

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2018 – DECEMBER 2018

Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

It's been a busy fall, and just like that another year is coming to a close. It's hard to know where the time goes!

It was great to be able to spend time this fall with our members across the country. I was in almost every province these last couple months: I attended symposiums on privatization organized by CUPE NS and CUPE NL; joined the SCFP Quebec General Council for an afternoon; spoke at the biennial convention of the Hospital Employees Union in BC; met with two locals in Saskatoon who are facing difficult employers; spoke to health care workers in Ontario and joined an OCHU rally in Toronto; and I joined the CUPE PEI All Presidents meeting and a CUPE AB executive meeting by Skype – which is never the same as being there in person, but works in a pinch.

We continue to see right-wing governments and politicians attacking our rights, across the country – workers' rights, language rights, and human rights. CUPE's leaders and activists continue to stand against these attacks, to fight back, and to resist. And I have never been more proud of our union.

Legislative Update

The fall session of Parliament has seen some ups and some downs.

Fourteen years after a federal Pay Equity Task Force made recommendations on pro-active pay equity legislation for workers in the federal sector, we will finally have legislation. The federal government introduced it as part of an omnibus budget implementation bill at the end of October, and it is expected to be passed by the House and given royal assent before the end of the year.

In October, the Prime Minister called one by-election, choosing to ignore three other vacant seats where voters were also without representation in the House of Commons – despite a long-standing tradition of calling by-elections for all vacant seats at one time.

MARK HANCOCK
National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY
National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

DENIS BOLDUK, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, DANIEL LÉGÈRE, MARLE ROBERTS
General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

This was a cynical and political decision aimed at the NDP, given that leader Jagmeet Singh is the nominated candidate in Burnaby South, one of those vacant seats. We look forward to supporting Jagmeet in that by-election, whenever Trudeau finally calls it.

But by far the most disappointing decision taken by the Trudeau government this fall was their decision to follow in the footsteps of Stephen Harper and violate the Charter rights of postal workers across the country with back-to-work legislation. Facing significant fines, CUPW members returned to work, but vowed to keep fighting for their right to bargain a free and fair collective agreement. Our National Executive Board approved a \$1 million interest-free loan to support CUPW in their fight, and CUPE members across the country have been joining solidarity actions.

In the 2015 election, the Liberals had promised they would be different from Stephen Harper – they promised electoral reform, they promised to build a nation-to-nation relationship with Canada's Indigenous peoples, they promised not to play games in the House of Commons with omnibus legislation and procedural tricks, and they promised they would respect labour. It's pretty clear that they have abandoned those promises and have abandoned their commitments to working people. With a federal election scheduled for October 2019, we will remember.

Electoral Reform

All eyes will be on British Columbia in December, awaiting the results of a provincial referendum on proportional representation. CUPE BC has been working hard to engage our members in this referendum and encourage their support to change the electoral system from out-dated first-past-the-post elections (which most often leads to majority governments being formed with far less than a majority of the vote) to proportional representation, where every vote will count towards electing their representatives to the provincial legislature.

While the federal government has dropped the ball on electoral reform, watch for a referendum to be held in PEI in 2019, and for the provincial government in Quebec to announce their plans for changes to their electoral system as well.

Canadian Labour Congress

CUPE participated in the CLC constitutional review, which is ongoing. Our submission included recommendations to address inequities in affiliate representation at the CLC's Canadian Council (the governing body between conventions), the need for a weighted vote based on membership at the Canadian Council, and to address inconsistencies in delegate entitlement to Congress conventions. Not surprisingly, there are differing opinions on many topics and it appears unlikely that the Council will reach consensus on most matters, which should make the 2020 CLC convention a lively affair.

Our labour movement continues to struggle with the impact of Unifor's departure earlier this year. Labour councils have been especially hard-hit by Unifor's decision, not just financially but in terms of activist participation. I am proud of CUPE members and locals who have stepped up to fill the void.

