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## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE 2024 – SEPTEMBER 2024

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Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

As usual, the summer has come and gone far too quickly. I hope you all had an opportunity over the last few months to rest and recharge.

Our union continued its work with vigour through the summer. Across the country, CUPE members and leaders have been focused on advancing our priorities to make every province and territory a better place to work, live, learn, and play.

CUPE actively participated in Pride events from coast to coast to coast, advocated to governments to foster better relationships to advance workers' rights, and fought tirelessly against the threat of privatization in various sectors.

As members of Canada's largest union, we know that the vital work we do improves the lives of not only those we represent but of the communities in which our members live. As we face difficult employers and hostile right-wing governments at every turn, we must remain steadfast in our fight to make sure that we stand for those who suffer racism, discrimination, misogyny, and all other forms of oppression. Our advocacy is more important than ever as we know that elections at all levels of government are either in progress, or imminent.

We are headed into what is sure to be an eventful autumn now that NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh has ended the Supply and Confidence Agreement his party had in place with the Liberal government since March 2022.

Let me be clear: New Democrats made historical gains during the agreement. The party's strategic work to move forward important pieces of legislation in a minority government paved the way for access to essential services for those who have needed them but have not been able to afford them. Meaningful progress on issues like dental care, pharmacare, anti-scab legislation, and sustainable jobs will have a huge impact on the lives of so many.

We are close to seeing pharmacare pass in the Senate, but we must not take it for granted.

**MARK HANCOCK**

National President/Président national

**CANDACE RENNICK**

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

**PATRICK GLOUTNEY, FRED HAHN, SHERRY HILLIER, GINA MCKAY, KAREN RANALLETTA**

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

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The road ahead brings with it new challenges. The NDP will need to focus on beating Pierre Poilievre and his Conservative party when Canadians next go to the polls.

Poilievre wants workers to believe he is an ally. He has traded in his suits for work shirts, ditched the glasses, and has been making rounds on shop floors across the country, in an attempt to win over those whose rights he's spent his career voting against. But we can see through this charade.

We need to remember that Jagmeet Singh and the NDP, the party we helped found, is the only national political party that will support workers' rights, protect public services, and make life more affordable for everyday Canadians. We cannot afford to have an anti-labour Prime Minister that supports "right to work" legislation who will roll the clock back on all the progress we have made.

We must steadfastly push back against anti-worker policies and politicians. We have seen the use of forced binding arbitration by the federal government to resolve labour disputes, for example, most recently with rail workers. Like I said in my letter to the federal minister, the government's decision to order binding arbitration against the Teamsters upends the foundations of labour peace "by signalling to all federally regulated employers that the heavy hand of the federal government is at their disposal to use in the event of labour unrest, even if it means undermining the independence of the Canada Industrial Relations Board and running roughshod over the constitution."

As we head into the fall, let us continue to work together to win strong contracts for our members, build worker power to take on the austerity agendas of right-wing governments, and ready ourselves to mobilize CUPE members nationwide for a more just society.

## Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION
Quebec	CUPE 2614	Société des arrimeurs de Québec (SAQ)	81	Locked out September 15, 2022	Ongoing
Quebec	CUPE 2815	Videotron	214	Locked out October 30, 2023	Ongoing
Ontario	CUPE 2361	University of Western Ontario	325	August 30, 2024	Ongoing
Quebec	CUPE 1638	Quebec City	1350	June 21-23, July 10-15, September 12-13, 2024	11 days
Quebec	CUPE 5499	Office de l'habitation de Longueuil	33	July 8-10, 2024	3 days
Quebec	CUPE 2566	Town of Saint-Constant	110	July 18-19, 2024	2 days
Quebec	CUPE 3434	La Société de transport de Sherbrooke	172	September 9-11 and 21, 2024	4 days

## **CUPE 2614**

On September 15, 2022, more than 700 days ago, the Port of Quebec locked out 81 members of CUPE 2614. We continue to demand that the employer engage and come to the bargaining table. CUPE 2614 members have several concerns about health and safety within their workplace and have undertaken their due diligence in raising their voices about the dangerous conditions of the wharves and the inaction on the part of the port authorities and the federal government towards fixing them. CUPE 2614 members are also advocating for predictable work schedules that will allow for family life and putting an end to 76 hours or more scheduled work weeks.

