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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT DECEMBER 2025 – MARCH 2026

Sisters, Brothers, and Friends:

As we closed out 2025 and welcomed the new year, I hope you all were able to take a moment to rest and spend some time with those who mean the most to you, as well as reflect, and applaud our collective efforts and wins over the last year.

I began the year in the usual way, meeting with staff from each region. It was inspiring to hear from CUPE staff from across the country, whose dedication and expertise are the driving force behind our union's work. Every member of our team plays an instrumental role in advancing CUPE's agenda, strengthening bargaining power, and moving the labour movement forward. Their commitment ensures that workers have a voice, protections on the job, and the ability to fight for stronger public services, making real change possible for Canadians.

CUPE has great momentum since we turned the page to 2026. Members, leaders, and staff are hard at work defending workers' rights, strengthening public services, and advancing social and economic justice across Canada. Every day, our members are standing up to protect decent work, challenge corporate power, and ensure that communities, families, and the environment are prioritized over profit. From the fight for accessible child care to defending the right to strike, from holding governments accountable on Employment Insurance to demanding transparency and sustainability in emerging technologies, CUPE is at the forefront of building a fairer, stronger Canada for all workers.

CUPE's Take Action to Fix EI campaign is mobilizing workers nationwide to demand a fair and effective Employment Insurance system that actually supports people when they need it most. The campaign highlights how the current EI system fails too many workers, especially part-time, precarious, and migrant workers, with barriers to eligibility, low benefit levels, and regional disparities that cut benefits to as few as 14 weeks. CUPE is calling on members and allies to pressure the federal government to rebuild EI so it provides meaningful income support for unemployment, sickness, caregiving, and parental leave, and works for all workers, not just corporate interests.

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General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

Artificial intelligence is expanding rapidly in Canadian workplaces with minimal oversight, few regulations, and high environmental costs, threatening workers, communities, and the climate. CUPE warns that AI's massive energy, water, and mineral demands are driving greenhouse gas emissions, straining aging electricity grids, and fuelling resource extraction that harms ecosystems and violates Indigenous rights, all while private corporations profit from public investment. CUPE is calling on the federal government to enforce strong environmental laws, require transparency on AI energy and water use, and build publicly owned digital infrastructure to protect Canadian sovereignty. Employers must also disclose AI's environmental impacts, empowering workers to hold them accountable and safeguard both jobs and the planet.

CUPE, on behalf of 800,000 members, including 12,000 child care workers, wrote to Minister Patty Hajdu to raise serious concerns about the future of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program. While the program marked a historic step forward, Budget 2025 maintained status quo in funding, short-term agreements delayed \$10-a-day targets, and loopholes allowed public dollars to benefit for-profit operators, threatening quality and access. CUPE called on the government to recommit to public and not-for-profit delivery, invest in recruiting and retaining child care workers, and fully fund Indigenous and community-based child care, stressing that a universal system depends on strong public services.

CUPE has been active in the fight against Bill C-12 which will roll back refugee protections and put hundreds of thousands of Canadian residents, including CUPE members, at risk of deportation. The Bill, which was fast-tracked through the House of Commons in 2025, is also being rushed through the Senate. CUPE made submissions to the House of Commons as well as the Senate calling on the Bill to be repealed and calling on the government to go back to the drawing board on fixing the immigration system by following the lead of migrant-led organizations. We expect the Senate to vote on the bill in late March, and we are lobbying Senators to make amendments to the Bill along the lines with the recommendations made by the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (SOCI).

CUPE's campaign to support Bill C-247 is a bold fight to defend the fundamental right to strike in Canada, pushing back against a federal government that has repeatedly used Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to shut down lawful job action and side with employers instead of workers. CUPE highlighted how this power was used to silence striking flight attendants at Air Canada, tipping the scales toward corporate interests and undermining collective bargaining rights protected under the Charter. Bill C-247, introduced by NDP MPs, would repeal Section 107 for good, removing the government's ability to unilaterally end strikes behind closed doors. CUPE is mobilizing members and Canadians to support this legislation so workers can bargain fairly, wield real leverage, and secure justice on the job without fear of government intervention.