Many CUPE locals across the country have joined or rejoined their local labour councils, or have renewed their efforts to participate, and that has been noticed. If your local has not yet made the decision to reinvest in your labour councils and federations of labour, please do. Canada needs a strong and vibrant labour movement, and the labour movement needs CUPE members to make that happen.

International Trade Union Confederation

At the beginning of December, I participated in the Canadian delegation to the 4th Congress of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), in Copenhagen. With a theme of “Building Workers Power: Change the Rules”, the main work of the Congress was reaching consensus on a substantial program of work with four main parts: Peace, Democracy and Rights; Regulating Economic Power; Global Shifts - Just Transitions; and Equality.

National Conferences

Our third National Sector Conference was held in Ottawa at the beginning of November. More than 1,000 CUPE members and staff gathered to share information and learn about important trends and challenges in their sectors, across the country. Participants also heard from CUPE’s new economist, Angella MacEwen, listened to members share success stories about fighting privatization, and gaining respect in the workplace. And we launched our national response on workplace violence, which gives locals and members the tools they need to educate their members about their rights on the job, and to tackle the issue of violence at work with their employer.

Registration is now open for our National Bargaining Conference, being held March 18 – 21 in Saskatoon. This will be a skills building conference, with workshops focused on strategic planning for bargaining, engaging our members in the process, campaigns, and strike preparations. It will also include an outside panel of experts on current trends in collective bargaining.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

There were two disputes involving job action during the reporting period that were resolved.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Quebec	5317	Viterra - Port of Montréal	51	January 30, 2018 Locked Out	230 days
Nova Scotia	4764	Community Justice Society	7	July 30, 2018	36 days

Local 5317 – Viterra at The Port of Montréal – Quebec

Viterra, one of the main grain marketer/handlers at the Port of Montréal, locked out 51 members on Tuesday, January 30, at 7 a.m. The members were seeking equity with other Port of Montréal workers represented by CUPE.

The lock-out was lifted on September 17 after Local 5317 reached an agreement with Viterra. The agreement provides for a 2% wage increase in each year of the agreement, retroactive to January 1, 2017. Evening shift differential increased by \$1.50 per hour worked to \$2.00 per hour. All work performed on Saturday is now paid at double time. Employer's contribution to the pension plan doubled from 3% to 6%. Mechanics received a wage adjustment of \$2.38 per hour. Employer paid book-off time is now 300 hours where before it was zero hours. In addition, the local achieved improved health and safety language.

Congratulations to the members who held firm in their resolve to achieve a collective agreement that met their needs without concessions.

Local 4764 – Community Services Restorative Justice

CUPE 4764 members, caseworkers employed by the Community Justice Society (CJS), began job action on July 30th, in support of their demands to achieve wage parity, which was the main issue.

The union had identified a pay equity gap between restorative justice caseworkers and probation officers. The restorative justice caseworkers, who were paid about 56 per cent of what probation officers were earning for doing similar work and requiring similar qualifications, were looking for 90 per cent of the wages that probation officers were paid.

Caseworkers received an almost 20% wage increase, effective on ratification. Other improvements included parking, meal allowances, and an adjustment to the retirement savings plan.

Wage increases are as follows:

- 1% effective April 23, 2017
- 19.4% effective September 1, 2018
- 2% increase effective April 1, 2019
- 2% effective April 1, 2020

The new collective agreement runs from April 23, 2016, to March 31, 2021.

Congratulations to these seven members who achieved the parity that they sought at the outset of bargaining.

Other Bargaining

CUPE 410 members who work for the Greater Victoria Public Library voted more than 85 percent in favour of strike action on the heels of talks breaking off between the union and representatives of the Greater Victoria Public Library and Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association at the beginning of November.

The employer presented workers with a list of concession demands, refused to move on its concession demands and refused to answer key questions about sweeping changes proposed to scheduling and use of auxiliary workers.