## **CUPE 2815**

On October 10, 2023, CUPE 2815 members who work at Videotron in Gatineau, Quebec, overwhelmingly rejected their employer's substandard offer. Instead of returning to the table to negotiate a fair contract, the employer locked the 214 workers out on October 30.

These members remain united, while the employer continues to insist that the local accept a concession that would allow unlimited contracting-out of work which would allow work to be outsourced overseas. CUPE 2815 is adamant that jobs need to be created and remain within the community. Members have been without a contract since August 31, 2020. Because Bill C-58 is not yet in force, Videotron is using replacement workers, many of whom work abroad for poverty wages.

## **CUPE 2361**

On August 30, 2024, CUPE 2361 members working in custodial, trades and maintenance at the University of Western Ontario commenced strike action after the Employer walked away from the table. These members are fighting for better wages from an institution that lags far behind colleges and school boards in the London area. The substandard wages paid by the University are fueling recruitment and retention challenges that have led to a staffing crisis on campus.

## **CUPE 1638**

CUPE 1638 represents outside workers of Québec City. The contract expired in December 2023, but bargaining had started in February of 2023. After over 50 bargaining days, the employer refuses to address the union's demands related to scheduling. The wages are below comparable in Lévis by an average of 5\$ an hour so adjustments are needed. With very high participation rates, the local had a strike vote of 98%. Members took to the streets in June with a three-day strike, five days in July and again in September for two days, to put pressure on the employer in strategic ways.

## **CUPE 5499**

CUPE 5499 represents employees of Longueuil Housing (Office de l'habitation de Longueuil). Their collective agreement expired on December 31, 2022. By June 2024, there had been no significant progress on wages. The local held a three-day strike to force the employer to present a monetary offer. Cost of living adjustments, retention issues, remote work and flexible schedules are the local's priorities in this round of bargaining.

## **CUPE 2566**

CUPE 2566 represents inside and outside workers of the City of Saint-Constant. Labour relations are strained, the employer using union-busting tactics, having laid off 25% of the bargaining unit members, and recalled some of them without regard for seniority. The parties are litigating a number of issues that should have been dealt with at the bargaining table. Both contracts expired on December 31, 2021. Significant wage adjustments are required for these members to reach remuneration levels comparable to other similar towns in the region, and the employer is asking for concessions on benefits and bargaining unit scope. The local held a two-day strike in July to show this anti-union employer that members are standing strong.

## **CUPE 3434**

CUPE 3434 represents bus drivers in Sherbrooke. Their collective agreement expired in February of 2023. The employer's last monetary offer was unacceptable, so the local got a strike mandate with a 100% vote. Members held a three-day strike during back to school season for the Cegep and University of Sherbrooke.

## **Bargaining**

Firefighters in Quebec were on a roll this summer! Locals in the sector concluded six collective agreements, one of which was a first contract. CUPE 7159 signed their first collective agreement with the town of Saint-Donat-de-Montcalm; it includes a new salary structure, strong job protections, increased vacation time and holiday pay, as well as a new life insurance plan. The contract offers residents improved fire safety with increased coverage through guaranteed hours.

CUPE 7129, representing firefighters of St-Michel, achieved wage increases of 15% over two years, retroactive to 2023, and annual increases of 3% for 2025 to 2027, increased overtime pay, and vacation pay, as well as employer contributions to employee RRSPs.

CUPE 7106 bargained with the Town of Disraeli a 4% wage increase for 2024 and between 2.5 and 3.5% for subsequent years, based on the cost of living. Vacations and union leaves are improved, and residents will benefit from better fire safety coverage with more full-time firefighters.

CUPE 7175 also achieved increased fire safety and first respondent coverage for residents of Saint-Félix-de-Valois, with increased staffing.

CUPE 7135 negotiated with the city of Saint-Zotique a flat rate increase of \$2/hour for 2023 and again for 2024, and an added percentage increase totalling 14.3% over five years. This was achieved after members rejected a final offer from the city and mobilized to improve their working conditions significantly. Vacations were also improved, as well as allowances. A new classification of fire prevention technician was introduced in the contract.

The new contract bargained by CUPE 7122 with the Municipality of Rawdon provides a new salary structure with significant adjustments, a general increase of 8% for 2024, 3% annually for 2025 and 2026, and 3.5% for 2027. Other improvements include adjustments to on-call premiums, increased staffing levels and better permanent fire safety coverage. Finally, a new first respondent service will be offered to residents in 2026.

