

October 2012

TO ALL CUPE CHARTERED ORGANIZATIONS

## DECEMBER 3 – CUPE IS LAUNCHING AN EXCITING NEW CAMPAIGN ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The International Day for Persons with Disabilities was established by the United Nations to create awareness, understanding and action for the legal and social rights of persons with disabilities. This year, to mark December 3, CUPE is launching a disabilities rights campaign, championed by the Persons with Disabilities National Working Group.

Workers with disabilities include people with physical, mental, learning, and intermittent disabilities. These disabilities could have been incurred at birth, developed over time, or been the result of an accident. Government statistics show that almost 15 per cent of Canadians have a disability, meaning that in CUPE, approximately 93,000 of our 620,000 members may have some form of disability. For other equality-seeking groups, the rate is even higher.

Workers with disabilities have rights that CUPE is committed to protecting. Our new campaign will raise awareness of disability issues, create relationships with disability rights organizations, and provide tools for bargaining and administering our collective agreements so that the rights of our members with disabilities are understood and upheld.

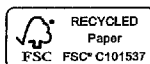
We want members to know:

- Workers with disabilities have a legally-enforceable right to have their disability accommodated by their employer.
- Accommodations might include changes to the physical work environment, and being flexible with respect to tasks, assignments, schedules, and other working terms and conditions.
- CUPE staff representatives and bargaining committees support members with disabilities by negotiating language on short-term disability, long-term disability, workers' compensation top-up, occupational health and safety, and the duty to accommodate.
- Every CUPE member could require some form of accommodation over the course of their working life. Members with disabilities have often pointed out, "We are the only equality-seeking group that you might be a member of tomorrow."

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PAUL MOIST – National President / Président national CHARLES FLEURY – National Secretary-Treasurer / Secrétaire-trésorier national

TOM GRAHAM – FRED HAHN – DANIEL LÉGÈRE – LUCIE LEVASSEUR – BARRY O'NEILL – General Vice-Presidents / Vice-présidents généraux



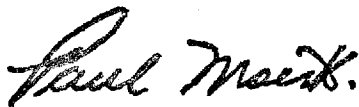
Our campaign will feature a new brochure on disability rights and the duty to accommodate, a series of fact sheets, and more. You will be able to follow the campaign and access information on-line. Watch [cupe.ca](http://cupe.ca) for details.

Here are other ways you can support the campaign and members with disabilities:

- Get involved with activities in your region to promote the campaign and raise awareness about disability issues and rights. Start by getting in touch with the Persons with Disabilities National Working Group member for your region.
- Are you a steward? There are two Steward Learning Series workshops that relate to disability rights: 1. Creating accommodation-friendly workplaces; 2. Disability issues for stewards.
- CUPE staff also offer duty to accommodate courses. Check with your education representative to find out about courses offered in your region.
- Let us know about your local's bargaining successes on disability issues, and help inform our bargaining equality resources. Email us at [equality@cupe.ca](mailto:equality@cupe.ca)
- Work to ensure that every bargaining committee has a person with a disability on it. People with disabilities need to be reflected in all of our union structures.
- Become informed and stay informed. Here are some useful web resources:
  - Council of Canadians with Disabilities: [ccdonline.ca](http://ccdonline.ca)
  - Canadian Working Groups on HIV and Rehabilitation: [hivandrehab.ca](http://hivandrehab.ca)
  - Canadian Abilities Foundation: [abilities.ca](http://abilities.ca)
  - The Disabled Women's Action Network (DAWN): [dawncanada.net](http://dawncanada.net)

We value the contribution of all our members. With this campaign, we will continue our work to make CUPE a model organization, and a standard-bearer for accessibility and inclusion.

In solidarity,



PAUL MOIST  
National President



CHARLES FLEURY  
National Secretary-Treasurer