Welcome to the first edition of Unifor’s new national magazine, Uniforum.

This will be a quarterly publication, evolving out of the biweekly newsletter that began four years ago with the founding of Unifor.

As a growing and active union, Unifor needed a way to better talk to members and the public about the major issues facing Canada and the role the union is playing to set a progressive agenda in this country. We also wanted to highlight the activities of our regional directors and national departments.

A magazine gives us much more opportunity to do all those things, and is a vital part of a broader and ongoing update of Unifor’s overall communications plan.

With the magazine, we will take a big picture look at some of Unifor’s national campaigns and priorities – such as in this issue, trade, pharmacare and labour laws.

Events such as rallies and council meetings will receive much more timely online coverage through the unifor.org/news website and social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

This magazine replaces the printed version of the biweekly Uniforum newsletter, and subscribers to that publication have been placed on the mailing list for the magazine. Subscribers to the online newsletter will continue to receive updates on Unifor’s activities by email. Subscription is part of your union membership.

The idea behind this new communication strategy is to generate much-faster coverage of live events through online stories, social media and email, while providing in-depth analysis with this magazine – while giving greater voice to the regional activities of Unifor across the country.

Please encourage others to subscribe to this magazine. It’s a great way to stay informed and to learn about the incredible things Unifor is doing.

And, while you’re at it, you haven’t done so already, get regular news updates by following us at Facebook at Facebook.com/UniforCanada or on Twitter at @UniforTheUnion.

Staying involved means staying informed.

There’s no better way to stay informed about your union and find out how to get involved with your union than to sign up. Here are a few ways to stay in touch.

You can:
✓ Subscribe to this free magazine by emailing communications@unifor.org with your name, address and Local number
✓ Join the new electronic newsletter, a roundup of news and media releases, and political action, at unifor.org/subscribe
✓ Like us on Facebook at Facebook.com/UniforCanada
✓ Follow us on Twitter at @UniforTheUnion

Plus: Our national website, unifor.org, has regular updates on news and events, plus information on political campaigns, bargaining, and all the work being done by your union to help members and their communities. However you prefer to stay in touch, Unifor has something for you!
Communicating for change

In a political union such as ours, effective communication is key. Unifor was founded four years ago as a political union. We recognized that in order to bring real and positive change for working people, their families and their communities, we needed to be active on the political front, as well as at the bargaining table.

For Unifor and its members, that has meant many things in the years since.

We have invested heavily in ground-breaking research taking a close look at the issues of the day, from pensions, to minimum wages, to labour and employment laws, to trade deals, and much, much more. Without a doubt, Unifor has led this country in independent progressive research.

And when it came to getting that research out into the world and in front of decision makers, we have made the needed investments for that, as well. Our lobby efforts in Ottawa, provincial capitals and municipal offices across Canada have often seen dozens of members at a time meet with politicians and government officials to put our message before them.

Think about that. Unifor doesn’t rely on highly paid lobbyists to get our message out. We rely on working people – people who one day are on the shop floor doing their jobs, and the next day are sitting with a mayor, a Member of Parliament, a cabinet minister or even the prime minister explaining Unifor’s position on an issue affecting their community.

I can tell you, that has an impact. I’ve seen it happen. There is nothing more effective than a worker telling a politician what needs to be done to make Canada a stronger and more inclusive country for all.

With a mobilized membership and an informed public, we can achieve just about anything to build a better country with equity and opportunity for all.

Doing that, of course, means effectively communicating our message. We can have all the best ideas in the world, but without the ability to effectively communicate them to those who need to hear those ideas, our impact is severely diminished.

At Unifor, we communicate in many different and important ways – one on one with politicians (as mentioned), with our own membership through local, regional, sectoral and national meetings, with the public through media releases and media interviews, with our thousands of followers on social media, and now, through this new magazine.

Each tool we use to communicate is a little different, to ensure we reach everyone we can, but the overall message remains the same: There is much more that can be done to make Canada better for all, and we have a few ideas about how to do just that.

As a labour leader, effective communications has been at the heart of everything I do, because Unifor’s political power is based on an engaged membership, an informed public and decision makers who know that our union is able to get our message out – so they had better listen.