Congratulations to the members of CUPE 110 at the Winnipeg School Division who recently ratified a three-year collective agreement with wage increases including market adjustments in the range of 4.75 to 5.2% in years 1 and 2. The third year included a 2.9% wage increase. The members also saw improvements to clothing and tool allowances.

In Saskatchewan CUPE 600, representing staff working in Community Living Service Delivery through the provincial government negotiated a three-year contract that includes a 7.8% general wage increase as well as market adjustments, a pension contribution increase, increased shift and weekend premiums and improvements to scheduling and standby provisions.

In Ontario, the central bargaining table for our eight locals representing staff at long-term care homes operated by Extencicare was able to reach a negotiated settlement that included 3.5% each year. They were also able to secure significant wage adjustments for multiple classifications. As a result of these gains, these locals are now at the very top among for-profit homes, and given the nature of long-term care bargaining in Ontario, these gains will carry over and cement a trend of significant wage increases across the sector.

Members of CUPE 2484 who work at five locations of the non-profit Ideal Child Services Group engaged in an impressive mobilizing campaign as part of their most recent round of bargaining. As a result of their efforts, they were able to win substantial gains including 11.6% over three years accompanied by a \$1,800 signing bonus. They were also successful in tripling the number of paid programming hours, increases in sick days, vacation improvements, new paid professional development, increases to the employer paid share of benefits, and increased registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) contributions.

CUPE 7575 with the Thames Valley District School Board welcomed a newly organized group of 610 student supervisors into the local. Through the course of bargaining, they were able to reach an agreement to roll these new members into the existing collective agreement and in so doing were able to secure access to sick leave, long term disability and the Education Workers Benefits Trust as well as the ongoing wage increases won during the Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU) strike in 2022.

In Alberta, 12 locals were able to negotiate wage increases above the government's mandate of 2.75%.

CUPE 37, CUPE 38, CUPE 709 and CUPE 1169 at the City of Calgary all won contracts which saw their wages increase by 3% in the first year and 3.25% in the following years of a three-year agreement, along with other important enhancements. CUPE 30, which represents workers at EPCOR in Edmonton, also saw wage adjustments and a general wage increase after a tough round of bargaining.

CUPE 2550 bravely fought back a two-tier wage proposal from The Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional School Division which would have seen new members receive lower wages than current members. Supported by staff, the Alberta Division mobilized support for the local so that they could stand strong against this effort by the employer to divide the union.

In New Brunswick, CUPE 1418 accepted a contract with a 12.5% wage increase over four years that includes a job classification with a two-tier wage. The local leadership has committed to making it a bargaining priority to remove the two-tier wage at the next round of negotiations.

CUPE 1905 representing workers at the Kennebecasis Valley Regional Police Force ratified an agreement with wage increases totaling 17.5% over five years. CUPE 3226, representing outside workers at the Town of Quispamsis also ratified an agreement with wage increases totaling 16.75% over five years.

In Prince Edward Island (PEI), the transportation workers of CUPE 1145 and the education workers of CUPE 1770 and CUPE 1775 have ratified a three-year agreement with a 10.25% wage increase along with a flat rate increase for trades workers, and a change in hours for administrative support staff. CUPE 4893, representing employees at the Town of Kensington, won significant wage adjustments, with most members receiving increases between 25.7% and 30.2%.

## **Regional Updates**

### **Atlantic Region**

#### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

I was in St. John's in August, where I was able to support NDP candidate Nicole Boland's campaign. Nicole has served on the Newfoundland NDP's executive as a labour representative, is a registered social worker, and advocate for mental health in the province. Although the outcome of the by-election wasn't what we'd hoped for, Nicole came close to turning the seat to orange. It's always great to see labour activists get involved in politics to try to make a difference, and I applaud her on a solid campaign!

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador voiced concerns that the provincial government is prioritizing private agencies for nursing staff over investing in public health care. The government claims to reduce privatization while renewing contracts for private nurses, resulting in lower wages and poor conditions for these public sector workers.

The government's recruitment efforts have been inadequate. CUPE represents 2,300 health care workers in the province and recently brought forward a petition with over 1,400 signatures to address recruitment and retention issues but has not been included in the government discussions on health care reforms. The Furey government needs to listen to health care workers as they're the ones who have a front row view of the issues that are plaguing the system.

