

RECOMMENDATIONS

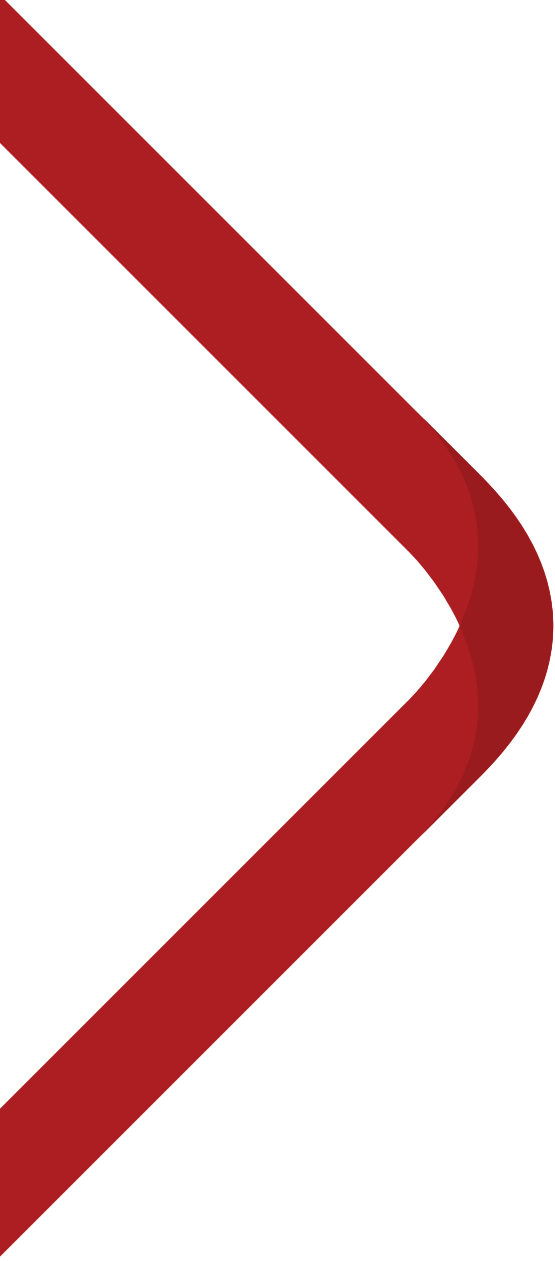
ONTARIO DIRECTOR

Ontario Regional Council

Sheraton Centre Hotel, December 2-4 2016



unifor



Ontario Regional Council Director's RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School Bus Campaign

The Ontario government bidding system for school bus contracts in Ontario called Request for Proposals (RFP) system has forced large operators to give up routes, driven small, independent operators out of business.

This RFP system led to chaos at the beginning of the this school year, when thousands of students in both the public and Catholic school boards were left stranded because there weren't enough drivers for all the routes. On the other end of the spectrum, a wave of job losses swept across the province caused by the RFP system and a bidding war that saw contracts flipped and a race to the bottom on wages.

I ask that all Ontario local unions actively support the campaign efforts of Unifor members working in the school bus industry. The union is calling on the province of Ontario to implement a fair wage policy for school bus drivers, to protect collective bargaining rights in the event of a contract flip, and for more safety inspections of school buses on Ontario roads. Full details and materials for the campaign are available online at www.unifor.org/schoolbuscampaign.

I therefore recommend that all local unions encourage their members to:

- Sign the online petition to the Minister of Education, entitled: "School Bus Drivers Deserve Better;"
- Send a letter to their Member of Provincial Parliament, expressing their concern over deteriorating work standards in the school bus industry; and
- Contact their local school board trustee, to raise awareness of the union's campaign.

The Ontario Regional Council will also work with local unions in the school bus sector, as well as parents, teachers, municipal leaders and fellow allies, to organize a community solidarity event to raise further awareness about the challenges facing Ontario's school bus drivers, the school bus industry and related struggles.

2. Make it Fair Campaign

Ontario workers are increasingly trapped in precarious part-time, temporary, contract and subcontracted jobs, as employers in every sector drive down wages and working conditions.

The Ontario government is in the process of reviewing the outdated Employment Standards and Labour Relations Acts, with the stated aim of addressing the increase in precarious jobs – through the Changing Workplaces Review. Changing Workplaces Review process is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make the changes that Ontarians need. With the Changing Workplace Review still ongoing, it is vitally important that the labour movement, in co-ordination with community partners, keep up the pressure on government about the importance of the Review and creating meaningful changes that will improve the lives of Ontario workers – now and in the future. “Make it Fair” is a campaign of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) to mobilize labour unions to fight for labour law reform, in solidarity with the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign.