I am incredibly proud of this union and the political work we do, and our ability to communicate a vision for a better Canada for all.

Jerry Dias
National President
Unifor shapes political landscape

Since Unifor’s founding Convention in 2013, the union, through its members, has had tremendous influence in shaping the political landscape in all regions of the country. After the recent British Columbia election, Unifor has now gone through a full national election cycle, with votes taking place federally and in every single province and territory and we have seen success.

Over the past four years the union has worked diligently to defeat Stephen Harper, to stop Tim Hudak’s anti-union agenda in Ontario, to elect Rachel Notley in Alberta, to bring Stephen McNeil to within an inch of a minority in Nova Scotia, and to take away a Liberal majority in British Columbia for the first time in 16 years.

As we made our mark in these elections, it was clear that Unifor had become the most active and visible union in the country on the political front. Time and time again we put the most boots on the ground - a testament to our members will to make a difference as we fought back and challenged the status quo from coast to coast.

Our union has exposed the anti-worker agendas that exist in Nova Scotia and Manitoba and launched a campaign to stop the fire sale of Crown corporations in Saskatchewan.

Outside of election campaigns, we fought for labour law reform, resulting in the first proposed changes in a generation in both Alberta and Ontario to combat the impact of precarious work and help raise the floor for all workers. Of course, a key gain in both provinces has been the commitment to a $15 minimum wage. We must continue to push to make this a national standard so that no worker is left behind.

All of this was achieved while taking on free trade deals such as NAFTA, CETA and TPP and fighting against a punitive U.S. government attack on our softwood lumber industry. These battles continue and every voice, and every pair of boots, will be needed to ensure that fair deals protecting good jobs are made and enforced.

The strength of our membership allows us to make progress not only at the ballot box, but also in bargaining and beyond. The collective power that we have achieved together assists us in everything that we do to affect political and social change.

As a socially progressive union each of us have a responsibility to promote equity in the workplace and in society. Our work is collective and must also continue to lead the fight for equality for women, for workers of colour and workers with disabilities, for members of the LGBTQ community and for justice for Indigenous peoples.

Our victories and our ability to continue the struggle would not be possible without you - our members and retirees, and I thank you for all that you do.

Many of you have taken the time to attend Unifor councils and conventions, to participate in government lobbies, or to show up at rallies and protests. It is the members who are responsible for the growth and success of our union, and make Unifor a leading voice in Canada.

We have come a long way since our founding Convention. There is still much road for us to cover and I look forward to taking the journey with all of you.

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Softwood Lumber Campaign an inspiration and an example for others

The strength that Unifor draws from the mobilization of its members, combined with that of the different actors in our community, is impressive for its magnitude and its ability to influence our governments’ decisions. In that respect, I would like to talk about the remarkable experience of our softwood lumber campaign.

It’s quite rare to see organizations more accustomed to confrontation than collaboration agree to put their differences aside to form a common front that defends not only jobs, but the very survival of our regions. Bringing together the Premier of Quebec, several top ministers, employers, unions—including Unifor—and municipalities within a single coalition is a feat that deserves recognition.

In the fall of 2016, at the end of the one-year grace period following the expiry of the Canada-U.S. Softwood Lumber Agreement, we mobilized our forces in anticipation of the impending crisis. And our union didn’t just take a “top-down” approach focusing on executives and high-ranking officials. We reached out to our grassroots members, who embraced this combat wholeheartedly within their communities and workplaces, proving that when jobs are at risk and entire towns or communities are threatened, people spring into action. That’s exactly what we saw in all the regions, especially those where the forestry industry is present.

Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Quebec is a special case that deserves mention. Our members there created a coalition with employers and regional politicians called the “Alliance Boréale.” On April 30, more than 4,000 people – a huge turnout for a northern region – answered the call to come out and march in the streets of Dolbeau, a demonstration of their successful mobilization. We saw members of the Quebec National Assembly, members of Parliament from Ottawa, the Premier of Quebec, employers, leaders of the central labour federations, Unifor members in the forestry industry and other sectors such as aluminum, mayors, and many others marching side by side.

Unifor mobilized all across Quebec and Canada, organizing hundreds of actions to demand that the federal government intervene on the softwood lumber issue. Among other actions, we conducted a tour of the Quebec Director’s regions, holding press conferences and encouraging local unions to send hundreds of letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and we conducted a week-long lobbying blitz in Ottawa during which our members met with dozens of elected officials of all political stripes.