There is instability in the child care sector further to the provincial government's implementation of the federal bilateral funding agreement. Some centres that rely on the provincial operating grant have reported late payments from government affecting operations for those facilities. Activists in the sector are working with *Child Care Now NL* to work towards a defined benefit pension plan for child care workers and are calling on employers to increase wages so that these educators can make ends meet. To ensure the highest quality care, the organization is insistent that there is no place in child care for private for-profit companies and we couldn't agree more.

#### **Nova Scotia**

School support staff in Nova Scotia worked tirelessly on a report on violence in public schools to launch a campaign to improve safety for both staff and students. The Nova Scotia School Board Council of Unions (NSSBCU) emphasized the need to heighten awareness about the challenges education workers are subjected to daily.



This effort follows a recent report from the Nova Scotia Auditor General that supports CUPE's findings, indicating that incidents of violence are underreported, and agrees that staff face significant barriers. CUPE has been trying to share data on school violence with the Ministry of Education since 2022, but they continue to leave the workers in this sector out of their discussions. During the 2022-2023 school year, 27,000 violent incidents in public schools occurred, and it is estimated that the number of incidents increased in 2023-2024.

The *Private Health Care is a Poison Pill* rally held in Halifax on July 16 was a success, with labour activists from various parts of the country joining to send a message to Premiers who continue to funnel money into the privatization of health care that public services are not for sale. The rally coincided with the summer Premiers' meeting, where the message from CUPE members and other labour allies was clear – we won't back down as right-wing governments collaborate with greedy corporations to prioritize profits over the health of our communities. I'm so proud of our members for taking on the fight against these opportunistic Premiers whose attacks on our public systems have led to those requiring care to go without.

## **Maritimes Region**

### **New Brunswick**

With New Brunswickers set to cast their ballots in the upcoming provincial election on October 21, 2024, CUPE members in the province have ramped up political action strategies to send Premier Blaine Higgs packing. The blatant disrespect he's shown for workers' rights and the vital public services they provide across New Brunswick (NB) has ignited a desire for real change at the ballot box. I urge anyone who cares about quality health care, housing, and other social programs to get involved by joining a local NB NDP campaign.

CUPE leaders in New Brunswick met with representatives from the NB NDP, NB Green Party, and NB Liberal Party in Fredericton to discuss critical issues affecting workers in the province. The discussions focused on the need for flat wage increases and improving the labour relations and collective bargaining process. Unsurprisingly, Premier Higgs didn't accept the invitation to attend. The premier wants nothing to do with hearing what labour leaders have to say about any of the public services they deliver.

CUPE was well-represented as many Local Presidents capitalized on the meeting opportunity to emphasize that flat wage increases are more equitable than percentage-based raises, particularly for lower-paid workers. They also highlighted the need for wage increases that exceed inflation to ensure workers can live with dignity.

CUPE continues to fight against the provincial government's attempt to forcibly transfer our members' pensions using the heavy hand of legislation instead of respecting the collective bargaining process.

## **Prince Edward Island**

Under Premier Dennis King, the Prince Edward Island (PEI) Progressive Conservatives have struggled to address public dissatisfaction with their health care and housing announcements. We continue to see ongoing issues such as staffing shortages and long wait times in health care, along with rising concerns about housing availability and affordability. CUPE PEI remains steadfast in their advocacy for public solutions to these problems.

CUPE leaders, staff, and members on the Island remain vigilant as the provincial government is advancing new environmental policies in response to recent extreme weather events. We want to ensure that there is emphasis on sustainable agriculture and climate resilience remain at the forefront.

## **Quebec**

In July, I had the chance to celebrate Picketers' Christmas with locked-out members of CUPE 2815 and their families. Despite the length of the dispute, the members are trying to keep their spirits up. This lockout isn't getting the media attention it deserves, not least because Videotron is part of Quebecor's media empire, and we know that Pierre-Karl Péladeau doesn't appreciate criticism. The local had to hold a rally on the Jacques Cartier Bridge at the start of the new school year to get some visibility. Videotron is a very profitable company, and there's no reason for this dispute to drag on, other than management's stubbornness in ultimately wishing to relocate jobs.

Canada's telecommunications sector is very much at risk in this respect. The Liberal government is putting a lot of pressure on companies to lower telephone rates, but it's doing so without any consideration for maintaining quality jobs in Canada. For example, Telus continues to reduce its Canadian workforce and outsource our members' work overseas. CUPE 5044 has filed an application with the Canada Industrial Relations Board to prevent a wave of constructive dismissals to outsource more jobs. Telus hopes to force our members to resign by unilaterally changing their workplace.

