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## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2025 – DECEMBER 2025

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Sisters, Brothers, and Friends:

I drafted my first National President's report for the December 2015 National Executive Board meeting. Although a decade has passed every time I put pen to paper to report on the work of our powerful union, I do so with so much pride at what we've accomplished in the last quarter. This report is no different.

Throughout the last six elections at National Convention, it's with the utmost humility that I get back to work to join and lead you in the incredible work we do each and every day. I hope that you are all as proud as I am of our countless achievements and contributions to the lives of working people in Canada.

So many of our actions made headlines. CUPE education workers in Alberta held one of the largest rallies in Edmonton's history at the legislature, pounding the pavement, clad in purple, telling the UCP government they knew their worth and were done settling for less. Our flight attendants at Air Canada had the whole country watching as they stood strong and resilient and faced off with not only their employer, but with the federal government. We celebrated the long-overdue implementation of federal anti-scab legislation, a major victory that reflects years of CUPE's relentless advocacy to strengthen workers' rights and restore balance at the bargaining table, and there are so many more memorable moments.

There is no doubt that 2025 was an incredible year for the Canadian Union of Public Employees. From every corner of the country, our members were hard at work, working diligently toward strengthening the power of the labour movement. In usual CUPE fashion, we faced off with concession-pushing employers, right-wing governments at all levels attempting to force their austerity agendas upon us, all the while focusing our efforts on plans to grow not only worker power and solidarity within the labour movement, but strategizing on how to rebuild the presence of the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons.

As I draft this last report of the year, I look back on our accomplishments with pride, and the hope that 2026 will bring equally memorable moments, but am starkly aware that we also have our work cut out for us. I hope you all have a chance to rest up and recharge during the holidays, and I look forward to connecting with you in the new year.

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**MARK HANCOCK**

National President/Président national

**CANDACE RENNICK**

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

**DAWN BELLEROSE, PATRICK GLOUTNEY, SHERRY HILLIER, GINA MCKAY, KAREN RANALLETTA**

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

## **Federal Government**

Mark Carney's 2025 budget offered only token gains for workers, most of them recycled, limited, or won through union pressure rather than real leadership. While maintaining child care funding and hinting at expansions to pharmacare and dental care provided brief relief, the budget largely ignored the daily struggles of working people. Instead, it delivered deep harm: massive public-service job cuts, more privatization, falling investments in health care, long-term care, child care, education, and other essential services, and no meaningful action on EI, housing, climate, transportation, or media. It weakened collective bargaining, undermined pensions, and handed new advantages to corporations through tax breaks and incentives.

Trump's 25% tariffs have added months of economic instability that hit workers hardest, from falling exports to rising youth unemployment, yet the federal response has focused on corporate priorities and budget cuts. Public services, workers' rights, environmental protections, and Indigenous sovereignty have all been pushed aside, turning the tariff crisis into an excuse for austerity.

People across Canada are struggling to find family doctors, child care, and affordable housing because federal governments have failed for decades to invest in public services and hold wealthy corporations to account. Instead of fixing the crisis they helped create, the Liberal government is now scapegoating migrant workers and international students, putting hundreds of CUPE members at risk of losing their status and being forced out of the country. This would devastate already strained sectors like health care, child care, education, and long-term care, and deepen the crisis facing families and communities. CUPE is calling on the government to reverse harmful immigration cuts, expand access to permanent residency and permit renewals, end exploitative closed work permits, reinvest in public services, and stop legislation like Bills C-2 and C-12 that fast-track deportations and weaken refugee rights.

## **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)**

Following the government's first budget, the CLC engaged directly with Prime Minister Carney, confronting the government over its plan for deep cuts to federal public service jobs and the vital services Canadians depend on. These cuts threaten workers, communities, and the broader economy. While acknowledging some positives in the budget, including investments in housing, infrastructure and union training programs, the CLC led a coordinated national effort to mobilize workers and push MPs to reject austerity and demand real solutions. The message was clear: Canadians need stronger public services, affordable housing, and care, not cuts. The labour movement stood united in demanding a budget that worked for people.

The Canadian Labour Congress hosted a launch of the NDP leadership race with a workers-first forum that brought candidates together to confront the real challenges facing people across the country, drawing more than 150 attendees in person and thousands online.

At a time of rising costs, unstable work, and global uncertainty, the event put workers' priorities at the centre of the national conversation and signalled a renewed push to rebuild the party's connection to the people it was created to serve. Candidates showed a clear commitment to strengthening workers' rights and improving life for families, offering a hopeful vision of a party grounded in solidarity and ready to fight for meaningful change. The forum marked a powerful start to the leadership race and affirmed that Canada's unions are determined to ensure workers lead the way toward a stronger, fairer future.

The Canadian Labour Congress hosted its annual lobby day on the Hill on November 25. CUPE members joined activists from across the country and together held meetings with more than half of the Members of Parliament. The lobby day focused on three priorities: services that make life more affordable; trade that puts workers first; and infrastructure that builds up Canada. Representing the largest union in the country, CUPE members need to be front and centre at the upcoming CLC Constitutional Convention in Winnipeg, taking place from May 11 to 15, 2026. This is where the direction of the entire Canadian labour movement will be decided. With workers facing growing pressures from austerity, privatization, and political attacks, we cannot afford to sit back. CUPE's voice, power, and experience must be in the room, shaping debates, setting priorities, and pushing for a bold, worker-driven agenda. When CUPE shows up in full force, the labour movement becomes stronger, more united, and impossible for governments or employers to ignore. This convention is not just another gathering, it is a pivotal moment to stand together and fight for the future working people deserve.

## **National Convention**

CUPE's 2025 National Convention marked a major milestone for the union, now 800,000 members strong and moving steadily toward one million. The convention brought an energized mix of first-time delegates, new staff, and seasoned leaders, all contributing to thoughtful and respectful deliberations. International guests and high-profile speakers, including Bea Bruske, Timothy Caulfield, Lee Saunders, and Olivia Chow, helped ground the week in both global solidarity and forward-looking strategy. Although Stephen Lewis regrettably couldn't attend, CUPE members sent him strength and love in a heartwarming greeting.