CUPE supported members from across Canada to attend the Canadian Health Coalition's lobby day on Parliament Hill in early February. Our members joined approximately 200 union members and activists to call on the federal government to enforce the Canada Health Act and stand up to health care privatization, including the naked attempt to dismantle our public system through Bill 11 in Alberta.

CUPE also stood with its labour allies on Parliament Hill to demand a workers-first approach to the economy and trade, warning that renewed threats to Canadian jobs expose the dangers of corporate-driven trade policies. Together, unions called for a national, worker-centred strategy that protects public services, defends domestic industries, and safeguards Canadian sovereignty, making clear that Canada's future must be shaped by democratic control and collective action, not corporate profit.

In February, CUPE's All Committees Meeting (ACM), held in Ottawa, brought together union activists from across the country for a week of powerful discussions, strategizing, and action focused on strengthening our movement and defending public services. With members united from coast to coast to coast, the undertone of the energy was clear: when workers stand together, our voices are amplified. CUPE made the most of this momentum by hosting an All Committees' Lobby Day, holding 93 meetings with Members of Parliament, Ministers, Senators, and Party Leaders. Members brought their lived experiences to Parliament Hill, speaking passionately about the urgent need for meaningful investments in public services and social programs, so that elected officials could put human faces to the real impacts of underfunding and privatization in communities across Canada.

On the ACM's final day, members reflected on the impact of their advocacy in raising their issues with parliamentarians, and pressing for concrete action, from caucus discussions to private members' bills. Elected officials acknowledged the challenges ahead, and many asked that we keep in touch and that ongoing dialogue with CUPE was welcome. The week also strengthened our commitment to safer workplaces through the interactive workshop "Healthier Work, Not Tougher Workers", where participants explored psychosocial hazards and practical solutions to protect workers' psychological health and safety. I'm proud of the work accomplished throughout the course of the week. CUPE members know that strong public services depend on strong unions, and together we will continue championing for the respect, resources, and protection that workers and communities deserve.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION
Federal	5490	Pascan Aviation	20	October 28, 2025	Ongoing
Quebec	4317	Gateway Terminals – Port of Montreal	30	September 22, 2025	168 days
Quebec	5564	Autobus Fleur de Lys	30	November 16, 2025	115 days
Ontario	1281	York University Faculty Association	8	October 27, 2025	98 days
Quebec	301	City of Montreal	6441	February 4, 2026	1 day

CUPE 5490

CUPE 5490's flight attendants have been holding the line since October 28, 2025, in their fight for a fair second collective agreement that includes wages reflective of the vital work they do. This employer has not hesitated to use replacement workers despite new federal anti-scab legislation, undermining our members as they are forced to defend their bargaining rights before the CIRB.

CUPE 4317

Members ratified the tentative agreement on February 27, 2026. The new contract provides annual wage increases of 6,25%, 4% and 2,25% for the following years, with CPI indexing, and includes language to protect 22 jobs against automation.

CUPE 1281

After 14 weeks on the picket line, CUPE 1281 ratified a tentative agreement on February 1, 2026. Members were intent on protecting bargaining unit work, and strengthening health and safety language. While the strike was a long and difficult one, the members remained united and will continue forward with strength and solidarity.

CUPE 5564

Members ratified the tentative agreement on February 12, 2026. The new contract provides major improvements to working conditions, starting with wage increases ranging from 21,25% to 30% over five years, including a full CPI indexing protection, 37,5 hours work week, paid meal breaks, increased paid holidays, increased union release time, improved health and safety language and a 1000\$ signing bonus.

CUPE 301

CUPE 301 held a one day strike to send a message of unity and solidarity as bargaining with the City of Montreal is entering a critical phase. Wages have fallen behind in recent years, and catching up is the main priority for the Local.

Regional Updates

Atlantic Region

Newfoundland and Labrador

Since the Canada-Wide, Early Learning and Child Care program began in 2021, families in Newfoundland and Labrador have seen significant benefits. Child care fees have dropped to less than one third of what parents paid in 2021, helping working families better afford the cost of living. However, these gains will not last without stronger action from the provincial government.