I therefore recommend that local unions:

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

3. Psychological Wellness

Protecting the psychological health and safety of workers is just as important as protecting workers from physical injury and illness. Bullying, harassment and abuse in the workplace can result in physical illness and lasting mental illness. According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, more than 500,000 Canadians will not go to work because of mental illness each week; more than 30% of disability claims and 70% of disability costs are attributed to mental illness; and approximately \$51 billion each year are lost to the Canadian economy because of mental illness. In 2013, Canada became the first country in the world to establish a National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) worked with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to develop the standard with input from labour unions. The standard establishes criteria for a psychologically safe system of work; It is time that our workplace protections evolve from physical safety to include the promotion of psychological health and prevention of psychological harm.

I therefore recommend:

1. That the National Health and Safety Department with the Ontario local unions work together to lobby the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) to accept the CSA Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Standard as a code of practice under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and that the MOL allocate sufficient resources to enforce the code of practice
2. That Unifor leadership negotiate the standard into their Collective Agreements.

4. Cap and Trade

In May 2016 the Wynne government in Ontario passed legislation, the *Climate Change Mitigation and Low Carbon Economy Act*. The meat and potatoes of the plan features Ontario's commitment to join the Western Climate Incentive's Cap and Trade program.

Unifor has given critical support to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and to Ontario's Climate Action Plan. However we have consistently raised concerns on the need for transitional credits beyond 2020 for "EITE" industries, requirement for "cross border carbon adjustments" to ensure that products entering Ontario from jurisdictions without a carbon price are not creating unfair advantage, and the clear need for framework on "just transition" for workers affected by climate change. Our Convention in August passed Resolution 20 that included a full range of support for workers including:

1. Employment transition
2. Re-training
3. Re-location assistance
4. Early retirement
5. Pension bridging
6. Income security / stabilization

"Emissions Intensive Trade Exposed" or EITE industries employ thousands of Unifor members in oil extraction, upgrading and refining, natural gas processing and distribution, petrochemicals, automobile, truck and bus manufacturing, aerospace, mining, aluminum and pulp and paper. Our members work in 30 of the 150 large emitters listed on Ontario's data base.

The Government must take concrete steps to demonstrate to Ontario workers that they will not be left behind as economic and environmental change transforms our province.

I therefore recommend:

1. ORC Health Safety and Environment Committee's primary goal on Climate Change and Just Transition be the fulfillment of commitments for certainty and support for EITE industries, a clear Just Transition policy and framework within the Ontario Climate Action Plan and that this undertaking be in conjunction with the National Union
2. ORC continue to work with partners in the Ontario Clean Economy Alliance, Blue Green Alliance, Green Economy Network (CLC) and the OFL on these related issues of climate change, energy policy, Just Transition and Good Jobs.
3. Local unions utilize the Courses offered at our Unifor Family Education Center to better understand the modern day crisis of climate change. Specifically I recommend Environment (Community), Environment (Workplace) and Good Jobs in a Green Economy to investigate the emergence of a green economy through a labour lens. This course will also equip members in the ability to be part of a broader discussion on developing sustainable action plans for good jobs in a green economy.

5. Paid Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence

Unifor has been a leader in advocating for solutions to gender-based violence; a 2015 Canadian survey demonstrated that domestic violence is a workplace issue with 1/3 of workers reporting experiencing domestic violence in their own lives.

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

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

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

I therefore recommend:

1. That Unifor members lobby their Members of Provincial Parliament to follow the example set out by the Province of Manitoba and include Paid Domestic Violence Leave in employment standards legislation.
2. That Unifor leadership continue to negotiate paid leave at the bargaining table for all domestic violence survivors.

6. Accessibility Legislation

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

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

I therefore recommend:

1. The Ontario Regional Council express its support for Unifor's Workers with Disabilities caucus and for national accessibility legislation that ensures people of all abilities are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful work, secure a decent standard of living and participate fully in all social, political and cultural institutions;
2. Local Unions circulate the submission of the Workers with Disabilities to encourage discussion and inform members of the work being done to secure an accessible future;
3. Local Unions participate in the consultations in their local areas and provide support to members who wish to share their experiences at these consultations.



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