I congratulate my good friend and colleague, National Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick on her re-election, and know that we will continue to work together with a strong and united leadership team committed to tackling the challenges ahead. Delegates debated constitutional amendments, including updates to the trial procedure, and its complaint processes, and defining the age of young workers in our organization as 35 and under. The future of CUPE, our wonderful Youth Council, played a standout role by hosting sessions on how to run effective campaigns, underscoring the importance of building the next generation of leaders. In total, the convention passed 33 resolutions and addressed 19 more through composite decisions, reflecting the depth of members' priorities and the strength of our work. I was proud to see our convention showcase a confident, growing union, grounded in solidarity and ready to push forward together.

CUPE's 2025-2027 Strategic Directions outline a bold plan to defend workers and public services in a turbulent political and economic climate. Our union has committed to advancing Indigenous reconciliation, strengthening public services, and leading a just energy transition, while pushing for worker-centred oversight of artificial intelligence and a fair economy that rejects privatization, regressive tax cuts, and rising inequality. CUPE also pledged to deepen its international solidarity work, expand political action to confront right-wing agendas, defend human rights against growing hate and discrimination, fight the climate crisis with worker-led solutions, and tackle the affordability crisis through strong public services, better wages, housing advocacy, and efforts to grow union density. Together, these priorities affirm CUPE's resolve to protect workers, expand equity, and build a more just, sustainable, and democratic future.

Congratulations to the newly elected members of CUPE's National Executive Board, whose leadership will help drive our union's priorities in every region and across every community. From General Vice-Presidents Sherry Hillier, Patrick Gloutney, Dawn Bellerose, Gina McKay, and Karen Ranalletta, to the Regional Vice-Presidents elected across the country, including Stacey Lucas, Alan Linkletter, Ashley Clark, Iris Lloyd, Fanny Demontigny, Hugo Tessier, Yolanda McClean, Michael Hurley, Marty Larocque, Andre Freynet, Kent Peterson, Raj Uppal, Sheryl Burns, Tony Rebelo, this board reflects the strength and diversity of CUPE members nationwide. We also applaud Diversity Vice-Presidents Aubrey Gonsalves and Debra Merrier, along with alternates Nas Yadollahi and Mike Kubrakovich, whose voices will help ensure equity remains at the heart of our movement. Together, this outstanding team is well positioned to lead CUPE forward with vision, solidarity, and unwavering commitment to workers.

I also extend our sincere thanks to Fred Hahn, Barb Nederpel, Carmen Prefontaine, Bryan Keith, and Stephen Drost for their years of dedicated service on the National Executive Board. Their leadership, advocacy, and unwavering commitment to CUPE members strengthened our union at every turn, and their contributions have left a lasting impact on the movement. We are grateful for all they have done to advance workers' rights and build a stronger, more united CUPE.

### **Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts**

#### **CUPE 3261**

In a very successful round of coordinated bargaining three units of CUPE 3261 representing workers at the University of Toronto Press were able to achieve an 11<sup>th</sup>-hour settlement that enshrined a common expiry date – guaranteeing the consolidation of members' bargaining power moving forward. Other gains included the scheduling/distribution of hours by seniority, increases to employer-paid sick days, more union release time, standardization of grievance and harassment procedure language across collective agreements and pathways to full-time work.

## CUPE 3003

Members of CUPE 3003 who work for the Town of Battleford reached a tentative three-year agreement with general wage increases of 4% (2025), 3% (2026), and 2% (2027). In addition to the general wage increase, affordability was further addressed when all classifications received a flat-rate increase of \$1.00 per hour for each of the three years of the contract.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION
Ontario	1281	York University Faculty Association	8	October 27, 2025	Ongoing
Federal	5490	Pascan Aviation	20	October 28, 2025	Ongoing
Quebec	4317	Gateway Terminals – Port of Montreal	30	September 22, 2025	Ongoing
Quebec	4545	City of Laval	830	March 6-12, 2025; July 17-19, 2025	9 days
Prince Edward Island	830	City of Charlottetown Water and Sewer	30	July 29, 2025	107 days
Ontario	1544	City of Timmins	38	September 29, 2025	13 days
British Columbia	2269	District of Squamish	228	October 16, 2025	14 days
Nova Scotia	3912	Mount Saint Vincent University	157	October 22, 2025	27 days
Nova Scotia	3912	Saint Mary's University	128	October 23, 2025	26 days
British Columbia	1699	Regional District of Fraser-Fort George	87	Locked out November 7, 2025	11 days
Quebec	1983	Société de transport de Montréal	4200	November 1, 15 & 16, 2025	3 days

## **CUPE 1281 – York University Faculty Association**

Staff working for the York University Faculty Association, members of CUPE 1281, went on strike after a lengthy round of bargaining in which the Employer tabled numerous concessions and brought a US-based union-busting law firm to the bargaining table. The main point of contention is the Employer's insistence on hiring new management positions outside of the bargaining unit, leading to fears of an erosion of bargaining unit work.

## **CUPE 5490**

Members at Pascan Aviation went on strike October 28, 2025, over the issues of wages, off-base residency, assignments and crew planning. The Employer demonstrated their lack of willingness to seriously bargain when they began approaching individuals as early as April to try and line up scab labour in the event of a strike. Indeed, when the strike began the Employer engaged scabs in a flagrant violation of the new federal anti-scab legislation.

## **CUPE 4317**

CUPE 4317 represents 30 members who work as transport agents in the Port of Montreal. They have been on strike since September 22, 2025, fighting for protections against contracting out. As soon as the local got wind of non-management personnel doing their work during the strike, a complaint against the use of replacement workers was filed with the CIRB using the new anti-scab provisions in the Canada Labour Code. We are awaiting a decision.