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador, representing 6,600 members, including child care and education workers in the province, is calling on Premier Wakeham and his government to take greater responsibility for the program's future. As the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development meets with federal and provincial counterparts, CUPE is urging the province to significantly increase funding, raise wages, provide pension benefits for early childhood educators, and respect workers' right to bargain collectively. CUPE also stresses the importance of limiting for-profit child care, keeping child care services accountable to the public, and using public buildings such as schools and universities to expand regulated child care spaces. Without these steps, the program will continue to fall short and rely on the low pay and insecure working conditions of a largely female workforce.

CUPE condemned Memorial University's plan to cut jobs, close campuses, and slash services as a reckless response to a budget deficit, exposing workers and students to unnecessary harm. These cuts, driven by years of provincial funding reductions, directly target CUPE 1615 members and weaken the province's only public university. CUPE called on both levels of government to restore public funding immediately, protect jobs, and ensure accessible, high-quality education, making clear that austerity at the expense of workers and students is unacceptable.

Nova Scotia

CUPE members in the province are celebrating a hard-fought victory after the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia struck down Bill 148's four-year wage freeze as unconstitutional, reaffirming workers' Charter right to free and fair collective bargaining. The court was clear that the law, brought in under former Premier Steven McNeil, and upheld by Houston and the NS Conservatives, violated the duty to negotiate in good faith, stripping workers of hard-earned wages and benefits. CUPE is demanding the government respect the ruling, stop wasting taxpayer dollars on an appeal and attacking workers' rights and bargain in fairly with the workers who keep Nova Scotia's public services running.

CUPE signed onto a joint media release with labour allies in the region warning that Nova Scotia's public mental health and addictions system is under threat. Public-sector clinicians, many of whom are CUPE members, provide life-saving care every day, yet the Independent Service Provider model has created an unfair pay gap with private-sector providers funded by taxpayers. This inequity is driving skilled workers out of the public system and undermining care. CUPE is calling on the provincial government to act immediately to close this gap, protect frontline workers, and ensure a fully public, accessible, and sustainable mental health system for all Nova Scotians.

Unions representing Nova Scotia teachers and school support staff, including CUPE, have raised urgent concerns over escalating school violence, with tens of thousands of incidents recorded in recent years. CUPE members report daily threats to their safety, from being struck or cut by students to heavy objects being thrown, forcing some to take long-term leave due to injuries. Despite minor steps such as a revised student code of conduct, the provincial government has failed to treat violence as a serious workplace safety issue, leaving staff underprotected and overworked. CUPE and the NSTU have called for smaller class sizes, proper training, and stronger enforcement of occupational health and safety standards, exposing a government that continues to prioritize administrative measures over the real safety and well-being of workers and students. This failure to act reflects a broader pattern of neglect under Premier Houston, from workplace safety to the rising costs of essential services, among other issues.

Earlier this year, Nova Scotia's NDP sharply criticized Premier Tim Houston for his absence and inaction on Nova Scotia Power's proposed rate hikes, which included a 3.8 % increase retroactive to January 1 and a further 4.1% rise the following year. The NDP warned that households were already stretched thin and that the utility had lost public trust following the previous year's cyber attack. Party house leader Lisa Lachance highlighted that Houston, who had appointed himself energy minister, had been missing from hearings and had failed to submit official government input, leaving Nova Scotians without meaningful protection from rising costs. The NDP called for a full-government review of Nova Scotia Power, exposing a premier more concerned with avoiding accountability than defending working families.

Maritimes Region

New Brunswick

In her 2026 State of the Province address, Premier Susan Holt defended deep cuts to public spending as necessary for economic growth, despite a soaring \$834.7 million deficit, effectively shifting the burden onto workers and public services while protecting corporate interests. The government's plan prioritizes tax breaks for investors, resource development, and private-sector projects, offering no guarantee of good union jobs or meaningful labour protections. Meanwhile, the health care crisis is worsening, with nearly 238,000 New Brunswickers, almost one third of the population, left without a family doctor or nurse practitioner. The message is clear: the government is willing to weaken public services and overburden frontline workers to reward businesses, leaving communities to pay the price of its so-called "economic transformation."