The proposed concessions relate to the extent and nature of precarious work, the rules and wages related to scheduling during normal weekend days, and the use of student employees in place of existing, long-serving auxiliary staff.

In New Brunswick over 75% of CUPE's 30,000 members will be at the bargaining table next spring. The Progressive Conservatives, propped up by 3 MLAs from the People's Alliance Party (PANB), will attempt to hold power for the next four years as a minority coalition government. Immediately after the Liberals lost a confidence vote in the legislature, CUPE bargaining teams assembled to strategize and prepare their coordinated bargaining. Despite what some government negotiators hope, members will not change their resolve and will be following their bargaining plan to increase the buying power of members.

CUPE Local 90 has ratified a new collective agreement with the City of Weyburn. The union membership voted 90 per cent in favour of ratification. The Union was adamant throughout bargaining that they would not accept concessions, and never backed down. It was unfortunate that it took until mediation for the Employer to realize that the union was serious about not accepting the Employer's concessions. The ratified agreement contains no concessions, and includes a wage increase of 1%, 1.5%, 1.5% and 1.5% over the four years of the deal. All current employees will receive retro pay back to January 1, 2017.

Members in every region of CUPE are fighting back against concessions and resisting two-tier provisions, supported by our national bargaining policy. Employers are paying attention and know that when they take on one bargaining unit, they are taking on CUPE's 3,711 other bargaining units and over 665,000 members. Our fight against concessions is paying off with real gains at the bargaining table.

Regional Services Division Updates

ATLANTIC REGION

Both CUPE Nova Scotia and CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador held evening panel discussions to call for public accountability legislation and improved disclosure rules for the procurement of public services and infrastructure. I was glad to be able to attend these forums where experts discussed the lack of reporting standards for public-private partnerships.

There should be no secrets when public money is spent on public infrastructure and services. A more transparent and cost-effective approach to public procurement will ensure we can afford all the hospitals, highways, education, long term care and other public services we rely on.

Newfoundland and Labrador

CUPE NL joined with allies of Common Front NL to launch the \$15 and Fairness NL campaign. Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada, at \$11.15 per hour. Fewer than 6 per cent of Canadians live in jurisdictions with a lower minimum wage. The campaign is calling on the province to adopt a \$15 per hour minimum wage.

Thirty percent of the labour force in Newfoundland and Labrador earn \$15 an hour or less and women are disproportionately represented, comprising two-thirds of that group. A higher minimum wage is a concrete way to help reduce growing inequality and help move workers and their families out of poverty.

CUPE's public sector locals across the province reached tentative agreements with the government in early October.

The provincial government announced in November that it would amend the Labour Standards Act to allow victims of family violence to take leave from work, making Newfoundland and Labrador the latest province to enact similar legislation.

CUPE 1761 members are in bargaining with their employer, the Town of Placentia, who is seeking to freeze their wages over four years. The local is fighting back strong. They are starting with a member mobilization and public support campaign to raise awareness.

Nova Scotia

The highway workers of Nova Scotia, represented by CUPE 1867, are campaigning against the use of a public-private partnership to construct a new thirty-eight kilometer stretch of Highway 104. The Liberal government has announced it intends to use a P3 scheme to design, finance, build, maintain and operate this \$285 million project, without any evidence that this model will cost less or that the highway maintenance will meet appropriate safety standards.

Locals 227 and 1431, representing employees of the Halifax Water Commission, are facing over a dozen concessions at the bargaining table, most of which will negatively affect work-life balance. I joined members of Local 227 at a membership meeting in November, and was pleased to see their members vote overwhelmingly in favour of strike action.

In the health sector, the Nova Scotia Council of Unions and the employer group have completed collective bargaining for all acute care collective agreements and have referred remaining matters in dispute to arbitration. The issues that must be resolved by arbitration have been narrowed considerably.