In August, Quebec was hit by hurricane Debby. I would like to underline the exceptional work of our members on the front line throughout the province, providing for the needs of the population in the event of a crisis. Collapsed public roads, massive power outages, emergency services overflowing with calls and monster insurance claims – CUPE members were there.

From emergency services to manual and white-collar workers, Quebec's municipal employees had to work around the clock. Insurance companies, such as Beneva, where a large proportion of employees are members of Local 2310, were also busy. With lines jammed and claims volumes at an all-time high, teams worked as hard as ever, in a context where customer service was difficult.

In addition to damaged municipal infrastructures, call-buried dispatchers and fire departments dispatched to the scene, the electricity network was also under strain, with half a million customers without power at the height of the storm. CUPE members at Hydro-Québec and Hydro-Sherbrooke were dispatched to the scene. We can be proud of our members, and we owe them our heartfelt thanks.

The 190 members of CUPE 4835, who work at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), ratified a new collective agreement that includes wage adjustments totaling 4.75% for 2022; 3.5% for 2023; 2.25% for 2024 and 2% for 2025. These gains are complemented by a framework for the use of new technologies, providing for justification of changes and the employer's obligation to inform the union prior to their implementation, to minimize the impact on workers, and to offer the necessary refresher training during working hours.

## **Ontario**

Earlier this summer, I joined an anti-privatization rally at Michael Ford's office organized by the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU). Hospital workers organized a series of demonstrations across the province to protest the Ford government's plan to privatize services currently covered under Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). Although the premier has said that patients in Ontario won't have to pay for health care services with their credit cards, a recent report from the Ontario Health Coalition found that private clinics are illegally billing for medically necessary services thousands of dollars – a clear violation of the Canada Health Act. I applaud OCHU for mobilizing their members to speak out against the privatization of tests like MRIs and CT scans. Privatization will only worsen wait times. It's clear that proper funding is needed to alleviate the overtaxed system, so that health care can be accessed by all, not just those who can afford to pay out of pocket.

OCHU also released *No Respite: Ontario's Failure to Plan for Hospital Patients*, a report outlining the unprecedented hospital capacity problems since the election of the Ford government. The report highlights that for Ontario to have the same level of staffing as other provinces an additional 34,292 full-time equivalent (FTEs) would be required. The staffing crisis is also compounded by a 534% increase in the number of job vacancies since 2015. Increases in the number of hospital beds have also not kept pace with population increases – resulting in a 12% decrease in hospital beds per capita since 2005. The excellent report also shows that the government's plans for the sector will not only solve the problem – but will only make it worse. OCHU's work has garnered significant media attention, bringing important focus to this issue as signs point to the possibility of an early provincial election.

Minister Todd Smith, who replaced Stephen Lecce as Ontario's Minister of Education, announced publicly in July the government's plan to privatize the \$10-a-day child care structure in the province before resigning the following day. Smith had requested the federal government lift caps on the for-profit child care spaces, currently set at no more than 30%. We wrote to the Federal Minister to make clear our opposition to this request, but also to reiterate our position that any solutions for increased child care spaces throughout the country must prioritize the expansion of public and non-profit child care services.

The coming months will be busy for the locals at the City of Toronto who are gearing up for bargaining. CUPE 79, CUPE 416 and CUPE 4948 are each undertaking preparations and member mobilization for negotiations of collective agreements that expire at the end of the year.

## **Manitoba**

The federal by-election in Elmwood-Transcona is taking place on September 16. The by-election is necessary due to former NDP MP, Daniel Blaikie's resignation on March 31, 2024. After almost a decade in federal politics, Blaikie is moving on to work with Premier Wab Kinew, as Senior Advisor on Intergovernmental Affairs. We're working with CUPE leaders and activists in the province to join together to elect Leila Dance, who would be the first woman to be elected MP in that riding.

While in Manitoba in August, I was able to spend some time with local leaders and I had the opportunity to meet with members from the Prairie provinces who were in Gimli for member facilitator training. It's always inspiring to spend time with activists, and I appreciated having the opportunity to meet with these dedicated members who are committed to contributing to the important work of union education.

Congratulations to Carmen Prefontaine who was elected Regional Vice-President representing Manitoba. Carmen fills the vacancy left by Gina McKay who was recently elected as the General Vice-President representing the Prairies.