CUPE 1252, which represents hospital employees in New Brunswick, held a historic summit for newcomers as part of our National Union's effort to build solidarity with migrant workers in our union. Around 150 members from across the province attended, including seasoned union leaders and brand new members for whom this was their first union experience. Congratulations to CUPE 1252 on a successful newcomer's forum. Our members' paths to Canada may be diverse, but what is most important is that we remain unified in our solidarity.

Prince Edward Island (PEI)

Rob Lantz returns as Premier of Prince Edward Island after securing permanent leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party, amid a year of political instability that saw three premiers in twelve months. While he touts priorities like health care, affordability, land, and energy, Islanders have heard these promises before, with little sustained investment in the public services they rely on. His record shows a pattern of poor decisions, leaving frontline workers stretched and families struggling, while complex infrastructure and trade projects take precedence over urgent needs.

CUPE PEI participated in a protest outside the Progressive Conservative Leadership Convention in support of education workers, ensuring that Premier Lantz knew what his priorities needed to be on day one of his official mandate as party leader. This means he continues to be Premier without a mandate from the people of PEI and plans to continue to do so without calling a general election in the spring.

After 107 days on strike, the brave members of CUPE 830 have returned to work with their heads held high. As municipal elections loom this year, members of CUPE 830 and across the island are mobilizing to ensure that we elect councillors and mayors who care about workers and our communities and show the door to those who side with scabs. CUPE members also gathered for the first ever PEI coordinated bargaining summit. Inspired by the CUPE 830 strike, and by province-wide mobilization to support the striking workers, CUPE members on the island are coordinating to win strong collective agreements that will strengthen our workplaces and our communities.

Quebec

As expected, the new administration at the City of Montreal is not acting with respect toward its employees or the unions that represent them. By announcing 250 job cuts without providing details to the unions, the City has created uncertainty and a climate of mistrust among its staff. With no meaningful dialogue taking place, representatives of CUPE 429 had to attend City Council to seek explanations, which proved unsatisfactory. Rather than taking a poorly informed, unilateral approach, the administration should consult its employees through their union representatives to hear proposals from the real experts: those who deliver services to residents.

The lack of consultation and respect is also characteristic of the Legault government, which is acting like a bulldozer in the health care sector. Another ill-advised reform has been proposed that it would eliminate a key pillar of public health care in Quebec: the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ). Employees learned the news through the media. As an autonomous and independent public health body, the Institute plays a unique and essential role in our health care system. Shifting resources toward curative care at the expense of preventive public health is a serious mistake. Quebec also risks losing globally recognized expertise in public health.

For the first time in more than 15 years, members of CUPE 301 held a 24-hour strike to send a message of solidarity and to tell the City of Montreal that blue-collar workers will not accept concessions to their working conditions. In recent years, these workers have lost between 6% and 7% of their purchasing power. Not only is the City offering no catch-up, it is proposing a financial framework that would further impoverish them. An unlimited general strike remains a last-resort pressure tactic, but if it is the only way to reach a satisfactory agreement, the union and its members are prepared to go there.

In December 2025, amid controversy over the role of unions in our society sparked by the introduction of a CAQ Bill, a major poll was conducted for CUPE Quebec by the firm CROP. A total of 2,000 Quebecers responded, and the results are very encouraging. 81% believe unions play an essential role in defending workers, while 79% feel the current Quebec government is seeking to reduce union influence. This level of public support shows that people expect governments to treat unions as partners, as they have traditionally done in Quebec. Collaboration, rather than confrontation, has advanced the social and economic agenda that built the Quebec we know today.

Ontario

Ontario's paramedic system is in crisis, driven by chronic understaffing, soaring call volumes, and a growing mental health emergency among frontline workers. Yet some continue to push for a costly and unnecessary College of Paramedics that would do nothing to improve patient care. Representing roughly 8,000 paramedics and communications officers, CUPE warns that burnout, PTSD, moral injury, forced overtime, and high attrition are crippling recruitment and retention, leaving services unable to meet demand and communities at risk.