## **CUPE 4545**

Outside workers at the City of Laval were fighting concessions in scheduling, and successfully got those off the table, but concessions around overtime are still being pushed by the employer. After a lengthy round of bargaining – including 9 days of rotating strike – the local was successful in pushing back concessions and securing wage increases that properly address the rise in the cost of living.

## **CUPE 830**

Members of CUPE 830, Charlottetown Sewer and Water Workers, spent 107 days on the picket line amidst increasingly nasty tactics by the employer. From bringing in scabs to banning the local president and other members from entering the council chambers – the Mayor of Charlottetown tried everything to break the solidarity of the members of CUPE 830. Despite everything thrown at them, the membership stood strong, fought back concessions and ratified a collective agreement that protects jobs now and into the future.

## **CUPE 1544**

Members of CUPE 1544, working at City of Timmins Transit, rejected a tentative agreement they felt did not adequately benefit all members. After 13 days on the picket line, the membership ratified a collective agreement that contained across-the-board wage increases as well as special wage adjustments for every classification.

## **CUPE 2269**

After being locked out for close to two weeks, the members of CUPE 2269 at the District of Squamish ratified a collective agreement that included wage increases of 3.75%, 3.5%, 3.25% and 3%. The new deal also included living wage increases for the lowest-paid workers and market adjustments for six other classifications. There will also be a joint committee to make recommendations on alternative scheduling options that promote a better work-life balance.

## **CUPE 3912 – Saint Mary's University and Mount Saint Vincent University**

Members of two separate units of CUPE 3912, at Saint Mary's University and Mount Saint Vincent University, spent nearly 3 weeks on the picket line and achieved historic gains in their collective agreements that addressed the membership's key priorities of job security and compensation. These members, who were among the lowest-paid part-time faculty in the country, also achieved improvements to contract timelines and evaluations processes.

## **CUPE 1699**

After CUPE 1699 members participated in limited job action in October to highlight the need for a fair contract, their employer, the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George locked them out on November 7, 2025. Job action ended when the parties reached a tentative agreement on November 20, 2025, with the help of a mediator. The five-year deal not only helps ease affordability challenges workers are facing, but it also improves the public services that communities expect from the Regional District, and helps to retain the best employees to provide those services.

## **CUPE 1983**

CUPE 1983 represents bus drivers and metro operators at the Société de transport de Montréal. They withdrew their services for three days, after the Quebec Labour Tribunal ruled that the planned strike would not impede essential services required under the Quebec Labour Code. The CAQ government threatened to adopt a back-to-work order under the newly adopted Bill 89, but opposition MNAs from Québec solidaire blocked the necessary motion in the National Assembly. The parties reached a tentative agreement shortly thereafter, which is now being presented to the membership for ratification.

## **Regional Updates**

### **Atlantic Region**

#### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Voters in Newfoundland and Labrador went to the polls on October 14. After former Premier Furey's resignation earlier this year, it was clear that support for the Liberals was waning. Despite CUPE members' dedicated efforts to elect progressive candidates to the House of Assembly, ballots cast resulted in yet another Conservative provincial government at the helm.

The 2025 provincial election in Newfoundland and Labrador made one thing clear: workers will continue paying the price for years of short-sighted decisions, first under the previous Liberal government and now under a right-wing party determined to push even deeper cuts. The former Liberal administration left a trail of underfunded public services, contracting out, and chronic staffing shortages that weakened the very systems communities rely on. Instead of reversing this damage, right-wing politicians are doubling down, attacking unions, starving public services, and pushing privatization schemes that benefit employers and insiders while leaving workers and families behind. CUPE members see the pattern plainly: whether it's Liberal neglect or right-wing austerity, the burden always falls on frontline workers and the people who depend on strong, public, accessible services. We intend to put Premier Tony Wakeham on notice that CUPE will not sit quietly. We will confront his government at every turn and fight relentlessly to protect workers, defend public services, and ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians get the fair, well-funded supports they deserve.

#### **Nova Scotia**

Negotiations with the Houston government collapsed after two years of bargaining, forcing CUPE to file for conciliation as long-term care workers continue to be offered wages far below what they deserve. Workers who care for some of the province's most vulnerable seniors are the lowest paid in Atlantic Canada, with some earning nearly \$10 below the estimated living wage. CUPE's proposals aim to fix this crisis through fair wage adjustments, long-service incentives, and recruitment measures, yet the government has refused to seriously consider them. It is unacceptable and embarrassing that Nova Scotia lags so far behind, and the government's latest offer would only deepen the problem as the cost-of-living rises. Our members in long-term care across more than 50 facilities are moving ahead with strike votes, determined to fight for the respect and fair compensation they have long been denied.

Across Atlantic Canada, CUPE members in the education sector are gearing up for major battles to defend public services and protect the workers who keep schools running. In Nova Scotia, all eight locals are moving into bargaining with a united strategy, a solidarity pact, and a clear focus on winning real wage gains and stronger health and safety measures to confront the growing crisis of workplace violence.

CUPE 3912 has led part-time faculty at Saint Mary's University and Mount Saint Vincent University back to work after more than three weeks on strike, delivering significant gains for academic workers. Representing over 5,000 members, the union's strength and solidarity made it possible to make meaningful gains in job security, compensation, and contract timelines, improvements that were not on the table before workers took collective action. With strong agreements already reached at Dalhousie and negotiations ongoing at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, CUPE 3912 continues to show that organized, united academic workers can raise standards across campuses and make real, lasting improvements in their working lives.

## **Maritimes Region**

### **New Brunswick**

Following CUPE 2745's successful complaint over bad faith bargaining and a clear violation of the statutory freeze, the Labour Board ordered the government to rescind all layoff notices issued to library workers and reverse its decision to cut school administrative assistants' hours. The government attempted to stall by requesting a stay of the decision, but that request was rejected, and it was ultimately forced to comply.

Despite this, CUPE 2745 had to pause its ratification vote yet again after the employer issued new layoff notices, demonstrating a continued disregard for workers' rights. CUPE is now weighing further legal action, including a possible contempt application, to hold the government accountable.

