

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## ONTARIO REGIONAL DIRECTOR

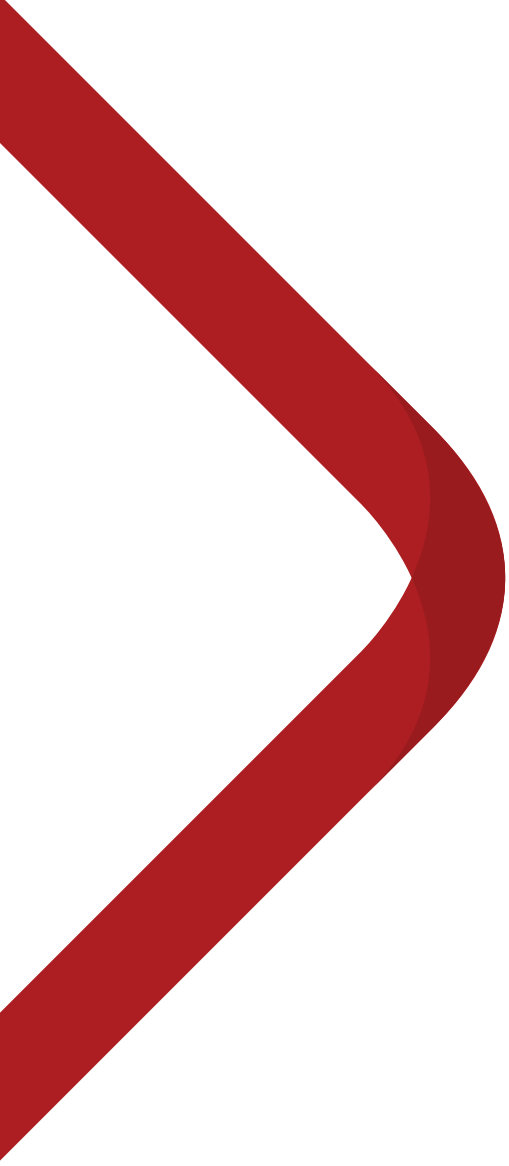
Ontario Regional Council

Sheraton Centre Hotel, Toronto, December 1-2, 2017



**UNIFOR**

Ontario Regional Council  
Conseil régional de l'Ontario



# Ontario Regional Director's RECOMMENDATIONS



## 1. Ontario Election 2018

Unifor Ontario members have been extremely active on the political front mobilizing for progressive change to enhance the lives of not only our members but also for all Ontarians. Advocating for improvements to the Employment Standards and Labour Relations Acts has been at the centre of our members' political activism. Bill 148 is now law and our members' determination to fight for change has not gone unnoticed.

The Progressive Conservative party voted against Bill 148, voting against the \$15 dollar minimum wage, against increased vacation, and against paid domestic violence leave. All of the hard work put into achieving these gains can be undone with the stroke of a pen if the Conservatives are elected.

Ontarians will go to the polls on June 7, 2018. We must mobilize and engage our 160,000 Unifor Ontario members to not only protect our hard fought gains but to also elect politicians who share our vision for the kind of change that brings about meaningful progress for our members and their communities.

Therefore I recommend that:

- a. Unifor Ontario commit itself to undertake all that is necessary in the next provincial election to elect a progressive government that respects trade union rights and the role of the labour movement.
- b. That the delegates to the ORC participate in the identification of the election issues that matter to our members and communities by completing the ON election survey.
- c. That local unions work actively with the Political Action and Membership Mobilization department to engage meaningfully with Unifor members through the distribution of materials on the issues that matter to our members.
- d. That local unions engage with other local unions through participation in town hall meetings (locations to be determined) and carry out member-to-member engagement with a focus on the issues that matter to our members.
- e. That Ontario Unifor local union leadership, activists and members mobilize to stop Patrick Brown and the Ontario Conservative party from forming government.

- f. That local union leadership work actively to mobilize members to get out and vote in large numbers on Election Day June 7, 2018.

## **2. Support and Action on Canadian Labour Congress Campaign for Pharmacare**

Canada remains the only country in the world with a universal health care system that doesn't include coverage for prescription drugs. Three million Canadians are unable to afford their prescribed medication and 9 in 10 Canadians support having a National Public Drug Plan that provides universal access to prescription drugs. It's time we made this a reality.

Unifor advocates for the creation of a public, national Pharmacare program. The time to act is now.

Therefore I recommend that:

- a. Ontario locals support Unifor's efforts on Pharmacare by asking employers to sign onto a joint union-employer letter and that locals take a draft motion to their city council to have them pass. Copies of the joint letter and the motion are available at [www.unifor.org/pharmacare](http://www.unifor.org/pharmacare).
- b. Ontario locals participate in the Canadian Labour Congress Pharmacare Campaign by mobilizing members to sign the CLC Petition at [www.aplanforeveryone.ca](http://www.aplanforeveryone.ca).
- c. Ontario locals attend town hall meetings organized by the CLC and labour councils.