Paramedics already work under rigorous oversight, and a new regulatory body would only add fees, bureaucracy, and barriers for workers while ignoring the real solutions, sustainable staffing levels, competitive compensation, and robust, trauma-informed mental health supports. CUPE is calling on the province to abandon this distraction and instead work with frontline workers on evidence-based reforms that strengthen emergency medical services by respecting paramedics, supporting their well-being, and ensuring safe, reliable care for Ontarians.

Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board is under fire for spending nearly \$855,000 on television advertising aimed at polishing its public image while injured workers continue to face delays, long wait times, and understaffed services. The union representing WSIB's 3,800 workers has strongly criticized the campaign as a misuse of employer funds, arguing that money paid through employer premiums should be directed toward improving core services, faster claims processing, better access to health care, and adequate staffing, not feel-good ads for an agency that injured workers have no choice but to use. Critics, including labour and the Official Opposition, say the campaign reflects a broader pattern of misplaced priorities, where public agencies invest in reputation management instead of delivering tangible improvements for workers. The union is calling for an immediate shift away from expensive advertising and toward investments that actually support injured workers, strengthen frontline services, and restore the WSIB's focus on its fundamental mandate.

More than 100 public sector trades workers at CUPE Ontario's Trades Conference denounced the Ford government for policies that have driven skilled trades people out of public service and weakened essential infrastructure. Delegates highlighted that unionized trades workers keep schools, universities, hospitals, and communities running, yet face suppressed wages, chronic underinvestment, and government disregard, forcing many to leave for the private sector. They also raised serious concerns about the Labour Minister's conduct and the damage ongoing investigations have done to trust in the labour system. The conference demanded immediate investment in public sector trades in the next provincial budget, making clear that strong public services require respect, accountability, and fair compensation for unionized workers.

OCHU/CUPE released a damning report, *Driven to the Brink: Projected Cuts to Intensify Ontario's Hospital Crisis*, warning that the Ford government's austerity measures will devastate Ontario's hospitals, eliminating over 10,000 jobs and leaving a shortfall of more than 4,000 staffed beds. The report shows that restricted funding, set at only 2% annually, has forced hospitals to slash staff even as patient volumes soar, leading to longer wait times, rushed care, preventable errors, and overcrowded hallways.

Frontline workers are being pushed to the breaking point, compromising patient safety and the quality of care, while the government neglects its responsibility to adequately fund and staff public health care. OCHU/CUPE's research underscores that Ontario hospitals are drastically under-resourced compared to the national average, and calls on the government to immediately hire 48,000 staff, add 6,200 beds, and increase hospital funding by \$3.2 billion, warning that without decisive action, the crisis is self-inflicted and will continue to endanger patients and workers alike.

Manitoba

Utility Operators with the City of Winkler have officially joined CUPE following a successful card-signing campaign under Manitoba's card check legislation, further strengthening our presence in the municipal sector. CUPE already represents thousands of municipal workers across Southern Manitoba, including workers in City of Morden, and now counts over 5,000 municipal workers province-wide. I extend a warm welcome to these new members, as they join Canada's largest union.

A recent poll shows Premier Wab Kinew and the NDP holding strong, steady support more than two years into their mandate, holding at 53% overall, up from 45% at the start of their term, and leading across nearly every demographic and region, including 59% in Winnipeg. The party remains popular despite economic challenges, including inflation and tariffs on various sectors, and with growing appeal among younger Manitobans, women, and even outside traditional urban strongholds. Much of this approval reflects the NDP's focus on strengthening Manitoba's public services, including investments in education, expanded social programs, hiring frontline support workers, and improvements to health care.

CUPE remains adamant that Manitoba's health care system cannot afford a return to PC policies, emphasizing the need for a strong, well-funded public system. Under the previous PC government, emergency rooms were closed, health care workers faced wage freezes and chaotic forced votes, privatization expanded through agencies and delisted services, and chronic underfunding led to layoffs and systemic stress described as a "pit of despair."