Violence in schools across New Brunswick has reached an unacceptable level, putting workers and students at risk daily. CUPE is working closely with other education unions, particularly teachers, to build a united response, even as the current government and school districts refuse to engage meaningfully on this crisis. After years of trying to raise these concerns with districts and past ministers with no resolve, CUPE is preparing next steps, including involving WorkSafeNB, filing right-to-information requests to document violent incidents, and informing the public about what is really happening in schools. CUPE is committed to ensuring that members know their rights, including the right to refuse unsafe work, and encouraging them to file near-miss reports so the full scale of the issue is captured. We will press this government to face the consequences of its inaction, and we will keep fighting until every worker can do their job in safety and with the respect they deserve.

### **Prince Edward Island (PEI)**

It was a privilege to join the members of CUPE 830 on their picket line two times over the course of their history-making strike. These members achieved a major victory after 107 days on the picket line, standing strong against concessions and protecting both current and future members. These dedicated municipal workers showed unwavering solidarity and determination.

Their collective strength forced the employer to respect their rights. CUPE staff, CUPE PEI, fellow unions, community allies, local businesses, and supporters across the province all stood with them every step of the way. This win is a powerful reminder of what workers can achieve when they hold the line together, and it will not be forgotten.

The PEI government has approved a five-year, \$27.3-million contract with Island EMS that does nothing to guarantee faster ambulance response times, even though wait times across the province have soared, doubling in some rural areas over the past five years. Instead of demanding real improvements, the government handed the private operator a new management fee with no performance strings attached. While the province highlights new units and call-triaging, these measures fall far short of what Islanders need: timely emergency care and accountable public oversight. CUPE continues to make it clear that the root of the crisis is the privatization of the service, a shortage of paramedics driven by poor wages, and chronic underinvestment. Ignoring these workforce issues will only keep patients waiting and put frontline workers under even greater strain.

## **Quebec**

On November 29, 2025, a massive rally shook the streets of Montreal, with more than 50,000 people rising up to denounce the CAQ government's authoritarian drift. Make no mistake: Quebec is standing tall against the right-wing tide! Every union in the province was out in force, joined by allies from community groups of all stripes. Candace and I met thousands of CUPE members from every corner of Quebec and marched shoulder to shoulder with them. Leaders of large unions closed the event with speeches reminding everyone of the importance of union solidarity and civil society. Magali Picard, president of the FTQ, viciously attacked by Labour Minister Boulet, received unwavering support from the activists present, CUPE included, loud and clear.

This rally is just one flashpoint in the anger burning among our members in Quebec, as the CAQ government began piling up bills targeting unions to weaken them. Whether by limiting the right to strike in an unconstitutional way, restricting the ability of unions to participate in public debates, or imposing unprecedented bureaucracy on their financial administration, the CAQ is sliding into dangerous authoritarianism. The erosion of the rule of law has been condemned by voices across organizations: the Barreau du Québec, constitutional law scholars, the Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and the Ligue des droits et libertés. CUPE is right there in the fight!

Transit unions at the Société de transport de Montreal were forced to negotiate under the shadow of anti-union threats of this government, which was toying with stripping their right to strike by rushing through a new law that hands sweeping powers to the Labour Minister. Thankfully, Québec solidaire, the only party in the National Assembly that stands with unions, stepped up and blocked this attack. I want to thank Alexandre Leduc for standing firm in the face of pressure from commentators and right-wing politicians. CUPE 1983 and CUPE 2850 managed to reach tentative agreements before the Bill came into force. At the time of writing, members were in the process of ratification.

Once again, the axe has fallen on TVA's newsrooms. This time, 87 members of CUPE 687 working in news production lost their jobs. Since 2023, nearly 800 positions have vanished at the broadcaster. Government inaction is a big part of the problem. One solution? Extend tax credits for news to audiovisual production instead of limiting them to print media. Regional and local journalism is vital to the cultural and civic life of our communities. Gutting newsrooms across Quebec is poison. If society is becoming more polarized, divided, and corroded by disinformation and incivility, it's partly because regional journalism is being abandoned. The Carney government has the tools to act, what is it waiting for?

CUPE, alongside Unifor and the Steelworkers, also raised the alarm about telecom job outsourcing before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (SECU). With hard data, we showed the surge in foreign subcontracting by telecom giants and laid out the risks of handing sensitive data to companies beyond Canadian laws and oversight. By pushing for more competition in an already cutthroat market, the federal government is fuelling unintended consequences: jobs lost to foreign firms, with no safeguards to protect consumer data, local businesses, or public authorities. The result? Real risks to national security.

## **Ontario**

A new academic study confirms that mandating nurse-to-patient ratios in Ontario hospitals would save lives, improve patient care, and help address the province's severe staffing crisis. The research highlights that safer workloads reduce medical errors, burnout, and staff turnover, while improving outcomes and cutting costs. Other provinces like British Columbia and Nova Scotia have adopted similar standards with positive results, yet Ontario continues to resist. CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions will push for ratios in upcoming bargaining, as over 16,000 licensed nurses remain out of the workforce. The Ontario NDP has reintroduced a bill to legislate ratios, a move the Ford government previously voted down.

There have been a number of recent developments around the OMERS pension plan. Robert Poirier, the government-appointed advisor leading the governance review of the plan, released his final report. This report came on the heels of a province-wide campaign to make sure that the concerns of CUPE plan members were heard by the review. Thanks to the hard work of activists and staff, the report echoed many of our concerns and made recommendations that were a clear victory for union sponsors of the plan. Among those victories was replacing the Sponsors Corporation with a Sponsors Council that would end corporate confidentiality requirements and restore power to union and employer sponsors. Before the ink was even dry on the report, the Ford government announced legislation as part of the Fall Economic Statement that would only implement selected recommendations. Union-side sponsors are pushing back around a number of concerns, particularly the reintroduction of the fiduciary responsibility requirement, opening the door back up to issues of confidentiality and representational restrictions that had been criticized by unions and the government's own reviewer.