The fact that the Premier of Quebec personally congratulated Unifor for its efforts speaks for itself.

The result, as you know, is that the federal government finally accepted our demands. And though the war is not over for fair trade, since an agreement has not yet been negotiated, we can be proud of our union and our members for having won an important battle.

We should all draw inspiration from this situation, which proves that coordinated actions have the power to stir all of society into action. In fact, the Quebec government is planning to borrow a page from our playbook in its renegotiation of NAFTA by creating a coalition similar to ours.

It’s up to us. We need to make sure we act as proactively as we have done throughout our softwood lumber campaign to demand a fair future.
WESTERN:
Making a difference at the polls

It’s been another feisty year for Unifor in the western region of Canada, chocked full of bargaining gains and grassroots mobilization.

Our member mobilization has been on both sides of institutional power. In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, Unifor led the fight back against right-wing governments stuck in the out dated mentality of austerity and trickle-down economics.

Yet in Alberta, our grassroots work has focused on building support and strength for a bold NDP government that is putting working people first. Shifting from a conservative 40-year legacy will not happen overnight, and Unifor members have been working with the government to introduce a nation-leading Climate Action Plan and historic updates to workplace rights in labour law.

Our struggle is very different in the Prairie provinces, where public sector service cuts and privatization are more common. In Saskatchewan, for example, we have waged a very effective campaign to protect the province’s myriad of Crown corporations from being sold off to the private sector. Keeping Crowns public both protects good jobs but also maintains key infrastructure and services in public hands.

In Manitoba, a part-time premier who spends half of his days in Costa Rica has targeted the province’s most vulnerable workers by taking away certain rights to form a union. Unifor is taking the lead in a fight back that involves building capacity and helping re-build the opposition.

On the West Coast, Unifor went all-in on the election campaign to end the 16-year dynasty of the right-wing BC Liberal Party. Unifor’s activists ran a strategic campaign that targeted swing ridings and we played a critical role in replacing the Christy Clark government with the NDP’s John Horgan.

ONTARIO:
Labour laws changed by working together

We’ve had a very exciting year in Ontario. This fall, we expect Ontario to become the second province in Canada to introduce a $15 minimum wage, with a host of other important changes to outdated labour legislation.

This is an amazing achievement and I can tell you that it wouldn’t have happened without all of those who called their MPP, emailed and organized lobby visits. You told your stories about why these changes matter to you, your family and your community. You advocated not just on behalf of yourself, but for those who are caught in a cycle...
of precarious work and working poverty with such little control over one’s life and well-being.

You came to Queen’s Park for Unifor’s lobby day, hopped on a bus to the Rally for Decent Work at Queen’s Park, participated in the Fight for $15 and Fairness campaign or got involved in the Ontario Federation of Labour’s Make it Fair campaign.

Such movements are not built overnight but built by working together across sectors and organizations with a common goal. Our union has shown that we can win by doing deep organizing and having challenging conversations about politics. We win when we all do our part towards a shared goal and feel united in our hope. At times when we are surrounded by doubt, to be hopeful is to be courageous.

Our work in Ontario is not yet done, the Fair Work, Better Jobs (Bill 148) must become law. Unifor will continue pushing on this front and beyond to strengthen workers’ rights. I encourage you to get involved – so that together we can truly win the day for workers!

Unifor members in Atlantic Canada continue to inspire with incredible fightback in defense of good jobs and a better more equal world - at the bargaining table, in politics and in our communities. And we have done it together, in solidarity, building our union every step of the way.

In Nova Scotia, this meant a years-long fight against Premier Stephen McNeil’s Liberal government that introduced seven pieces of anti-worker legislation in its first term. Members mobilized to protect the right to strike and even the right to keep their own union.

Unifor’s bold campaign to reverse the damaging cuts to nursing homes became a spark that rallied people against the premier’s austerity agenda and mobilized Nova Scotians. Because of us, healthcare became a major issue in the May 30 provincial election and the catalyst for McNeil losing several ridings, holding his majority by a slim two seats and a mere 137 votes.

