Theresa said, has the responsibility under the law as we do as trade unionists. It is as much our responsibility as it is theirs.

Pay equity is not a women’s issue; it’s a worker’s issue. So, let’s show the workers the money. Let’s start. Our members are depending on us. We can’t let them down. Thanks.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Speaker on mic 2.

CHRIS TAYLOR: Chris Taylor, president of Local 200, and National Executive Board member. I rise in support of the resolution.

As a union, we have done so much, and rightly so, to make sure that equity is a part of everything that we talk about, that it is a part of our fabric. Pay equity, unfortunately, is legislated, but just as health and safety is legislated, and we still have to go in and bargain and make sure the employers are doing the right thing. Pay equity is no different.

So, this resolution speaks about the amount of work still left to be done. We made great strides in pay equity. There has been huge gains, and rightly so, for the members that have not been treated right, but there is more work to be done.

So, I stand in full support. I am proud of our local to be a co-sponsor of this resolution. But, I want to make sure that people understand it doesn’t stop at the resolution. We have to go back into the workplaces and make sure that pay equity is a part of every bargaining that we undertake, and make sure that the maintenance part of it goes with that.

As Theresa and Jim both spoke very eloquently, the maintenance part is something that has to be checked on. You can’t just put it in your collective agreement. We all know what collective agreements mean. It is easy to put it in words. It is harder to make sure that it is enforced.

So, please go back in your workplaces. Make sure that the equity stays as part of your collective agreements. And, make sure that it is enforced. It means so much to the people that
count on the same wages for the same amount of work. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, brother. Speaker on Mic 3.
PEARL ALMEIDA: Good evening, everyone. Pearl Almeida, president of Local 6006 and member of the Ontario Region Women’s Committee. Local 6006 and the Ontario Region Women’s Committee rise in full support of this recommendation. And, just so you know, I have sisters from my local right here. W e are not all speaking, so don’t be too worried about it.

Women working full time still earn an average of 70 percent of the wages men earn for the same job. This is even worse for women of colour, Aboriginal women and persons with abilities or how we call disabilities, not to forget our youth. We need to close this gap. We, who are in positions of leadership, need to hold the employer accountable. We are very good at that. But, as union leaders, we also have to be accountable, because we can be responsible and we are responsible for maintaining pay equity.

This resolution will continue to root out the systemic discrimination that continues even today, and help shine the light on it. It takes a long time. It is not a quick and easy fix. For example, the Bell pay equity that we lived through took from 1989 to 2003. However, we have to continue to do this. I am going to have Donna speak very briefly on it as well.

DONNA PETERSON: Donna Peterson, chief steward, Local 6006. I was a part of and a recipient of the Bell pay equity settlement in 2003. I understand the struggle that we have been through and continue to obtain pay equity. It must be maintained. Equal pay for equal work.

PEARL ALMEIDA: So, sisters and brothers, today I asked you to support this recommendation, not just by a show of hands, but by also some really solid action when we go back into our workplaces. Thank you.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sisters. Speaker on mic 4.
DENISE VIAU: Denise Viau, Local 444. I was appointed on the Pay Equity Committee in 1999 for Caesars Windsor -- or it was Windsor Casino at the time. I’m sorry. And, I want to stress the education that the union gave me. If it wasn’t for the education I got from the union, I wouldn’t have known where to start, because it is such a complicated process.

But, we had approximately 102 classifications, so it made it very difficult. But, it also gave me the confidence to fight the mean casino corporation that we dealt with at that time. There was a lot of challenges. They hired a consultant, which we basically told them to go. If we listened to the consultants, we never would have achieved anything. So, you have got to be careful of that, too; right? So, again, they gave us the confidence. We sat in a room for over a year, debating and scoring the different jobs.

So, I am really happy to say, after all that time, we were able to close the gap to the tune of $2½ million. But, in saying that, it is also shameful. To me, it’s shameful. I mean, I am glad we got that, but at the same time, to know the difference between the male and female classifications, it makes it shameful. But, I rise in support of this resolution.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much sister. Speaker on mic 5.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I won’t repeat everything everyone else said. So, I just want to say that I stand in support of this resolution, because it supports Unifor’s equality policy, and it does narrow the gender gap.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you, sister. Speaker on mic 4.
ROSEMARY VIOLA: Hi. Rosemary Viola, vice-president, Local 5555, McMaster University, where we have a pay equity compliant job evaluation system. Was putting it in intimidating? Yes. But, I can assure you, you can learn. You would be surprised of how much you can learn. W as it interminable? Yes. The process is long. It can take years. But, it does come to an end.