A new report from England delivers a stark warning to Ontarians: privatizing hospital surgeries is a failure that harms patients and weakens public health care. After roughly 20 years of outsourcing surgeries to for-profit clinics in England, the result was longer wait times, greater inequality, and a hollowed-out public health system. Despite this clear evidence, Doug Ford is charging ahead with the same reckless agenda, funnelling public dollars into private clinics and expanding profit-driven delivery of cataracts, hip, and knee surgeries. The Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) and other health coalitions are joining forces to expose Ford's plan for what it is, and their message is clear: privatization puts profits before patients, drains capacity from hospitals, and threatens the foundations of universal public care. The Ford government must reverse course before it drags Ontario's public health system past the point of repair.

New polling shows that Ontarians are fed up with the Ford government's corruption, with a clear majority saying Labour Minister David Piccini should resign over the scandals surrounding the \$2.5-billion Skills Development Fund. Even many past PC voters agree he turned a fund meant for workers into a political slush pool for insiders and lobbyists – including unions who took money from this fund while endorsing Ford in the last election. Nearly half of respondents see this as evidence of a broader, deep-rooted problem in how the Ford government hands out public money. For most unions, the takeaway is clear: when public funds are misused to reward friends and donors, workers and communities lose. This latest scandal proves the Ford government must finally face real accountability.

The Ford government's latest move to replace elected school board trustees with unaccountable "student and family support offices" is part of a broader effort to distract from its own chronic underfunding of public education. Ontarians see through the tactic: polling shows the public blames the Conservatives, not trustees, for cuts, overcrowded classrooms, and the lack of student supports. Instead of investing in schools, the government has installed costly supervisors who drain board budgets while avoiding transparency about their salaries and expenses. This ongoing interference undermines local democracy, weakens community voice, and deepens the crisis in education. CUPE will continue standing with parents, students, and workers who are demanding real accountability and real investment in public schools.

## **Manitoba**

The Manitoba NDP is standing up for human rights with Bill 50, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act, which would make it harder for future governments to use the Charter's notwithstanding clause, a tool that can override fundamental rights. The bill requires any government invoking the clause to explain its reasoning to an appeal court judge, who can comment on its use, ensuring transparency and accountability. Premier Wab Kinew stressed that this measure protects vulnerable groups, including 2SLGBTQ+ communities and religious minorities, pointing to recent uses of the clause in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Quebec that targeted these communities. In contrast, Progressive Conservative leaders have dismissed the bill as a distraction, showing a willingness to allow the clause to be used in ways that undermine human rights. Bill 50 demonstrates the NDP's commitment to defending Charter protections and holding governments accountable to the public.

The Manitoba government's decision to eliminate sick notes for short-term absences is a smart, long-overdue move that will ease pressure on an overstretched health care system and save patients, doctors, and taxpayers' valuable time. By allowing employers to request a note only after seven consecutive days away, the province is cutting unnecessary paperwork, freeing up the equivalent of 50 doctors' worth of appointments each year, and responding directly to the successful "Sick of Sick Notes" campaign led by Doctors Manitoba. With support from both labour and business, this initiative shows a practical, collaborative approach to improving health care access.

CUPE Manitoba launched its new *We Work for Manitoba!* children's activity book in Brandon on November 22, highlighting the essential public services that sustain communities and the workers who deliver them. CUPE members also distributed the book during the Santa Claus Parade as part of the union's holiday outreach. The free resource showcases the wide range of CUPE members in Brandon, from school support staff and municipal workers to long-term care, child care, and Manitoba Hydro employees, and is designed to help children and families better understand the vital role public sector workers play across the province. I applaud the creativeness of this initiative, which is a meaningful way to celebrate frontline workers!

## **Saskatchewan**

Child care in Saskatchewan is at risk because the provincial government has yet to secure an extension of its \$10-a-day agreement with Ottawa before it expires in March 2026. CUPE warns that without renewed federal funding, child care centres could close, workers could be forced back to minimum wage, and parents could face skyrocketing fees. Saskatchewan remains without a renewed deal, leaving families and children vulnerable. While the government says it is negotiating, months of delay signal a lack of urgency and a disregard for the essential care and services that families rely on.

CUPE Saskatchewan's Education Workers Steering Committee (EWSC) urged the public to speak out on the damaging effects of years of government underfunding in schools with the launch of a province-wide survey. Education support workers, teachers, administrators, and parents were asked to share their experiences, and survey results will be made public and used to strengthen the EWSC's push for the provincial government to provide the resources and support students, and school staff need to succeed.

At the end of October, I joined Saskatchewan's health care provider unions who rallied at the legislature to demand a fair contract after three years without an agreement, underscoring how stagnant wages, chronic short-staffing, a broken AIMS pay system, and widespread burnout are driving workers out of the health care system. CUPE, SEIU-West, and SGEU leaders stressed that frontline staff have gone three and a half years without a raise and are struggling to make ends meet while carrying an unsustainable workload. As Health Care Provider Week unfolded, workers made clear that real recognition must come through action, not hashtags, and called on the provincial government and employers to finally deliver the wages, staffing, and working conditions needed to keep health care strong.

Following the throne speech on October 22, CUPE Saskatchewan was critical of the government for failing to deliver any meaningful support for public services or the workers who sustain them. The government laid out no plan to fix the health care staffing and retention crisis, stop facility closures, or provide long-overdue wage increases. It ignored urgent safety and funding issues in schools and provided no commitment to repair deteriorating education infrastructure.

Child care remains at risk with no renewal of the \$10-a-day agreement, and universities were left without any promise to halt layoffs, lower tuition, or provide stable funding. Unsurprisingly, the speech sidestepped workers and the public services families rely on represents a serious failure of leadership.