In New Brunswick, Unifor mobilized more than 700 members in defence of good jobs in the forestry sector. The June 19 softwood lumber rally saw Unifor activists from dozens of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia forestry communities join with key employers to defend their industry from unfair U.S. tariffs. Local leaders and activists from health care, aerospace, telecommunications and other Unifor industries showed their solidarity. This fight will continue.

Meanwhile, the solidarity of the locked-out members of Local 597 at D-J Composites in Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador inspired our whole union. On the line since December through an incredibly harsh winter, these 32 sisters and brothers have a motto we can all live by: One day longer, one day stronger!
NAFTA, TPP, CETA, China, Korea, Canada is negotiating and reneging a direct impact on the lives of working people.

Our government must put people that work for working people. For more information, go to
For Trade Agreements

Here’s Trade: Protecting the rights of working people abroad.

All over the world, governments and corporations are negotiating trade deals that will have serious implications for the lives of working people.

Ulster Unionist Party Leader first and negotiate trade deals with the United States, the European Union, and their communities.

Visit unifor.org/peoplestrade
A People’s Trade Agenda

Unifor is leading the push for a new agenda for trade, that puts people first

No two trade deals are exactly alike, but there is one thing these agreements all seem to have in common.

Trade agreements weren’t negotiated to help working people.

“Over and over again, we see trade deals being negotiated – behind closed doors – that only seem to serve the desires of the rich and the corporations, instead of the day to day needs of working Canadians,” National President Jerry Dias said.

“We need to change that. We need a trade agenda that serves the people and our communities, not the powerful.”

This fall, following Canadian Council in Winnipeg, Unifor launches an ambitious and innovative campaign, targeting Canada’s trade agenda.

“We are setting our sights very high with this campaign,” said Shane Wark, Assistant to the National President. “We want to do much more than just address this trade deal or that trade deal. Unifor is setting its sights on changing the entire way Canada approaches negotiating trade agreements.”

Over and over again, Dias said, as Unifor looked at the TPP, NAFTA, trade deals with Europe, Korea or China, it became clear that the problem was not just with this or that clause of any given deal, but with the entire approach Canada has taken to negotiating such deals.

Roland Kiehne, the Director of Membership Mobilization and Political Action, said while it is good to hear Canada’s Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland talk about a progressive trade agenda, it is up to Unifor and other unions and activist groups to make sure the government understands what a truly progressive trade deal looks like.

“There has been this assumption by government and their negotiators that if we just make life easy for corporations and their shareholders, jobs and prosperity will follow for the rest of us,” Kiehne said.

But in every case we have seen that is not true. Working people know how bad the last 30 years of trade deals have been for this country.

So-called “free trade” agreements, such as NAFTA and others, have contributed to investment drain and job losses – particularly in goods-producing sectors such manufacturing. In the post-NAFTA era of globalization, Canada’s manufacturing trade deficit has ballooned to $120 billion. As well, Canada has been the most-sued nation under Investor-State Dispute Settlement Systems, which gives corporations the right to sue a government if laws or regulations put profit at risk.

Canada also once again finds itself in the middle of a softwood lumber fight with the U.S., putting some 25,000 jobs at risk.

Unifor Local 592 member Tania Chypllyk is a millwright in Port Alberni. Jobs such as hers are put at risk by bad trade deals.
Dias said the new trade campaign, to be
named People’s Trade: A New Agenda for Trade
Agreements, would involve working with other
unions and non-government organizations to push
a progressive trade model that puts people and
their communities first.

“We want to hear from workers and community members
about how trade can better help them,” he said.

The centrepiece would be a series of town hall meetings
across Canada examining what trade deals mean in each
community, tailored to local needs. A Windsor town hall,
for instance, might look at NAFTA or attempts to revive the
TPP, while a town hall in Quebec, British Columbia or New
Brunswick might look at softwood.

Unifor is already active on many trade issues, and this new
campaign would bring all those efforts together into a focused
effort to change the way trade deals are negotiated in Canada.

Last June, for instance, Unifor Locals across Canada followed
up on months of lobbying and other efforts with rallies aimed
at pushing the government to stand up for the softwood
industry, its workers and their communities.