## **3. Organizing Recommendation**

From the outset, Unifor has adopted a very ambitious and aggressive commitment to our organizing efforts. Organizing builds unions as credible, influential and lasting organizations. Our union recognizes that our future success will be measured in part by our organizing success, as it is an indicator of our relevance to our society. Furthermore our commitment to organizing reflects our identity as a movement fighting for economic and social justice on behalf of all working people.

True organizing success can only occur if it is integrated into all aspects of the work of the union with everyone playing a role in organizing efforts. To build this culture of organizing, we must promote the concept that "workers organize workers". There is no stronger way to build a culture of organizing in our union than to foster more direct member participation in our organizing campaigns.

To date we have had great success, especially here in Ontario. Hundreds of workplaces and thousands of new members now enjoy Unifor representation. Many of our activists and locals have assisted us in this success, but more of us are needed to support and assist our organizing efforts.

Building Unifor into an organizing union is a goal that requires the participation of everyone, from rank and file members to elected leadership. The All In! Campaign provides tools, training and ideas for reaching out to non-union workers and building Unifor's membership and power.

Therefore I recommend that:

All Ontario locals, local leadership and activist endorse Unifor's policy and plan adopted at founding convention and participate in the All In! organizing campaign.

As part of the All In! Campaign, locals are encouraged to:

- Undertake a process to map their workplace to identify workers who could become members of Unifor;
- Assign an organizing liaison for the local union to maintain a relationship with the region's organizer;
- Organize "Know your Rights" events for non-union workers in the community;
- Commit to participate in regional All In! training sessions being held throughout Ontario in 2018.

#### **4. Campaign Against LVVR Requirements in Bill C-49**

Unifor represents more than 9,000 Canadians in the rail transportation industry and some 46,000 in the wider transportation sector. The industries where Unifor members work, transportation included, are essential to the success of the Canadian economy and serve as the nation's leading centres of advanced technology and innovation.

Unifor and its predecessor unions have always believed in, and sought to promote, workplace health and safety. Safety is a cornerstone value for us and Unifor is supportive of governmental efforts to reduce railway incidents. Unifor sits on Transport Canada's Advisory Council on Rail Safety (ACRS), for example, and provides a workplace health and safety training course to its members through its Paid Education Leave program.

Recent decades have witnessed a shift in Canada's regulatory regime, both in rail and in the wider transportation sector, in favour of so-called 'self-regulation'. Unifor believes that, while companies and labour unions ought to regulate their own behaviour, government also has a role to play in regulating commercial activity, especially in instances where worker and community health are on the line.

The Lac-Mégantic tragedy (and other fatal railway accidents, including the Via Rail incident in Burlington) revealed the folly of self-regulation in rail transportation. The omnipresent financial imperative to reduce costs will sometimes mean that companies face a tradeoff between safety and profitability. However, this is a false tradeoff and it should not be left to the rail companies to decide how that tradeoff is made. That is why Unifor supports a vigorous regulatory regime, with appropriate funding for inspections and with levies and penalties attached to non-compliance.

## BILL C-49

With respect to Bill C-49, the most significant element for our members is the requirement that all railway operators install and utilize Locomotive Voice and Video Recorders (LVVRs) in the cab, after extensive lobbying by the railway companies themselves. This aspect of the legislation, which appears to grow out of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) report—Railway Safety Issues Investigation Report R16H0002, released on September 3, 2016—is predicated on the notion that LVVRs will enhance safety if implemented as part of a non-punitive safety management system.

In its current form, however, the legislation goes beyond the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities report (An Update on Rail Safety, published in June of 2016) in that it will allow railway companies and governmental agencies to access and use the data gathered using LVVRs.

## Unifor's Objections to the LVVR Provisions of Bill C-49

The TSB wants to improve rail safety. So does Unifor:

- However, we do not believe that Bill C-49, in its current form, will improve railway safety;
- We do believe that Bill C-49 will violate the privacy rights of our membership and, by increasing the stress experienced by those in the cab of the locomotive, may even reduce safety;
- We also believe that employers will use this technology as a disciplinary tool;
- It is unclear about how the TSB plans to maintain the integrity of the LVVR data once the locomotive leaves Canada and enters U.S. territory, which concerns us;
- Furthermore, Bill C-49 will open the door to other transportation employers (namely those in air transport, road transport and marine transport, for example) to adopt LVVR technology, making privacy violations the government-sanctioned standard in the wider transportation sector.

Unifor has met with senior government officials to present our union's submission to the federal transportation committee. The document outlines the concerns above and urges the government to withdraw LVVR requirements from C-49.

Unifor has also contacted the office of Canada's Privacy Commissioner in order to inform the Commissioner that, should C-49 pass unamended, Unifor will be requesting an investigation into the law's compliance with federal privacy law.

Therefore I recommend that:

- a. The national campaign to oppose Bill C-49 be endorsed.
- b. Ontario locals sign the Unifor online petition to Stop Workplace Video Surveillance [www.unifor.org/c49](http://www.unifor.org/c49).
- c. Ontario locals be encouraged to contact their Member of Parliament to express opposition to Bill C-49.



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