



CUPE 2011

CUPE NATIONAL CONVENTION – VANCOUVER

Monday, October 31



FOR HER FUTURE—Ontario child care worker Christina Gilligan attended the child care sectoral meeting with her daughter on Sunday.

Delegates tackle challenges in every sector

Convention delegates got off to an early start on Sunday with sectoral meetings that explored various challenges CUPE members face every day.

School boards: In Saskatchewan, the government wants to cut spending on educational supports by screening out students from special needs designation and relying more on ‘peers’ in place of Educational Assistants. CUPE is fighting this and other attacks on school board workers across the country, including privatization threats and underfunding.

Libraries: In Toronto, workers face a hostile mayor who has threatened to close libraries. In Calgary, violence and harassment are long-standing concerns. And in Vancouver, technological change is being used by administrators to justify staff and other cuts. By engaging members and the public, however, locals in these cities have had some success in addressing these issues.

Health: More than 250 delegates heard from Eleanor Smith, president of UNISON, the largest public sector union in the United Kingdom. Smith emphasized the dangers of privatization and suggested union strategies to fight back.

Ambulance paramedics: In addition to the continued stripping of collective bargaining rights, delegates learned that paramedics also face new threats with the emergence of management consulting firms like KPMG, which advocate drastic budget cuts for EMS workers, and firefighters associations that work with right-wing governments to cut into EMS calls.

Child care: Outspoken advocate Sharon Gregson described a B.C. plan that integrates public education and quality child care while CUPE Researcher Margot Young shared the Australian experience, where Big Box corporations have squeezed out community providers. The CCPA’s Trish Hennessy said Canadian parents trust a public, regulated system that puts children’s needs first.

Electrical/utility: Delegates from Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba learned that wage and employment growth continues, although many face an increasingly challenging bargaining environment. Representatives also discussed the challenges presented by new technologies, such as smart meters, and heard an extensive briefing on the nuclear industry in Canada and internationally.

Municipal: Delegates shared strategies to protect jobs and communities from the right-wing agenda of cuts, privatization and service reviews. A panel of CUPE members and staff outlined a winning anti-privatization campaign in Penticton, an ongoing anti-cuts campaign in Peterborough, and the dangers of the Canada-EU Trade Agreement.

Post-secondary: Delegates heard from a panel on common challenges and solutions in the sector, with presentations on bargaining within a net-zero mandate, fighting privatization, building campus coalitions, fighting for pay equity in Quebec, and the ongoing strike at the University of Sherbrooke.

Social services: Cuts and privatization were the hot topic. Delegates shared concerns about the impact of systemic underfunding on service delivery and workload. Focus group testing reveals that most Canadians greatly value public services.

Water: CUPE water and wastewater members heard about the struggle to stop privatization and make the right to water a reality for millions of Colombians, CUPE’s work on First Nations water issues, the fight to stop a water P3 in Abbotsford, and the impact of new federal wastewater standards.

A visible history



As you make your way around the convention centre this week, take a few moments to enjoy the labour history panels displayed throughout the hall and outside of it. The panels are a project of the Labour Heritage Centre. The panels showcase a wide range of occupations, historical moments and work experiences. For more information, visit www.labourheritagecentre.ca/projects/

Join the Occupy rally!

Please join us on Tuesday at the convention centre’s west plaza (Jack Poole Plaza) as CUPE delegates rally to support the worldwide Occupy movement. CUPE members are part of the 99 per cent! Further details to be confirmed.

Tonight	
4:00 p.m.	Election Forums, Exhibit Hall AB1
8:00 p.m.	Equality forum, Ballroom C