In a submission to the federal government in July, Unifor
called for stronger labour and environmental rules for the
countries covered by NAFTA, and for adherence to those rules
as a condition for any of the trade liberalization aspects of the
deal to kick in.

Trade deals were supposed to help workers and their
communities. But if you ask any worker it is clear that has
not happened when the markets are left to their own devices
and trade rules make it easier for corporations to relocate
investment with no protections for affected workers.

Dias said, “Labour and environmental compliance needs to be
an integral part of this or any other trade deal. Without that,
it’s just another corporate trade deal. Our campaign is about
fixing that.”

For more, go to unifor.org/peoplestrade.

Solidarity For a Better World
Solidarity is part of everything Unifor does

Unifor’s theme for the 2017 Canada
Council - Solidarity for a Better
World - reflects the ambitious
bargaining and political vision of the union
since its formation. The theme helps frame
the achievements of the last 12 months,
and shape our discussions in the year
ahead.

It is easy to see how solidarity has been
guiding Unifor’s actions. Success at the
bargaining table hinges on solidarity -
solidarity between the membership and
the bargaining committee, solidarity
between job classifications, and solidarity
across generations within the workplace.

When bargaining escalates to job action,
solidarity among Unifor members
nationwide is critical.

Over the last year, Unifor members have
seen solidarity play out time and again.
Whether it’s for striking members at
Delastek in Grand-Mère or locked out

Working people know how bad the last 30 years
of trade deals have been for this country.

Unifor members at D-J Composites in
Gander, solidarity has been important
for financial support and maintaining the
fightback for respect and a fair contract.

Beyond its membership, Unifor has used
its political power to increase equity
and improve the economic security of
all working people. Within our borders,
this has meant being vocal and visible in
support of social justice work, speaking
out against racism and Islamophobia or
defending LGBTQ workers at pride events
across Canada. Unifor is also proud to
stand with Aboriginal peoples in the
struggle for reconciliation.

This work is made possible by the structures
that Unifor has entrenched in its constitution.
The union’s many standing committees
are populated by dedicated rank-and-file
members who spend countless hours
ensuring that Unifor is doing the heavy lifting
required for social change.

Outside our borders, Unifor is helping to
create a better world in many ways. The
People’s Trade campaign strives to ensure
that international trade is not a “race to the
bottom” in which corporations seek out
jurisdictions with the lowest wages and
least regulation. Unifor believes trade must
guarantee all workers safe workplaces, fair
wages and benefits, and rights at work. If
trade becomes a euphemism for pitting
workers from the Global South against
workers from the Global North, all of us lose.

Unifor has also dedicated substantial
resources to empowering international
partners. The Social Justice Fund supports
projects in Canada and around the globe to
build leadership and skills among others,
particularly those facing marginalization
and challenges due to poverty, racism,
sexism and a lack of opportunity.

From Gander to Bangladesh, Unifor is
committed to justice and solidarity for a
better world.
Standing Up For Health Care
Why Canada needs a national pharmacare program

For years, Unifor has partnered with national health organizations and grassroots movements to advocate for a stronger public health care system. From fighting creeping privatization, to advocating for equitable health transfers to the provinces and territories, our union has been outspoken about the need for affordable, accessible health care for all.

Local 1106 member Melissa Leonard is an RPN at Sunnyside Home in Kitchener. Unifor represents almost 30,000 healthcare workers.

Increasingly, the focus of many health care advocates has become the need for a universal pharmacare program. It’s easy to see why.

Canada remains the only country with a publicly funded health care system that does not include a prescription drug plan. According to the most comprehensive study on this topic, an estimated one in 10 Canadians can’t afford to fill their prescriptions.

Can we really say that we have a complete, universal health care system if that care stops at diagnosis for so many people?

Keeping people healthy is the best argument for a pharmacare program, but it’s far from the only reason. Currently, each province and territory is responsible for purchasing drugs and negotiating prices with suppliers on their own. Anyone who has shopped in bulk knows there can be huge cost savings to placing one large order versus 12 small orders.

Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ontario’s Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, has long advocated for pharmacare and wrote in The Globe and Mail that the price Canadians pay for some drugs compared with countries with a national pharmacare plan would be equivalent to paying $60 for a cup of coffee at Tim Hortons. We wouldn’t accept that, and we shouldn’t accept inflated prices for our prescription drugs.