The Sask Party government is also failing Indigenous children by refusing to backfill federal cuts to Jordan's Principle funding, leaving students without the specialized supports they rely on and forcing education workers to shoulder impossible workloads. CUPE members delivered a petition with over 1,100 signatures demanding urgent provincial action, warning that the loss of funding is harming children's ability to learn and thrive while burning out the workers who support them. CUPE's education workers in the province emphasize that Scott Moe and his government's inaction is leaving Indigenous youth behind, while the Saskatchewan NDP echo the call for accountability and immediate restoration of supports.

As a true affront to the havoc that the government has wreaked, former Sask Party MLA and speaker Randy Weekes showed up to the Saskatchewan NDP convention with a new NDP membership card in hand, making it clear he's done with a Sask Party, which he said has slid too far to the right and is now consumed by internal fighting. His move highlights the growing chaos inside Scott Moe's government, where MLAs and former cabinet ministers are reportedly scrambling behind the scenes over leadership and where harmful policies like the Saskatchewan Income Support program continue to fail people who are homeless, struggling with addictions, or living in deep poverty. While the Sask Party brushes off criticism instead of fixing the damage, the NDP under Carla Beck is united, energized, and earning overwhelming support from its members. Weekes's shift toward the NDP drives home a simple truth: the Sask Party is too divided and too out of touch to lead, and the NDP is increasingly seen as the stable, compassionate, and credible force ready to serve Saskatchewan far better than Moe and his right-wing cronies.

## **Alberta**

The UCP government's decision to mandate teachers back to work after their first strike in 25 years by using the notwithstanding clause marks a dangerous and deliberate abuse of power. By stripping educators of their constitutional rights before the courts could even weigh in, the province shut down legitimate collective bargaining and chose coercion over dialogue. This attack has only strengthened the labour movement. Unions across Alberta rallied behind teachers, recognizing that when a government uses constitutional shortcuts to silence one group of workers, it threatens the rights of all. The province may believe these tactics will intimidate and divide, but the solidarity across the labour movement shows that workers will not tolerate the erosion of their rights, or the weakening of the Charter, under any circumstances.

CUPE members stood shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with Alberta teachers to show that they will not stand for this assault on workers and will meet this overreach with unwavering resistance. No doubt as a result of the pressure from this solidarity, the province reached a tentative agreement with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees within minutes of those workers going on strike.

A recent fatality report has highlighted long-standing and systemic failures in Alberta's approach to protecting frontline care workers, pointing to major legislative gaps, weak safety standards, and inadequate employer obligations. The inquiry found that staff in high-risk care environments are often left without crucial information about the clients they support are expected to work alone in unsafe situations, and lack meaningful avenues to refuse dangerous work, problems made worse by years of UCP "red tape reduction" that stripped away oversight and weakened worker protections.

CUPE and safety experts emphasized that Alberta's laws allow employers to appear compliant while still exposing workers to serious harm, and they are calling for sweeping reforms, including mandatory sharing of client histories between agencies, stronger joint health and safety committees, clear sector-specific safety standards, and national guidelines for the industry. Labour advocates in the province note that violence against workers has climbed in recent years, underscoring the need for immediate government action to ensure that no one else is put at risk simply for doing their job.

The Alberta government's decision to force "citizenship markers" onto driver's licences and ID cards is widely seen as another overreach by the UCP, one that creates new risks, deepens inequities, and is a solution in search of a problem. Despite claiming the change will improve "convenience," the policy will require Albertans to track down passports or birth certificates just to renew a licence, placing the greatest burden on low-income residents, newcomers, and those with limited access to documents. Legal and civil liberties experts warn the plan is unprecedented, outside provincial jurisdiction, and dangerous, exposing people's citizenship status in everyday situations like traffic stops and increasing the chances of discrimination against non-citizens and racialized communities. Even the province admits it cannot verify who is or isn't a citizen, undermining its own justification. Critics, including the Alberta NDP, argue that instead of prioritizing equity and protecting people's rights, the UCP is choosing a policy that risks making Alberta less fair and less safe for those who already face discrimination.

The UCP government has introduced sweeping legislation that would shield three controversial gender-related laws from court scrutiny by invoking the notwithstanding clause. These laws restrict access to gender-affirming health care for youth, force schools to out students to their parents, limit sexual-health education, and ban transgender girls and women from female competitive sports. Medical experts, legal advocates, and 2SLGBTQ+ organizations have condemned the legislation as discriminatory, harmful, and rooted in misinformation. Courts have already paused parts of these laws due to concerns they could cause real harm, yet the government now aims to block Charter challenges altogether. By using the notwithstanding clause pre-emptively, the UCP is cutting off the ability of vulnerable youth and their families to defend their rights. If passed, Bill 9 would suspend key protections in both the Charter and Alberta's own human rights laws, allowing these policies to stand for at least five years without judicial oversight.

The move follows the government's recent use of the clause to force locked-out teachers back to work, showing a pattern of shutting down legal challenges instead of defending its legislation on merit. Critics warn the government is undermining democratic checks and balances, concentrating power in the hands of political leaders, and putting ideology ahead of evidence-based care. The result is a sweeping attack on human rights in Alberta, with trans youth, parents, teachers, and medical professionals left to deal with the consequences.

### **British Columbia and the Yukon**

In October, the District of Squamish locked out 250 members of Local 2269, which shut down vital public services and pushed workers onto picket lines for nearly two weeks. The Employer made this drastic move after CUPE members had been taking limited and targeted job action for fair, competitive wages to address the district's deep recruitment and retention crisis. Despite losing 40% of its unionized workforce since 2024, the district chose confrontation over solutions, offering enhanced compensation to exempt staff while refusing the same for frontline workers and misrepresenting negotiations to the public. Our members stood strong, and I was able to witness their solidarity first-hand when I joined them on the picket line. The local and the district finally reached a tentative agreement – a first step toward rebuilding trust, restoring morale, and protecting the essential services residents rely on. The new agreement includes wage increases of 3.75% for 2025, 3.25% for 2026 and 3% for 2027. Other key improvements include living wage increases for the lowest-paid workers and market adjustments for six separate classifications to support recruitment and retention. A joint committee will also be formed to make recommendations on alternative scheduling options that promote work-life balance.