MARITIMES REGION

New Brunswick

Immediately after Gallant's Liberals lost power on a vote of confidence, CUPE bargaining teams assembled to strategize and prepare their coordinated bargaining. The incoming Conservatives refused to meet, but this will not change CUPE's resolve to increase the buying power of our members as the majority of the 30,000 CUPE members in New Brunswick will simultaneously be at the bargaining table in the spring of 2019.

After 8 months of consultation, education sessions, meeting thousands of members in a provincial tour and grassroots member mobilization, CUPE NB's Bargaining Forward movement is now in full swing. The provincial government cannot shy away from the problems that a decade of stagnating wages creates. Growth is needed in New Brunswick, and workers' purchasing power is a key part in the equation.

CUPE New Brunswick is challenging a number of recommendations made by a taskforce responsible for evaluating WorkSafeNB. CUPE NB is concerned with limiting the powers of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, focusing on "early" return rather than "safe" return to work, and limiting resources for injured workers services with the objective of privatizing them. There was a lack of transparency in the appointment of worker representatives on the taskforce and insufficient workers' and injured workers' input and consultation.

CUPE is campaigning to organize the employees of Cannabis NB, the only legally authorized retailer for cannabis products in the province. Despite good development prospects, the crown corporation does not seem ready to commit to make these jobs stable and have all the benefits that should come with such a profitable industry. CUPE is also getting ready to represent workers of the SQDC, the public cannabis retailer in Quebec.

PEI

CUPE PEI participated in government consultations regarding raising the minimum wage. Following a recommendation from the Employment Standards Board, the province announced an increase of 70 cents per hour for the spring of 2019. Although the new hourly rate of \$12.25 will come short of providing a living wage for Islanders, with this hike PEI will remain the Atlantic province with the highest minimum wage.

Education sector local presidents met with the Minister of Education in October to update the Minister and his staff on some of the issues affecting their members: staffing issues, classification appeals, CUPE 1145's Red Light campaign, as well as their violence in the workplace campaign. A month later, we saw some progress when the Transportation Minister announced the government would make changes to penalties and enforcement against drivers who fail to stop for a school bus that has its flashing red lights activated. Congratulations to our members for a job well done!

CUPE 3260, representing education assistants of the PEI School Board, applied for conciliation as the wage mandate set by government is unacceptable. But despite the impasse on wages, the Local is pleased with what the parties were able to achieve at the table prior to conciliation.

Quebec

The results of a study on psychological distress were presented to the Provincial University Sector Council convention, which was held in October. UQÀM researchers reached the conclusion that over half the non-teaching staff in our universities suffer from psychological distress. Budget cutbacks over the past few years and reductions in personnel are the main causes.

In addition, about one-third of the employees deal with major problems in terms of work-life balance. Amongst the employees in distress, nearly half of them rely on medication, which impacts the cost of our insurance plans.

In the health care sector, our Quebec locals have been busy over the past few months negotiating local agreements following mergers in the sector.. Eight bargaining tables were up and running in early fall. The majority of our locals have reached satisfactory agreements, without there being any recourse to an arbitration/mediation process, while three of them are still working to achieve this.

The energy sector has also been very busy this fall, with a cross-province tour of the general membership meetings involving locals 957, 1500, 2000, 4250, 4785, and 5735 who represent Hydro-Quebec's unionized workers. The purpose of this tour was to present to the membership the tentative agreement reached this past summer between the locals and the employer. The agreement improves the staffing process, improves the insurance plans and vacation leaves, establishes parameters regarding mobility, establishes parameters regarding the "banker's clause" in the pension plans while maintaining the benefits, and grants salary and premium increases equal to the cost of living. At the completion of the tour, the members ratified the agreement.

Ontario

The Ontario government, elected on a slogan of "For the People", has shown its true intention of the meaning of their slogan during the fall economic update. The theme was clearly "*For the **Wealthy** People*", as the Ford Government laid the groundwork for tax breaks for Ontario's corporations and wealthiest individuals, which will lead to deep cuts across all sectors of government. Premier Ford's math just does not add up – you cannot cut taxes and bring down the deficit without cutting services.

