



**unifor**

Ontario Regional Council  
Conseil régional de l'Ontario

# ONTARIO REGIONAL DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS



ORC 2024

# **Recommendation #1**

## **Support for Victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Ontario**

Intimate partner violence is a devastating epidemic affecting thousands of individuals, families, and communities across Ontario. Troubling data reveals that police-reported incidents of IPV rose by 9% across Canada and 11% in Ontario between 2019 and 2022. Alarming, nearly half of Canadian women—44%—report experiencing some form of IPV, with women disproportionately suffering the most severe forms of abuse. On a global scale, it is estimated that nearly one in three women in a relationship will face IPV at least once in their lifetime.

Demand for support services has risen and unfortunately, survivors are often left without the assistance they need due to the chronic underfunding of shelters, crisis services, and legal resources. Many who have been impacted face long-term psychological and emotional trauma, further compounding their difficulties, yet access to specialized trauma-informed mental health services remains insufficient.

Comprehensive education and prevention programs are crucial to reducing the prevalence of IPV. It is imperative that a coordinated response be established between survivors, frontline service providers, community organizations, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and government to ensure holistic, survivor-centered support. Without their voices in the process, it will continue to fail to meet the needs of those impacted by intimate partner violence.

I therefore recommend that the Ontario Regional Council:

1. Urge the Ontario government to immediately pass Bill 173 and officially declare intimate partner violence (IPV) an epidemic, highlighting its severity, increasing public awareness, and promoting a coordinated response from public health authorities and policymakers.
2. Advocate for increased union support for members affected by IPV by encouraging locals to bargain collective agreement language with enhanced provisions for paid leave, mental health supports, Women's Advocates and EFAP representatives.
3. Increase local union and member awareness and training on IPV by hosting workshops, webinars, and other educational events to help recognize and address IPV in the workplace.
4. Work in partnership with service providers and community organizations that support IPV survivors, and their families, and further promote and participate in awareness campaigns such as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, events marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

# **Recommendation #2**

## **Renewed Focus on Advocating for Public Health Care in Ontario**

Public health care is a cornerstone of Canadian society, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their financial status, have access to quality medical services. However, the Ontario health care system is facing significant challenges, including chronic underfunding, staff shortages, long wait times, and a growing number of private, for-profit entities into the public system. Moreover, the lack of adequate funding and support in mental health services exacerbates the crisis, leaving many without the help they need.

These challenges impact not only health care workers but all sectors of our economy. A well-functioning health care system is essential for the productivity and well-being of all workers, across industries, ensuring they can remain healthy and supported.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the critical need for a strong and accessible public health care system to ensure that everyone can access the care they need in times of crisis and beyond. Privatization of health care services threatens the principle of universal access by creating a two-tiered system where only those with means can access timely and quality care, exacerbating existing inequalities.

The provincial government's policies have been increasingly permissive towards the privatization of health services, including diagnostic tests, surgeries, and other essential services that are fundamental to the health and well-being of Ontario residents. Health care workers, unions, and communities across Ontario have voiced strong opposition to privatization and have called for increased funding, better staffing, mental health supports, and improved working conditions within the public system.

I therefore recommend that the Ontario Regional Council:

1. Reaffirm our commitment to advocating for a fully funded and publicly delivered health care system in Ontario that provides timely and equitable access to all, while also recognizing the importance of comprehensive mental health services.
2. Call on the Government of Ontario to cease further privatization efforts and commit to reinvesting in the public health system through increased funding, improved staffing levels and expanded mental health supports.
3. Work alongside local unions, advocacy groups, health care workers, and the broader community to campaign for policies that strengthen public health care and oppose any efforts to undermine or privatize it.
4. Begin new campaign efforts to advocate, lobby and mobilize broad-based community and political support to strengthen Ontario's public health care system.

# **Recommendation #3**

## **Shaping the Future of Work**

The world of work is changing. Workers in all economic sectors, whether private or public, are susceptible to disruption driven by multiple external factors, international trade dynamics, shifting geopolitics, and more. Employers are relentlessly looking for new ways to cut costs and hike profits through outsourcing, offshoring, contract flipping, or by investing in new technology.

These forces create conditions that leave working people feeling unstable and uncertain. Reshaped and displaced jobs can leave workers worse off, with lower pay, fewer benefits or workplace protections. In too many cases, workers are left fighting to reclaim the basic rights and standards they've lost.

Unions can chart a path towards new laws, regulations, policies and bargaining strategies to face this transition for the benefit of workers.

Workers across Ontario and Canada can affect the future of work in a way that advances all working class people. The strategies we employ today will shape the future of work tomorrow. Unifor and its Ontario Council must continue leading the charge on advancing industrial strategies across key economic sectors, investing in public services and critical infrastructure, responding to workplace transitions and fighting to protect and expand fundamental workers' rights.

Therefore, I recommend that the Ontario Regional Council:

1. Advance Unifor's national campaign to establish industrial strategies, including made in Canada procurement policies, that expand investment and grow good, union jobs in the industrial economy.
2. Maintain and expand Unifor's community-based, peer-led labour adjustment programs when workers face workplace closures and long layoffs.
3. Encourage local unions to work with their Unifor service representatives to examine the use and impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in Unifor workplaces and support the union's efforts to develop collective agreement language to protect workers against the negative effects of advanced technologies, including AI, automation and engineered work standards
4. Continue to advocate for employment standards in Ontario that protect against growing precarity and improve job quality for workers in all industries.
5. Support the 'Fix Employment Insurance' campaign asking members to send a letter to elected representatives directly to Fix EI Now! in order to ensure the government builds strong economic stabilizers capable of supporting workers through major workplace transitions.