Cost savings to the provinces and to individuals along with better health outcomes should be motivation enough to make it happen, but pharmacare has been in political limbo for decades.

The earliest call for national pharmacare dates back to 1964 when the Royal Commission on Health Services recommended that Canada establish a universal, public prescription drug program following the introduction of Medicare. The chair of this commission, Saskatchewan Supreme Court Justice Emmett Hall, stated that “in view of the high cost of many of the new life-saving, life-sustaining, pain-killing, and disease-preventing medicines, prescription drugs should be introduced as a benefit of the public health services program.”

In the more than 50 years since, there have been multiple reports, studies, commissions, and campaigns all showing the benefits of a national pharmacare program.

There have been incremental adjustments to provincial health insurance programs over the years, with several provinces protecting residents from “catastrophic” drug costs only, but a true universal system continues to be just out of reach.

Now, there is growing momentum around a renewed call for universal drug coverage. Unifor supports the call for public, universal pharmacare for all. Our union and members will continue to meet with elected provincial, territorial and federal representatives to raise our voice and concerns.

What we hear at those meetings remains the same: if we want to see pharmacare, we must be vocal about it. This is why every Unifor member must be involved in pushing for change.

With every member speaking out and taking action it gets us one step closer to better health care for all.

To learn more about a national pharmacare program and what you can do to help, visit our friends at the Council of Canadians: canadians.org/pharmacare.
Labour Laws
Movement for decent work gains momentum

Over the last three years, the movement pushing for decent work has grown in size and in scope, internationally and nationally becoming recognized as a powerful catalyst for change.

Here in Canada, organizing has focused around the demands for a $15 minimum wage and stronger workplace rights. In Canada and the US, the Fight for $15 has also joined forces with Black Lives Matter to articulate a vision of economic and racial justice for workers of colour, who most often occupy the lowest and most precarious rungs of the economic ladder.

Elected officials on both sides of the border have been pressured to overhaul outdated employment laws that have left far too many workers stuck in low-wage, precarious jobs, with little control over their schedules or lives. This trend has disproportionately affected women, workers of colour, newcomer communities, young workers and workers with disabilities, making the fight for decent work an important equity and social justice issue.

“At the federal level, in Ontario and Alberta, Unifor has been at the forefront of the push to win new labour laws to make work fairer for everyone – both unionized and non-unionized workers,” said National President Jerry Dias. “Our core belief is that decent work is not just possible, but necessary for a strong economy where no one is left behind.”

The 2015 election of the NDP government in Alberta, led by former labour lawyer Rachel Notley, marked a turning point for labour and communities’ ability to influence change. A little more than a year after taking office, the Notley government announced it would introduce a $15 minimum wage in 2018, making it the first Canadian province to do so.

Recently, the Alberta government made changes to other labour laws, some of which had not been touched in 30 years. On June 7, the government passed into law first contract arbitration, card-based certification, protections for dependent contractors and a number of other improvements. Unifor worked with the government to draft this legislation.

Since 2013 there has been a political shift in which governments seem a little less interested in attacking working people and their unions. While this doesn’t extend to all provincial governments – Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are notable exceptions – there has been meaningful progress at the provincial and federal levels. This is the culmination of pressure and mobilizing by Unifor and other unions and organizations.

In early 2015, the Ontario government introduced its Changing Workplaces Review, the country’s first ever independent review of both the Employment Standards and Labour Relations Acts, with the goal of reducing precarious work.

The result has been the introduction of legislation, including a $15 minimum wage, card-based certification in certain sectors, successor rights in certain sectors, equal pay for full-time, part-time, and temporary workers, new protections for temp agency workers, paid sick days and other significant gains.

During the 2015 federal election the Liberal Party made a series of commitments to undo harmful anti-union Conservative laws, and the promises were put into action with the passage of Bill C-4, restoring card-based certification in federal sectors, and ending discriminatory annual financial disclosure requirements under Bill C-377.

The government has also ratified the International Labour Organization Convention 98, affirming the country’s commitment to upholding fair labour relations and free collective bargaining. Provincial and territorial governments must now follow suit.