CUPE B.C. released a statement strongly condemning the rise of Residential School denialism ahead of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, warning that denying the well-documented history of the Residential School system perpetuated harm, erased survivors' experiences, and dishonoured the thousands of children who never returned home. The division emphasized that these institutions carried out cultural genocide, a fact affirmed by survivor testimony and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Solidarity with Indigenous workers also means honouring survivors by learning the truth, listening to their voices, and challenging denialism wherever it appears, as reconciliation can only be built on truth.

The B.C. government's introduction of Bill 19 marks a major step toward expanding accessible, publicly delivered child care, and it reflects years of strong advocacy by CUPE B.C. and local unions. The legislation would allow school districts to offer child care for children of all ages, including infants and toddlers, and to provide care year-round during breaks and non-instructional days, making better use of public schools to meet families' needs. CUPE leaders in the province welcome the change as a smart, sustainable way to create more quality child care spaces while expanding hours and opportunities for school support workers. Bill 19 opens the door to significant growth in public child care, in alignment with CUPE B.C.'s Seamless Child care Now campaign and moving B.C. closer to a truly universal, publicly delivered system.

CUPE's K-12's provincial bargaining committee met with the British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) for a fifth bargaining session and made meaningful, if still preliminary, progress on addressing workplace violence, one of the most urgent issues facing education workers. While much work remains, the committee is encouraged and continues pushing toward a fair collective agreement that recognizes the essential role CUPE members play in public education and tackles the rising costs and unsustainable workloads affecting schools across B.C. The committee credits members' strong engagement and solidarity for helping drive progress at the table and urges everyone to stay connected through their locals and CUPE K-12 B.C. updates as bargaining continues.

CUPE 873's paramedics warn that soaring emergency room (ER) closures, more than 250 this year, is pushing its members to the brink and leaving many communities dangerously exposed. When local ERs shut down, especially in rural areas, paramedics become the only emergency care available, forced to travel longer distances while managing rising call volumes and chronic staffing shortages. These delays can be life-threatening, and as winter demand grows, CUPE fears the system is close to breaking. While the province is trying to recruit more workers, paramedics say communities must prepare for reduced access and longer waits, and that lasting solutions are urgently needed to protect emergency care.

Kate White's Yukon NDP achieved a major breakthrough in the 2025 territorial election, winning six seats (doubling their seat count) and becoming the Official Opposition, a clear sign that Yukoners want stronger, people-focused leadership.

Under White's steady and community-rooted approach, the NDP is now well positioned to push for better health care, more affordable living, and real support for working people, while holding the Yukon Party government accountable. The result reflects growing confidence in White's vision for a fairer, more compassionate Yukon and marks a significant step forward for the party's momentum across the territory.

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

More than 5,000 unionized long-term care and assisted living workers will transition to the province-wide Facilities Collective Agreement over the next two years, improving fairness for workers and stability in seniors' care, as part of a new tripartite agreement between HEU-led multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA), the Health Employers' Association of B.C. (HEABC) and the Province of B.C. Operators of care homes receiving a threshold of provincial funding, and who directly employ workers, will be designated as members of HEABC and subject to provincial collective agreements.

This agreement is an important step toward restoring a level playing field for working and caring conditions in provincially funded seniors' care homes. For years, HEU members have provided skilled, compassionate care within a fragmented seniors' care system marked by significant gaps in wages, benefits and workplace protections. These inequities resulted from past B.C. Liberal government policies that encouraged privatization and subcontracting. Those policies weakened care and disproportionately harmed a workforce made up mainly of women and racialized workers. They drove down wages, benefits and working conditions, creating high turnover and staffing shortages across the sector.

Decades of advocacy by HEU members are finally yielding results, with this government's commitment to restoring better labour standards in the sector. The Agreement reached is part of a tentative agreement and is subject to ratification, expected to be completed by December 19, 2025.

The B.C. Ministry of Health has extended the Provincial Rural and Retention Incentives (PRRI) program until December 31, 2025, for the 76 communities already eligible, following strong advocacy from the Hospital Employees' Union. While this extension recognizes the needs of frontline workers, the union continues to push for communities like Cranbrook and Kimberley, as well as members in private long-term care and assisted living, to be included. The PRRI program provides retention and referral incentives for eligible health care workers, offering up to \$2,000 per quarter to a maximum of \$8,000 per year for those with regular employment status. Established in 2021 to support staffing in underserved areas, the program helps ensure that residents in remote regions and vulnerable populations, including First Nations, continue to receive essential health care services.

HEU members are urging the federal government to reverse recent cuts to B.C.'s Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), warning that hundreds of essential health care workers may be forced to leave the province when their work permits expire. During a provincial mission to Ottawa, medical transcriptionist Harjinder Kaur shared with senior immigration officials how these cuts are destabilizing families and the health care system, as workers who clean, feed, and care for patients lose their pathway to permanent residency. HEU stresses that these workers have supported B.C.'s health care system through critical years and deserve the opportunity to stay and continue contributing. The union is calling for the full restoration of B.C.'s PNP allocation, the reversal of restrictive temporary foreign worker changes, and the creation of a permanent residency pathway for essential non-clinical health care workers.

HEU has intensified its organizing efforts, and it's already yielding results, with over 400 workers at four facilities joining HEU in recent months. HEU is also improving digital tools, including updated e-card capabilities, to better connect with workers and support continued growth across the sector.

### **Airlines and Federal Jurisdiction**

Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge flight attendants sent a clear message by voting 99.1% against the company's offer, frustrated that even with the proposed increases many of them would still earn less than the federal minimum wage. It's unacceptable that full-time safety professionals working for Canada's flagship airline are paid so little they can qualify for income supports. The union says Air Canada never genuinely bargained on wages and relied on early federal government interference to weaken workers' ability to strike and push down pay. The issue is now headed to mediation, and arbitration if needed, but flight attendants are clear that this fight isn't just about numbers on a contract, it's about being paid fairly for the critical safety work they do. While they secured some progress with partial pay for ground duties, they are determined to keep pushing until every minute of their essential work is finally recognized and fully paid.