Home care workers were particularly undervalued, with poor pay, benefits, and pensions. Since Wab Kinew and the Manitoba NDP took office, CUPE reports meaningful improvements: fair collective agreements without political interference, expanded home care benefits, hundreds of new support workers, and increased funding to improve patient-staff ratios. While challenges remain, strengthening public health care must remain a priority, and CUPE insists that the NDP reject any rollback to past PC policies.

Saskatchewan

CUPE 5430 is urging the Saskatchewan government to abandon plans for a new whistleblower hotline and instead address the province's deep health care crisis. With facilities closing due to short-staffing, patients facing months or years of delays, and health care workers going nearly four years without a raise, investing in a duplicative reporting system wastes public resources and undermines frontline staff.

The government should prioritize retaining and properly compensating workers, improving working conditions, and reducing wait times, rather than creating unnecessary bureaucracy that fails to support those keeping the system running.

CUPE proudly welcomes approximately 80 new members into the union following a decisive Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board ruling that affirms workers' fundamental right to organize and be heard.

The newly certified members of CUPE 5604 are Southland Transportation bus drivers serving 16 communities across the Horizon School Division, who stood strong through a lengthy employer challenge and ultimately secured majority support through a representation vote. This victory reinforces workers' right to organize by community and workplace, rather than being forced into employer-wide structures that dilute their voices, and marks an important step forward in empowering these drivers to collectively bargain for fair wages, safer working conditions, and respect on the job.

CUPE Saskatchewan urged the provincial government to take a strong position in support of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program, warning that government inaction and weak provincial commitment were creating uncertainty for families, workers, and child care centres. While the program had delivered real gains through lower fees, improved training, and wage enhancements for early childhood educators, the government fell short on its promise to create 46,000 child care spaces by 2026, leaving many communities without access to care. CUPE called out the province for failing to provide stable, long-term funding, refusing to bargain with child care workers on a province-wide wage grid, and not prioritizing public and non-profit delivery. CUPE made clear that the province's failure to invest, bargain in good faith, and prioritize public and non-profit child care threatened to dismantle hard-won progress and placed the burden of government neglect squarely on the backs of workers and families.

Alberta

I had the privilege of participating in our All Leaders Meeting in January. It was an inspiring day, hearing from local leaders from across the province as they shared their achievements, challenges, and unwavering dedication to advocating for their members. Candace and I proudly addressed those in attendance and brought messages of support and solidarity from across the country. The energy and commitment in the room were a strong reminder of the collective power of our union. Cutting the ribbon at the unveiling of the CUPE Alberta events van was an added highlight! Look out for the new wheels, sporting the provincial division's updated logo, at a community event near you!

Alberta's United Conservative Party (UCP) is under fire for its unclear stance on separatism, highlighted by NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi's challenge for MLAs to sign a simple pledge affirming pride in Canada and opposition to independence. Despite less than 10% of Albertans wanting to separate from Canada, Premier Danielle Smith continues to offer vague language about a "sovereign Alberta within a united Canada" and refuses to firmly oppose separatist movements. This focus on political posturing over real action on health care, the cost of living, and underfunded schools undermines public confidence, fuels division, and leaves NDP leaders like Nenshi standing out for taking a clear, pro-Canada position. Most recently, CUPE condemned Smith and the UCP government's proposed anti-immigrant referendum as a blatant distraction from worsening failures in health care, education, affordability, and jobs. Smith is deliberately inflaming division and scapegoating immigrants, who are vital to public services and the economy, instead of funding classrooms and hospitals. She has no mandate to privatize health care, to cut services to newcomers, or to impose voter restrictions that will serve only to suppress voter participation and undermine confidence in elections.

Manufactured culture wars, anti-immigrant fearmongering, and violent oppression tear communities apart, just as we see south of the border. Alberta's CUPE members and their communities deserve better. We're calling on Smith to call an election so that Albertans can have their say at the ballot box on the province's future, rather than having to vote on a divisive and unnecessary referendum.