Corporations used to pay the same share of taxes as individuals, to fund the services and programs our communities need to thrive. The corporate tax rate has been slowly reduced over the past several decades and now people pay 3.5 times more than corporations. At the same time, corporate profits have soared while people's wages have flatlined, and most Ontarians struggle with debt to cover their basic costs.

Representatives of locals affiliated to the Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU) met in Ottawa prior to the National Sector Council Conference to prepare for their 2019 round of bargaining. Delegates overwhelmingly adopted proposals to take to the bargaining table. This will be CUPE's largest bargaining table, representing 55,000 school board workers. The bargaining will be the first major negotiations in Ontario since the Ford government has been elected.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Sister Terri Preston for her commitment to education workers in Ontario and across the country. Terri has been the leader through several rounds of central bargaining with trustees and government, and is now stepping aside as President of OSBCU. We look forward to working with Sister Laura Walton as she steps into the role of President.

Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) is at the forefront in fighting the crisis in Ontario healthcare. Government cuts continue to hamper the delivery of hospital services where most hospitals are already operating at over 100% capacity. Surge funding to assist during the flu season has been cut in half. Funding for mental health has been cut by \$377 million. OCHU will continue its fight and push back hard as the government's fiscal plans collide sharply with the need for enhanced healthcare funding and we could be faced with the closure of 3,000 hospital beds across the province.

Led by Brother Fred Hahn and supported by activists and staff, CUPE won an important victory at the Sponsors' Corporation of the Ontario Municipal Employee Retirement System. We were facing six proposed changes that would have replaced 100% guaranteed indexing with conditional indexing for future pensions. CUPE had previously led the fight for guaranteed indexing. Other changes that would have harmed plan members were the integration of the pension formula with the new "Year's Additional Maximum Pensionable Earnings" (YAMPE) introduced as part of the enhanced Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and the change to early retirement benefit to require retirees be 5 years from their Normal Retirement Age (NRA) to receive an unreduced pension (age 60 for NRA 65 and age 55 for NRA 60).

The fightback against these regressive measures also led to victories on two plan enhancements - removing the 35-year service cap and the ability for Paramedics to negotiate into the NRA 60 pension plan. Enhanced part-time employee enrollment provisions did not pass.

Congratulations and thanks go to Fred, the CUPE Ontario Executive and activists, and staff for their leadership in this significant victory.

Manitoba

The legal challenge to the Pallister government's wage freeze legislation, *The Public Service Sustainability Act*, has taken a significant step forward with the setting of court dates with the Court of Queen's Bench. CUPE, as a member of the Partnership to Defend Public Services, is preparing to combat the legislation imposed on public sector workers in 2017. But workers have a long wait ahead of them: the first court date is set for November 18, 2019.

Our members in the health care sector are also dealing with fallout from another piece of anti-worker legislation from 2017. *The Health Sector Bargaining Act* forces health care workers across the province into representation votes. Members and staff are hard at work to prepare for these votes, scheduled for the spring of 2019, and we are confident that CUPE is the union of choice for these workers.

CUPE 851 in Swan River made it through a tough round of bargaining this fall. Faced with an employer who was dragging negotiations out and tabling serious concessions, including the removal of statutory holidays from the agreement, members gave their bargaining committee a strong mandate with a near-unanimous strike vote on October 16. Five weeks later, the membership ratified a concession-free agreement that included access to vacation for part-time workers and a wage increase of 4% over two years.

Local government elections held across Manitoba on October 24 saw some great results for labour-endorsed candidates. Congratulations to our members for all their hard work.

Saskatchewan

Bargaining continues to be difficult across the province, but the labour movement has held strong, together, against the provincial government's bargaining mandate. In a minor victory, the government recently announced that their previously mandated 3.5% wage rollback was no longer in place, and they are publicly asking unions to come back to the table.