Are there benefits? Absolutely. You could have a say in how your members’ jobs are evaluation and that can result in more money in your members’ pockets. And, it is money, which does not come out of the bargaining pie. You get to help determine what skills, what efforts, what responsibilities and what working conditions should be valued by creating sub-factors that
recognize each of these factors and assign them weight.  
Are there pitfalls? Yes, potentially. But, you can put safeguards in place for 
protection, like green-surfing jobs, which may be downgraded, so that nobody loses any money.  
Is help available? You bet. I am sure you can call the National. You can call Theresa from Local 240, or you can call me. Our bargaining units, specifically Unit 1, is large, in excess of 2,300 members, and varied, with jobs that range from medical secretaries to nuclear technologists, from clinical research nurses to research engineers, from file clerks to mail sorters, to academic advisors, to career development managers, to athletic coaches, fund raisers. The list goes on and on.  
But, by developing an evaluation system that is based on pay equity principles 
that is transparent and understandable, you can ensure that each job is compared to every other job, to 
ensure that each member is paid equitably for the work they perform.  
What is most important is the need to maintain. That is what this resolution 
speaks to. In our last collective agreement, we moved from detailed job content questionnaires to brief generic job descriptions, and from joint rating to management-only rating.  
We have noticed subtle changes in the ratings and no provision of rationales, so 
we will need a maintenance review. And, we warned the university in the last round of bargaining that 
we want it done before the end of this collective agreement, which is 2016.  
So, don’t think that once you have done your pay equity that it is done forever. 
You have to be diligent and constantly keep on the employer, or those gains you made will slip away, guaranteed. Thank you.  

DINO CHIODO: Thank you. Thank you, sister. Taking the last speaker on mic 5.  

KEN LEWENZA, JR.: Ken Lewenza, Jr. I will be real quick, Dino. I can’t help but 
to put my organizer hat on, on this particular issue, and I just want to give you an example.  
My partner is a member of Local 240, Unifor Green Shield. She thinks her 
chairperson and her workplace is absolutely fantastic, and that is Jodi Nesbitt. And, she has no desire 
or interest to ever have a leadership position in the union. She goes to membership meetings out of a 
sense of loyalty.  
And, I just want to share with this particular group, when we think about how do 
we broaden the base in our movement, how do we broaden people in our union, how is it that we can 
allow them to play a more relevant role, making a contribution in our union?  
And, I said to Theresa what an awesome opportunity it would be to bring women in our community, and it could even be men as well, that could be a part of education and see how the 
union has fought for equity over the years, how women have made gains, how we fought for equity, and 
to reinforce what the union is all about.  
But, then to provide women the opportunity to perhaps sit on, whether it’s a 
workplace committee, a regional committee on pay equity, so that when we win these types of battles 
that Denise just spoke about, $2½ million, that it is not about how the union made gains, but it is how 
they themselves made a gain through their union, including people into the union and those fights and 
in those victories. And, that is how we are going to build the union.  

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

On Resolution No. 4.  

(All those in favour?  
(favouring votes shown) 
Down. 
Opposed, if any?  
(opposing votes shown, if any) 
Carried. CARRIED.  
Thank you very much, brothers and sisters.  

NATIONAL AND AREA STAFF REPORTS  

DINO CHIODO: Now, I would like to just finalize, if we can, the National and 
Area Staff Reports. I know we’re late in the day, but at the same time, I want to give credence to all the 
work that has gone into making sure that we put this together.
And, again, if there are any speakers on any of the areas or sections of the National and Area Staff Reports? Speaker at mic 5.

MIKE LOVRIC: Thanks, Brother Chair. Mike Lovric, vice-president of Local 444. I am also the vice-president of National Rec. I know we do a lot of good things for our union, but we also do take care of our members, more than any other union does, and that is through recreation.

We have different councils throughout Ontario that organize recreational events. And then it goes to all local presidents, all the applications, everything like that. So, I just hope that when local presidents do get these that they pass it on to their members, because a lot of our members don’t like to get involved in the union.

And, one of the ways that we get them involved is through recreation. They come to our events. And, that is when we give them some messages about what our union does. It is a good organizing tool for Toyota, Honda, wherever we try to organize, because that is something extra we do for our members. And, all these people that do organize events, they all do it on their volunteer time.

And, also, I would like to just say that on the end of June, I think it is June 26th to 28th, there is going to be a Recreation Conference in Port Elgin. So, I just hope everybody will send your delegates. If you want to learn more about recreation, more of what we could do for our members, send your delegates to the June 26th to 28th Port Elgin Recreation Conference. Thank you.

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

CHERYL ROBINSON: Cheryl Robinson, president of Local 2002. I just want to say thank you to all the staff reps. I know folks don’t always get a chance to go through and read the reports in detail. But, on behalf of, certainly, Local 2002, a big shout-out to all of our staff reps that do lots of work outside of just this report.