CUPE Alberta has launched a campaign demanding that Premier Danielle Smith declare a health care state of emergency, exposing the devastating consequences of the UCP government's chronic underfunding, constant restructuring, and cancellation of critical projects like the southwest Edmonton hospital. Frontline workers and Albertans are sharing harrowing stories of long waits, inadequate care, and preventable deaths, from rural communities without emergency services to overcrowded urban ERs, showing the human cost of government neglect. By mid-January, the campaign had already mobilized 9,000 Albertans calling for immediate action, highlighting that the UCP has failed to protect public health, and urging urgent, decisive measures to restore safety, access, and dignity in Alberta's health care system.

British Columbia and the Yukon

CUPE joined the British Columbia Federation of Students at their rally for post-secondary education in February. Students and workers stood together, calling for increased funding for public universities, colleges, and polytechnics. The day showcased the leadership, activism, and commitment to progressive values within BC's student movement, emphasizing that collective action is essential to defend education, workers, and future generations.

In February, paramedics across British Columbia represented by CUPE 873 voted overwhelmingly for strike action (at 97%) as stalled negotiations highlighted decades of inaction on staffing shortages, burnout, and inadequate supports. CUPE 873 called for fair wages and benefits, stronger mental health resources, and protections against outsourcing to stabilize this critical workforce. Making clear how dedicated paramedics are to their profession and how important a stable ambulance service is, members' resolve allowed the bargaining team to land a deal. Negotiations were difficult, but the process worked. Next steps include a province-wide tour, both in person and online, where details of the agreement will be presented to more than 6,000 paramedics and dispatchers and questions answered ahead of a ratification vote.

The K-12 President's Council reports that provincial bargaining has entered a critical stage, with the BC Teachers' Federation returning to negotiations and the union's provincial bargaining committee preparing to resume talks with the BC Public School Employers' Association. Solidarity across public sector unions is more important than ever, and ongoing workplace actions, rallies, and advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening public education and securing respect for education workers will hopefully pay off soon. CUPE is seeking a fair agreement that includes increased resources, supports, and wages, while recognizing the essential role K-12 support workers play in student success and community well-being. Members are encouraged to stay engaged, connect with local representatives, and follow updates as negotiations continue.

Both BC community health workers and health science professionals reached tentative agreements at the end of February.

After almost one year of negotiations between the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) and Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) concluded a tentative agreement that achieves gains in many areas, despite the province's significant fiscal challenges. It provides general wage increases of 12% over four years, gains have also been made in classifications, scheduling, premiums, special leave, occupational health and safety, professional development funding, dedicated steward time, and professional fees. Five CUPE locals representing about 1,200 members are part of the HSPBA. CUPE representatives to the HSPBA bargaining committee are recommending members vote to accept the agreement.

The Community Bargaining Association, which represents over 17,000 community health workers, including four CUPE locals with about 1,800 members, also reached a tentative agreement with the Health Employers' Association of BC, thanks to the overwhelming solidarity between workers across the seven unions of the CBA, and the support members showed with a strong strike mandate. The bargaining committee secured a fair and transparent transition process into the CBA for supportive housing workers. The details of these wins will be shared with CBA members across the province over the coming weeks.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

Members of the Facilities Bargaining Association have ratified a new four-year collective agreement covering more than 67,500 health care workers across BC. Effective April 1, 2025, the deal delivers annual 3% wage increases, safety improvements, and a wage restoration plan aimed at repairing the lasting harm of the 2004 wage rollbacks. The agreement is expected to strengthen recruitment and retention while addressing long-standing pay inequities, and includes a significant commitment to restore standardized wages, benefits, and working conditions in parts of the privatized seniors' care sector. The gains reflect members' priorities and will help stabilize the workforce, ultimately improving care for patients and residents.

CUPE proudly welcomes 150 new members from the Hamlets at Penticton, who joined CUPE/HEU earlier this year. These dedicated long-term care workers provide essential, compassionate care to residents every day, and now they have the full strength and protection of our union behind them!

Airlines and Pan-Canadian Locals

Flight attendants at Pascan remain on strike, fighting for better working conditions and fair wages, among other demands. I was able to join them on the picket line in February along with Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) leaders and many other CUPE activists. The employer has continually tried to use scab labour by requiring pilots to do the work of flight attendants, utilizing a loophole in the new federal anti-scab legislation that allows employers to use employees already on their payroll to scab.