We only got this far through the hard work of Unifor, our members and our allies. We must all remain active to see this through.
Unifor is a union for women

The union’s commitment to equity is evident in our constitution, structures, bargaining agendas, community involvement and our advocacy work to push for legislative change. At the top of Unifor’s agenda is fighting for good jobs with equal access for all women. Unifor fights for the economic security of all women including: Indigenous women, women of colour, transgender women, women with disabilities, and young women.

Becoming a parent can have a lifelong impact on economic security for women. Here are three campaigns that you can get involved with to reduce barriers and gender inequality:

1. Maternity and Parental Leave: Almost 40 per cent of working women are not eligible for EI parental leave benefits. The system needs to change to lower the eligibility threshold and have a longer qualification period.

2. CPP “Drop Out” Provision: The recent expansion of the CPP discriminates against women. It does not allow workers to drop low-earning years that coincide with child-rearing, an exemption in the current CPP that is usually claimed by women. Join our fight to reverse this.

3. Child Care: High quality, public, accessible, affordable child care is necessary to accessing good jobs. By bringing in affordable child care, Quebec went from the lowest workforce participation by women in Canada to the highest. In fact, they are now third in the world for women aged 25-44. Now is the time to act. Agreements between the provinces and federal government are being signed and we can make them inclusive.

Unifor is a leader in the fight for gender equality and our collective action continues to make a difference. Get involved today!

For more information email women@unifor.org or visit unifor.org/women.

Reaching out: a union-wide effort

Unifor Local 6003 member Michel Du Cap never suspected that a company request for him to train other Bell employees would prove so positive for the union.

As a customer service agent in Quebec, he was put in contact with new customer service agents at Bell TV at the Scarborough office. That put him in touch with Samia Hashi, and together they realized there was a big difference between his union working conditions and her non-union conditions.

“We took the conversation offline and he explained to me what a collective agreement is and what the union could do for us,” Hashi remembers.

Hashi eventually called Unifor and was assigned an organizer to help her through the steps to organize her workplace. Today, she sits on the Ontario Young Workers’ Committee and is active in the union and at labour events.

Their story shows how Unifor members play a vital role to identify and support workers to join the union. Just one conversation can trigger an organizing process.

The Organizing Department’s All in! campaign was developed to help Locals and rank and file members reach out to welcome new members. Since its launch in August 2015, many Locals have participated and as a result Unifor has led successful organizing drives.

“While Unifor organizers can help workers through the process of joining the union, we rely on our members’ contacts and the actions of Local Unions for successful organizing,” said John Aman, Organizing Director.

The Department has tools and resources for locals to expand Unifor’s organizing efforts, including training sessions, mapping tools and tips for talking about the union.

For more, visit unifor.org/allin
Unifor acts to protect pensions

Many Unifor members take great pride in the fact that they participate in a decent negotiated workplace pension plan - and they should. Despite continuing challenges, workplace committees continue to bargain improved pensions for members at the negotiating table. However, with fewer workers having access to workplace pension plans, Unifor recognizes that securing adequate pensions through bargaining must be complemented by political action to improve universal public pensions.

Recent victories such as enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan and the reversal of the retirement age for the Old Age Security pension are important reminders of the valuable role the union plays in advocating for public pension reform. While these gains are celebrated, there is now a significant challenge in Bill C-27, federally proposed anti-worker legislation. As written, the bill would undermine defined benefit plans provided by employers in the federal jurisdiction and Crown corporations.

“Sadly, the Liberal government picked up where the Harper Conservatives left off,” said Director of Pensions and Benefits Corey Vermey. “If passed, C-27 would simply allow employers to walk away from pension promises made to workers and retirees.”

Unifor, working closely with Locals, retiree chapters, and the Canadian Labour Congress, launched an aggressive campaign featuring cross-country lobbying and an online petition signed by more than 3,000 activists. Together Unifor members forced the government to halt the bill’s progression. But our fightback must continue to seek full withdrawal of the proposed legislation.

The goal to achieve secure and adequate retirement income for all will be further addressed at Unifor’s first-ever Pension Summit to be held in May of 2018.

To sign the online petition, visit unifor.org/stopC27.
Unifor supports the demand for truth, justice for the missing and murdered, and reconciliation. Learn more at unifor.org

WE STAND WITH YOU