Workers at the City of Weyburn are celebrating a new collective agreement. Members of CUPE 90 were adamant they would not accept a single one of the dozen or so concessions their employer was proposing. Their steadfast resolve led to a mediated agreement that was concession free and included wage increases of 5.5% over four years, retroactive to January 1, 2017.

CUPE 1949 also resorted to mediation to reach an agreement with Legal Aid Saskatchewan. The local had previously filed an unfair labour practice claim with the Labour Relations Board after management moved to contract out duty counsel work to the private bar and to lay off several Legal Aid employees. The agreement, which was signed on November 22, resolved the claim by bringing some duty counsel and support work back in-house and creating mechanisms for reviewing related issues. This is a positive move for our members and for Legal Aid clients who rely on the support and services they provide.

At the end of September, it was an honour to join CUPE 1975 at their membership meeting at the University of Saskatchewan. After the meeting, members gave their full support to the bargaining team, in the form of a significant strike vote, to protect their rights to participate equally in their pension plan, and to preserve their defined benefit pension plan, at the bargaining table.

Alberta

After months of consultations and campaigns, CUPE members in Alberta celebrated a victory last month when the provincial government introduced legislation to make the Local Authorities Pension Plan (and two other plans) fully jointly trusteed.

This means that changes to the pension plans must be negotiated between employers and unions, rather than made arbitrarily by government. This brings Alberta into line with most other provinces, where governments have accepted joint trusteeship as a best practice. This legislation is expected to be passed into law in early December.

Alberta's economy continues to improve and is nearing the place it was at before the 2015 crash in the price of oil. Alberta led the country last year in economic growth and is projected to again lead the country this year and in 2019 and 2020.

The good economic news is contributing to a modest recovery in the finances of the provincial government, but our members are still facing difficulties at the bargaining table. Despite a trend across the Alberta public sector to minimal wage increases, CUPE has managed to do better among some of our post-secondary locals. CUPE 2157 (Keyano College) negotiated an economic adjustment of 1.5% in 2016 and a COLA of \$1,040 monthly, and CUPE 1368 (U of A Student Union) was able to negotiate wage increases of up to 40% with help from the increases to the Alberta minimum wage.

British Columbia

A record number of current, retired or former members ran for office in the municipal and school board elections held on October 20. Twenty-eight were successful. Thank you to all who ran for office, for taking the time out of your busy lives and campaigning on a progressive platform to support working people at the local level. Congratulations to all those who were successful. We know you will represent your constituents well. And congratulations as well to the many CUPE members who worked so hard on these important campaigns.

CUPE 4500 member Surinder Sahdra had responded to a variety of situations in his 18 years as a Transit Supervisor for Coast Mountain Bus Company. But until October 18, he had never had to pull someone back from the brink of a suicide attempt. Sahdra pulled up to where the man was standing, got out and began talking to him. He made a split-second decision to jump over the concrete barrier and grab the man's arm to hold him down. Another Transit Supervisor, Frank Liptak, ran over from the other side of the bridge to assist. Both supervisors were able to calm the man down while waiting for police to arrive. The Vancouver Police Department will tell you that Surinder is a hero. They commended him for his quick action, which saved that man's life.

Local 561 bus drivers have ratified a new collective agreement with First Canada ULC. The local's 160 members, based in Abbotsford and Chilliwack, had initiated job action with a uniform ban on October 10. The new three-year contract, retroactive to April 1, 2017, includes annual wage increases of 2, 2, and 2.5 per cent, retroactive wage reimbursements, and new language on run committees that will give members more input into the construction of their shifts while providing better work/life balance. It also includes language giving senior part-time employees access to sick leave, health and welfare benefits, the RRSP purchase plan, and full day's pay on statutory holidays.