## **Saskatchewan**

The NDP are gaining ground in the lead-up to the provincial election, and we will need all hands-on deck to make sure we produce a change of government in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Party caucus is imploding, and this is our opportunity to bring much needed change after 17 years of damage done by this government.

CUPE Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour have partnered with Fae Johnstone and Queer Momentum to hire a Saskatchewan organizer to build support for 2SLGBTQI+ rights and oppose anti-2SLGBTQI+ laws, policies, and political platforms. The organizer will be doing advocacy, organizing, and mobilizing across the province to mobilize voters against hate-based policies, such as Scott Moe's Bill 137 and his abuse of the notwithstanding clause to suspend the rights of children.

The controversial bill that we fear inflicts harm on youth, and forces educators and teachers to comply to do the same, was introduced, debated, and passed into law within days. By invoking the notwithstanding clause to override the Constitution, Bill 137 sets a precedent to ignore workers' *Charter* rights, and we just won't stand for it.

CUPE, along with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the Canadian Teachers' Federation have been granted intervenor status in the Court of Appeal case concerning the bill.

## **Alberta**

As the climate crisis rages, community members in Jasper, Alberta, saw firsthand the damage and devastation wildfires cause. The community, known worldwide for its picturesque landscape was ravaged by the province's most recent disasters brought on by climate change.

Members of CUPE 1357 and CUPE 1458 were impacted directly by these fires. Sadly, we know that the effects of the tragedy will be felt long after the last of the fires burn out. I extend heartfelt thanks to all locals who contributed to the National Disaster Relief Fund to offer assistance to those affected.

A recent poll commissioned by the Canadian Health Coalition revealed that approximately eight in ten Albertans want to see better cooperation between the provincial and federal governments to develop and implement a plan to address the staffing crisis in health care across the province. Instead, Premier Danielle Smith has stated that Alberta will opt out of both pharmacare and the federal dental program and wants the allocated funds to be sent directly to the province.

Rural emergency departments continue to see closures due to staffing issues, and opting out of major gains to accessing public pharmacare and dental programs will only further erode public services for Albertans.

We will be looking to newly-elected NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi, who takes over the reins from former premier Rachel Notley, to hold Smith and her government accountable. A better future for Alberta is possible, but the road ahead won't be easy, with still more than three years until the next trip to the ballot box.

I'm pleased to give a warm CUPE welcome to the roughly 120 employees of the Edmonton region's Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), who have joined Canada's largest union, with 85% of workers voting in favour. CMHA is the leading mental health organization in the region, delivering vital mental health support, health, and education support within the community.

Two-tier proposals are on more than a few tables in the province, and the region is coordinating to support affected locals in fighting back.

## **British Columbia**

This year I spent Labour Day in Burnaby with CUPE British Columbia (BC). The turnout was great, and together we celebrated victories that strengthened our movement and improved the lives of our members. From bargaining good contracts, to successfully organizing more workers into the fold, to campaigning for seamless public child care, it's important to recognize everyone's efforts in mobilizing. Labour Day is also an opportunity to get together to energize for what's ahead.

With British Columbians heading to the polls on October 19, it's more important than ever that CUPE members help the BC NDP gain the momentum that is needed to send Premier Eby back to the legislature for a second term. We know that many leaders and activists across the country's most western province are diligently getting their boots on the ground to prevent the Conservatives from winning seats.

We can't go backwards and return to privatization, crumbling public services, and austerity agendas seen before the NDP took power in the province. We see the havoc that right-wing politics wreaks on public services, community programs, and workers' rights across the country. I call on CUPE members to stand together to ensure that the Conservative Party of BC get hit with an orange tidal wave this October.

The BC Ministry of Labour has expanded the mental-health presumption for WorkSafeBC to include 11 new occupations, which will expedite access to treatment and compensation for psychological injuries. The newly covered roles include harm-reduction workers, respiratory therapists, shelter workers, social workers, transition house workers, victim service workers, and withdrawal management workers.

This change means these workers will see their claims processed and will receive benefits faster from WorkSafeBC once diagnosed with a psychological injury. The mental health presumption aims to better support those who care for others, and although CUPE recognizes the additions as a step in the right direction, it's important that we continue to work collectively to ensure the safety of all workers, which includes psychologically healthy workplaces.