Flight attendants once again proved they are the front line of passenger safety when an Air Canada crew swiftly evacuated a flight in Denver after detecting an electrical burning smell, all while not being paid for that lifesaving work. This is yet another example of airlines depending on crews' training, courage, and quick action in emergencies while refusing to compensate them for the hours when safety matters most. From electrical failures to bomb threats and tarmac fires, flight attendants handle some of the most dangerous situations in the industry, yet loopholes in the Canada Labour Code still allow airlines to leave this critical work unpaid. CUPE has been urging the federal government to fix this since 2023, but months after the Jobs Minister promised a review, nothing has changed. Flight attendants shouldn't have to beg to be paid for protecting lives and the law needs to catch up with the reality of their essential work.

CUPE 8125, has launched UltraExtraBasic.ca, a campaign that exposes how far the airline has strayed from its "caring" image, and highlights the ongoing problem of unpaid work in the airline sector. The campaign underscores that WestJet continues to rely on cabin crew to perform essential safety and service duties without compensating them for all hours worked, a practice that disrespects their professionalism and erodes fair working conditions. With a new round of bargaining underway, CUPE is pushing back against this unfair treatment and demanding meaningful improvements that reflect the skill, dedication, and safety responsibilities of flight attendants. The campaign calls for restoring dignity, respect, and proper compensation to a workforce that keeps the airline running, and its passengers safe during their travels.

CUPE applauded new legislation from the federal NDP that would finally make it illegal for airlines to force their workers to work for free. The proposed bill would amend the Canada Labour Code so flight attendants are paid their full hourly rate for all duties, including boarding, deplaning, pre-flight safety checks, and training, ending the roughly 35 hours of unpaid work they perform every month. These tasks are essential for passenger safety, yet airlines like Air Canada continue to rely on unpaid labour despite strong profits. The issue gained national attention during this summer's historic Air Canada flight attendant strike, and CUPE leaders say paying workers for every hour on the job should be a basic legal standard, not something they have to fight for. CUPE is urging all parties to pass the bill without delay and finally guarantee flight attendants the full, fair pay they deserve for every minute they spend keeping passengers safe.

The picket line at Pascan Aviation's Saint-Hubert head office was the scene of a shocking and dangerous incident in November. A management employee drove a vehicle toward 15 peaceful picketers, forcing one worker to be pulled out of the car's path at the last moment. CUPE 5490 has filed a police complaint, and the incident, witnessed by several people, exposes a serious and unacceptable disregard for worker safety. Pascan employees have been on strike since October 28 over wages, off-base residency, assignments, and crew planning, after their collective agreement expired in July 2025. Tensions may be high, but nothing justifies endangering workers' lives. The employer must be held fully accountable, both for the conditions that prompted the strike and for the reckless actions of its management.

CUPE 104 is urging the federal government to correct a serious omission in its recent changes to the Public Service Superannuation Act, which recognize certain public safety occupations but exclude RCMP Public Safety Communicators. These workers, who are the first point of contact in life-and-death emergencies and provide critical operational support during shootings, abductions, mass-casualty events, border incidents, and national security investigations, have been denied the same recognition and retirement protections as other federal public safety personnel. Their exclusion, particularly as the only female-dominated group in Canada's federal public-safety system, reinforces gender inequity and worsens already severe staffing shortages, burnout, and delayed emergency responses in RCMP Operational Communications Centres. CUPE 104 warns that leaving out the workers who hold Canada's emergency response system together is not only unjust but dangerous, and calls on the federal government to amend the legislation before it proceeds through Parliament.

## **Organizing**

For the reporting period of September 1 to November 30, 2025, CUPE welcomed 1,250 new members in 16 bargaining units, including 546 in social services, 214 in emergency and security services, and 412 in social services. There are currently 156 active campaigns underway that, if successful, could bring 55,431 new members to our union.

Our Atlantic region currently has five active campaigns in municipal services, which would see 2,788 new members join CUPE, including 2,436 in education.

In the Maritimes, there are currently nine active campaigns which could bring 741 workers into CUPE, including 309 in emergency and security services.

Quebec has 38 active campaigns underway in various sectors, that could bring 12,216 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 16,895 new members to our union, including 5,319 in municipal services.

Manitoba has 18 active campaigns, which could see 1,784 new members join our union, including 1,632 workers in education.

Saskatchewan has 14 active campaigns in various sectors, where we hope to bring 1,340 new workers into CUPE, 1,062 of which are education workers.

The Alberta region was busy with 12 active organizing campaigns that could bring in 7,595 new members into CUPE. Seven of the ongoing campaigns are in the education sector where CUPE is hoping to add 7,107 members.

In British Columbia, there are 24 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 11,793 new members.

## **In Memoriam/Personal**

### **Members**

Nihal Bahadir	CUPE 1483 – Ontario
Sharon Schaefer	CUPE 59 – Saskatchewan
Lynda Mackenzie	CUPE 3114 – Ontario
Dan MacBeth	CUPE 50 – British Columbia
Earl Sutherland	CUPE 15 – British Columbia
Bruno Silano	CUPE 1 – Ontario
Nancy Hanschmann	CUPE 109 – Ontario
Fred Muzin	HEU – British Columbia
Chris Alnutt	HEU – British Columbia
Jose Castillo	CUPE 416 – Ontario
Glenn Mitchell	CUPE 416 – Ontario

### **Active staff**

Mike Kelly	National Representative, New Glasgow Area Office
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### **Retired staff**

Guy Gohier	National Representative Quebec Regional Office
Jean-Pierre Levasseur	National Representative Quebec Regional Office
Lawrence Gould	National Representative Red Deer Area Office

**Fraternal**

Leo Gerard

President Emeritus United Steelworkers

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MK HK".

MARK HANCOCK  
National President

:sg/ceu