Delegates to the BC K-12 President's Council ratified a Provincial Framework Agreement (PFA) on September 25. The PFA with the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) was reached in mid-July. CUPE locals are tabling the provincial framework agreement with their proposals in bargaining with their respective school districts. The agreement includes benefit increases and language that helps address workplace issues and includes support for local bargaining. The current K-12 agreement expires on June 30, 2019. When ratified by CUPE locals and school districts, the provincial agreement will be in effect from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

I had the opportunity to address over 670 delegates at HEU's 31st biennial convention in early November. The Hospital Employees' Union is CUPE's Health Care Division in British Columbia. History was made when delegates elected their first woman president – Barb Nederpel, a health records clerk at Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops. Long time HEU activist and Provincial Executive member Betty Valenzuela also made history as the first Filipina-Canadian woman elected financial secretary, replacing Donisa Bernardo who recently announced her retirement.

Nederpel and Valenzuela will join secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside as the top officers of the union. In addition to regional vice-president positions, delegates elected Ken Robinson, 1st vice-president; Jodi George, 2nd vice-president; Bill McMullan, 3rd vice-president; Talitha Dekker, senior trustee; Barb Biley, senior trustee elect; and Ken Bennett, trustee.

I want to thank Victor Elkins, out-going President and retiring financial secretary, Donisa Bernardo, for their service and activism representing HEU members and workers in general.

The B.C. government has repealed Gordon Campbell-era laws that stripped health care workers' collective agreements of job security provisions and excluded them from the full protection of provincial labour laws.

Under that legislation, thousands of health care workers – mostly women – were fired as health authorities contracted out hospital cleaning, food services, laundry and other support services. Thousands more were laid off by nursing home operators who subcontracted care and support staff – and flipped those contracts –to keep wages low and bust union collective agreements. Nearly 10,000 workers had been fired as a result of the law.

In 2008, the B.C. government rescinded provisions of Bill 29 and Bill 94 that had been ruled unconstitutional. But both laws continued to exclude health care workers from key provisions of the B.C. Labour Relations Code, including successor rights and common employer declarations.

Bill 47 – the *Health Sector Statutes Repeal Act* – repeals both bills, effective early next year, and will be implemented through regulation after consultation with sector stakeholders. Congratulations to HEU for never giving up the struggle and thank you to the BC NDP for honouring an important campaign commitment.

Airlines

Flight attendants at Flair Airlines, represented by CUPE 4060, are negotiating their first collective agreement with a hostile employer who is not only attacking their newly certified union, but who is insisting on getting them to agree to a two-tier salary scale. Under the employer's proposal, new hires would work at a significantly lower wage and with no plan. Of course our members are fighting back against this unfair and unreasonable attack by Flair. They voted at over 98% in favour of a strike and are seeking support from CUPE members nationwide to put pressure on their employer.

CUPE 4070 members at WestJet, have elected their first local executive. There was plenty of interest in the elections, and I want to thank everyone who stepped up to participate in their new local union. I offer my congratulations to the new executive and look forward to working with them.

Organizing Report

During the period of September 1, 2018 to November 30, 2018, our organizing efforts have brought in new members and protected existing members. We organized 402 members in long term care, 11 members in social services, 205 members employed in municipalities and 48 members in library. This totals 666 new members into CUPE in 10 bargaining units.

We are currently involved in 29 active campaigns that, if successful, would bring 3,760 new members into CUPE. At Labour Boards across the country, we have 13 projects representing 3,672 new members waiting for certification votes to be conducted. There are two restructuring projects that have the potential to bring in up to 27,000 new members.

The organizing policy adopted by the National Executive Board "Growing stronger: A plan to build our union" contains 14 commitments to growth. These are:

- Building a culture of organizing across our union
- Organizing from a position of strength
- Accelerating our organizer training
- Improving our organizing materials
- Embracing data and digital tools
- Refining our organizing methods
- Protecting our existing members
- Following our work