Mutually respectful bargaining between CUPE 339 and the City of Nelson led to a renewed collective agreement that benefits not only these municipal workers but also the community they serve. Productive discussions at the table led to a four-year contract that saw a 17% wage increase, with the potential to increase an additional 1% if inflation surpasses 4% in the final year. CUPE 339 negotiated improved language throughout their agreement and better provisions for their pensions.

## **Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)**

As the BC provincial election day approaches, HEU is very vocal in their disapproval of John Rustad and the BC Conservatives' announcement that they would increase the use of private facilities to alleviate wait times, if elected. Rustad was in the former BC Liberal government and was hand-picked by Premier Christy Clark to cut services and increase the cost of living for everyday families. He has openly talked about millions in savings, which will only translate to exorbitant cuts to public funding in the sector. We can't have a two-tiered system in place, where those who can afford to pay for services have their health care needs met, while those who can't are left behind.

We know that if taxpayer dollars are infused into a private system, recruitment and retention issues will be exacerbated, as providers move to for-profit clinics, resulting in lengthier waits for critical testing and imaging.

HEU is actively mobilizing its membership to make their votes count on October 19, with an interactive website where members can get important information on what's at stake for health care in this election. I'm amazed at the great work that is being done to support Premier David Eby and his team. The cyberspace dedicated to pledging your vote for health care, and details on how to take action and get involved is a fantastic initiative. Well done HEU!

## **Airlines**

Thanks to the tireless efforts of CUPE Airline Division flight attendants, Bill C-409 has been introduced in the House of Commons to end unpaid work in the airline sector. The legislation would require airlines to pay for all hours worked by flight attendants, including pre-flight, post-flight duties, and training.

The NDP has long been advocating alongside CUPE on this issue. While the bill was introduced by the Conservatives, CUPE welcomes the support it has received across the political spectrum.

We must not be fooled into thinking that the Conservatives suddenly care about our members who are flight attendants. When they were in government, the Conservatives increased the passenger-to-flight attendant safety ratios, bowing to industry pressure and jeopardizing passenger safety. They also tabled anti-union legislation that would have hurt unionized workers across the country had it remained on the books.

CUPE continues to work closely with the NDP to ensure that this legislation is strengthened and that our members in airlines are compensated for unpaid work.

## **Organizing**

For the reporting period of July 1 to September 30, 2024, CUPE welcomed 1,186 new members in 13 bargaining units, including 456 in health, 233 in education, and 250 in post-secondary education. There are currently 137 active campaigns underway that, if successful, could bring 42,795 new members to our union.

Our Atlantic region currently has four active campaigns in social services, health, and recreation, culture, and entertainment, which would see 399 new members join our union.

In the Maritimes, there are currently nine active campaigns which could bring 804 workers into CUPE, including 300 in emergency and security services.

Quebec has 22 active campaigns underway in various sectors, that could bring 7,933 new members into the CUPE family.

The Ontario region continues its organizing efforts, with 26 active campaigns in various sectors that have the potential to add 13,989 new members to our union, including 2,557 in municipal services and more than 9,364 members in health care.

Manitoba has ten active campaigns, which could see 1,428 new members join our union, including 930 workers in education.

Saskatchewan has 17 active campaigns in various sectors, where we hope to bring 2,070 new workers into CUPE, 1,072 of which are education workers.

The Alberta region was busy with 13 active organizing campaigns that could bring in 2,207 new members into CUPE. Five of the ongoing campaigns are in the education sector where CUPE is hoping to add 1,627 members.

In British Columbia, there are 30 active campaigns across various sectors including social services, recreation, culture and entertainment, health, emergency and security services, education, and municipal services, with the potential of welcoming 14,042 new members.



## **In Memoriam/Personal**

### **Members**

Ronald “Cam” Lawton	CUPE 4222 – Ontario
Dumitrel Tofan	CUPE 7800 – Ontario
Sara Sarabosing	CUPE 561 – British Columbia
Jean Poole	CUPE 2087 – British Columbia
Ron Johnson	CUPE 416 Retiree – Ontario
Craig Hannah	CUPE 1975 – Saskatchewan
Pat Thast	CUPE 748 – British Columbia
Dana-Lynn Raïche	CUPE 3383 – New Brunswick

### **Retired Staff**

Orval Turcotte	National Representative Timmins Area Office
Albéric Mbayahaga	Cleaner National Office
Gilles Martin	Health and Safety Representative Quebec Regional Office
Richard Deaton	Assistant Director National Office

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK  
National President

:sg/ceu