I know it is probably one of the most thankless jobs, or lots of times our workplace reps feel that way. But, our staff reps do so much for us. They’re on call 24/7. And, I just want to say thank you to all of those that have touched our local and those that are doing work on behalf of our membership. Thank you.

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

MARY STRAUS: Mary Straus, Retirees Executive. I just wanted to bring something to everyone’s attention. It has been such a great couple of days.

One of our union sisters who isn’t a delegate to council any more, but was the first woman Executive Board member of a former union before Unifor, actually back in the UAW days, she was the first woman on the Executive Board. And, all throughout the time that she was active in a local, she was the president. She worked, worked, worked, always working against the Conservatives, I want you to know.

But, apparently, last week when I was away, out of town, actually on holidays in Europe, my sister, Roxie Baker, your sister, won the Agnes Macphail Award at the NDP convention. I hear a lot of nasty things about the NDP convention and I wasn’t there, so I am not going to comment on them.

But, I just want to tell you that to Unifor, it is an honour for Unifor as well as for Roxie. She is always promoting the union, always promoting women. She has been a mentor to many of us. I am sure there’s people in this room who will remember her leadership.

And, I just want to congratulate her and I want you all to congratulate her. It is a feather in our cap that we have got such a woman as a Unifor member.

DINO CHIODO: Seeing nobody else at the microphones.

All those in favour?
(favouring votes shown)
Down.

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

Thank you very much. Before we close off, I would like to ask Katha Fortier to come up and make some closing remarks.
KATHA FORTIER: Thanks, Dino. And, thank you to all of you. I mean, this is great. The room is still -- we probably have about 60 percent. And, I know it is hard. It has been a long day. We had the debate beforehand as to whether or not we ask people to stay to Sunday morning, or whether we try to just go through late and get things done on Saturday. We do appreciate your feedback and your patience, and the fact that we're here to listen to everybody. I appreciate that our last two resolutions affecting bus drivers and affecting women who need pay equity in their workplace, that people stuck around and listened to those debates because, quite frankly, this is the type of union that we are and this is what will make us better.

We always appreciate your input. The brother that said that every council has gotten 100 percent better each time, we are really glad we are doing well, but I don't know how we're going to get to 400 percent, but we'll keep trying.

We want your input. We want to hear back from you. You know who your Executive Board are, your National Executive Board. Of course, you know where to find Jerry Dias. He is all over the place. And, of course, Dino, who did a great job chairing today.

We did get a great financial report, and really are blessed that we have the funds to do business and to make generous contributions to those social organizations that we can support. So, again, just thanks to all of you, all of the staff, all of the delegates and guests who were so patient.

Remember Michael Harris' message about the Party of One. And, I know people have been flipping through the books today and are just really in awe. It is so absolutely shocking. But, it is great. It is really awesome that we have people like Michael Harris on our side and that are going to help us expose Harper for the liar that he is and for the dirty bastard that he is, and we are going to take him out of office next year. That is our goal for 2015, sisters and brothers.

Before we leave -- you can't leave yet, but we are going to sing together. And, Dino may want to make a few remarks. But, the tech crew could probably cue up our song.

DINO CHIODO: Thank you very much. I know it's going to be exciting and we're all waiting to dance and sing. But, in conclusion, we had a great exciting weekend. I mean, we took a lot of positions and we took a lot of information. And, hopefully, that information is going to go back to our locals.

We took positions on labour law reform, on violence against women, on free trade agreements, 2015 federal elections, on the bus industry, on issues like pay equity. And, those are all important issues, progressive issues.

And, from that perspective, again, the direction of the Ontario Regional Council now is going to go back to the local unions, to our activist bases, to the grass roots of our local unions, to be able to put those items forward and educate those members, so we can continue to work on those plans over the course of the next year.

After all, what we are here for and what is happening is trying to make that progressive change. What we wanted was a union with a vision to be able to bring those items and push those items forward. And, we are doing just that, creating a new vision in Unifor together.

And, that is commending each and every one of you, again, staying till the end in conclusion of this Ontario Regional Council. So, I ask that you all please applaud yourselves. Give yourselves a round of applause for the hard work and dedication that went into the last two days.

Because when our members talk about coming together and saying, “What did you guys do there? What happened?” There's two full days of discussing, debating, networking and talking about the importance of making things better within our organization. So, to each of you, thank you very much. And, again, we will cue up the cards.

Oh, I'm sorry. I've got to have a motion to adjourn. But, before that, please, everybody, have a great holiday season. Enjoy yourselves. Be safe. Don't drink and drive. Cue it up. And, we will move to adjourn. Thank you.

--- W hereupon the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.