# **Recommendation #4**

## **Working Together for a Better Ontario**

The upcoming provincial elections in Ontario mark a critical opportunity to shape a future that works for Ontario's workers, their families, and their communities. It is our chance to ensure that the government's priorities align with the needs of workers—strengthening public health care, resisting privatization, creating good jobs, addressing the growing affordability crisis and enacting anti-scab legislation to protect workers during labour disputes.

The ongoing strain on public health care, alongside privatization initiatives, underscores the urgent need for a government dedicated to preserving and improving essential services. Ontarians deserve a future where public services are robust, well-funded, and accessible to all.

At the same time, Ontario workers require a government committed to creating industrial policies that secure, well-paying jobs and investing in the industries that sustain our communities. The affordability crisis, including the lack of affordable housing and rising costs of living, demands immediate action to ensure all Ontarians have access to safe, stable housing and can afford everyday essentials.

Enacting anti-scab legislation is a critical step toward leveling the playing field for workers during labour disputes, ensuring fairness and protecting the integrity of collective bargaining.

Addressing these challenges is vital for building a future where workers and their families can thrive. By prioritizing these issues and mobilizing our collective efforts, we can work toward an Ontario that truly supports its people.

I therefore recommend that the Ontario Regional Council:

1. Launch a robust member-to-member campaign focused on the upcoming provincial elections, equipping members to educate their peers on the importance of voting for worker-friendly candidates.
2. Prioritize informing members about the risks of privatization in public health care, the importance of preserving public services, and developing industrial policies that will support workers and their families.
3. Partner with labour groups, community organizations, and other progressive allies to amplify our campaign efforts and ensure that workers' issues are front and center in the provincial elections.

# **Recommendation #5**

## **Organizing for a New Ontario**

Ontario is undergoing a significant economic transformation, fueled by the rise of new technologies such as electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing and substantial growth in sectors like warehousing. A landmark achievement in this evolving landscape is the recent unionization of Walmart's Mississauga warehouse, the first of its kind in Canada.

Unifor has also secured major victories in the aviation sector, manufacturing, health care, retail, and other industries. These successes highlight the strength of our organizing efforts and the growing recognition among workers that unions are essential in achieving fair wages, safe working conditions, and a meaningful voice in their workplaces.

As the divide between workers and employers continues to grow, unions have become a critical support system to address these challenges. This moment represents a wave of renewed interest in unionization, presenting an unparalleled opportunity to expand and amplify our collective voice.

Unifor members are at the forefront of this movement—not only as part of the solution but as the driving force to engage, educate, and inspire others to join the union. Organizing is the core of our union's mission, and our members play a vital role in forming connections and building solidarity across industries and workplaces.

Therefore, I recommend, that the Ontario Regional Council:

1. Reaffirm its commitment to the organizing goals set out at Unifor's founding convention in 2013, prioritizing new worker organizing as a central objective for the union.
2. Urge the Ontario government to implement better organizing laws, including card check certification, to simplify the unionization process and protect workers' rights.
3. Support ongoing organizing efforts and build on recent successes by expanding training and outreach initiatives to increase organizing capacity at both regional and local levels.
4. Encourage local unions to actively collaborate with organizing efforts, fostering greater education and awareness among members.



# **Recommendation #6**

## **Responding to U.S. Threats, Defending Canadian Jobs**

Ontario is the United States' largest provincial trading partner. In 2023, two-way trade in goods and resources amounted to \$500 billion, encompassing significant sectors such as vehicles, metals, and medicine. Importantly, Ontario's trade with the U.S. is both fair and balanced.

U.S. president-elect Trump has already threatened to impose tariffs on all Canadian goods and resources exported to the United States. This move is a calculated attempt to undermine Canadian jobs and shift investment to the U.S. Tariffs introduce investment risks, and for some companies, reducing these risks means redirecting investments south of the border. We've witnessed this strategy before, but this time Trump's actions are more aggressive, and the stakes are far higher.

Unifor is at the forefront of efforts to drive industrial redevelopment in our economy. We are advocating for forward-looking investments, urging governments to provide necessary support, and defending good union jobs. In recent years, we've achieved significant success, particularly in Ontario, including record investments in the auto sector. However, a trade dispute with our largest trading partner and closest geopolitical ally threatens to derail this progress. We will not let this happen.

Therefore, I recommend, that the Ontario Regional Council:

1. Work with the National Union on a coordinated strategy to support local jobs.
2. Condemn this unjustified and punitive trade actions by the U.S. government.
3. Collaborate with local unions across the province to monitor and identify risks associated with U.S. trade exposure and develop mitigation strategies in coordination with industry directors and national staff.
4. Urge provincial officials to work in concert with all levels of government to establish common positions and coordinated strategies to address the tariff threat, ensuring that workers' interests are prioritized in decision-making.
5. Undertake any action as necessary to prevent the outflow of jobs and investment to the United States, resulting from this tariff threat.