ALPA has supported our members every step of the way to ensure that pilots who scab are held accountable within their union. Our members will win with the strong relationship CUPE and ALPA have with each other. We share the same workplaces in the skies across Canada, and we will always have each other's backs.

In 2025, Canadian flight attendants reported over 100 incidents of dangerous and disruptive passenger behaviour, including assaults, threats, intoxication, smoking, indecent exposure, and refusal to follow safety procedures, causing flight delays, diversions, and emergency interventions. While the majority of reports involved WestJet flights and Calgary routes, many incidents likely went unreported, reflecting the hidden risks and pressures frontline crews regularly face. CUPE's airline division, representing approximately 20,000 flight attendants across 11 airlines, emphasizes that managing these high-stress and unsafe situations, both in-flight and on the ground, is a core responsibility that is often uncompensated due to outdated pay practices that only remunerate flight attendants while airborne. These challenges underscore the urgent need for flight attendants to be fairly compensated for all hours worked, and recognized for the critical role they play in ensuring passenger safety and de-escalating dangerous situations in Canadian air travel.

CUPE 8125, representing more than 4,700 WestJet and Encore cabin crew, is calling out WestJet for its reckless and profit-driven decision to implement the widely condemned 28-inch seat configuration, a move that directly undermined safety, inflamed passenger tensions, and pushed frontline workers to the breaking point. The airline's refusal to listen to cabin crew warnings resulted in more frequent onboard conflicts, escalating aggression toward flight attendants, and increased physical and emotional harm to workers who were forced to manage the fallout of a corporate experiment they neither designed nor supported. This reversal is a clear admission that WestJet ignored frontline expertise and prioritized revenue over people. As bargaining continues, CUPE 8125 is demanding an end to unpaid labour, full compensation for every hour worked, and a fundamental shift away from unilateral corporate decision-making, making it clear that safe operations, dignified work, and a positive passenger experience are impossible when an airline treats its workforce as disposable.

CUPE flight attendants at Air Canada have concluded arbitration after overwhelmingly rejecting the wages offered in the tentative agreement arrived at in the fall of 2025. The arbitration award imposed the same wages that members rejected by 99.1%, save for an additional 1% bump in pay for Rouge members. More than 10,000 flight attendants had taken strike action over years of substandard pay and unpaid work, only to have the federal government use broad ministerial powers to do the employer's bidding and order flight attendants back to work. Air Canada Component members took a courageous stand and defied that back to work order, making groundbreaking gains on unpaid work. CUPE calls on the government to pass Bill C-247, the NDP Private Member's Bill which would repeal Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, revoke this broad ministerial power, and restore balance to negotiations in the federal sector by protecting the right to strike.

The results of the federal government's unpaid work probe were released in February. CUPE, which represents approximately 20,000 flight attendants across Canada, slammed the probe's conclusion – to have airlines conduct self-audits – as being wholly inadequate and akin to putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.

Data shows that flight attendants work an average of 35 hours per month unpaid. Even major carriers have admitted that unpaid labour exists. 90% of respondents in a public poll said they supported putting an end to unpaid work. Yet Minister Hajdu and the Liberal government continue to side with billion-dollar airline companies instead of addressing the issue of unpaid work. CUPE calls on the government to pass C-250, the NDP Private Member's Bill which would close the loophole in the Canada Labour Code and address this issue once and for all.

Organizing

For the reporting period of December 1, 2025 to February 28, 2026, CUPE welcomed 673 new members in 12 bargaining units. There are currently 152 active campaigns underway that, if successful, could bring 59,117 new members to our union.

Our Atlantic region currently has three active campaigns in municipal services, which would see 2,411 new members join CUPE, including 2,356 in education.

In the Maritimes, there are currently eight active campaigns which could bring 430 workers into CUPE, including 299 in emergency and security services.

Quebec has 29 active campaigns underway in various sectors, that could bring 12,012 new members into the CUPE family.

The Ontario region continues its organizing efforts, with 23 active campaigns in various sectors that have the potential to add 16,915 new members to our union, including 5,069 in municipal services.

Manitoba has 17 active campaigns, which could see 1,391 new members join our union, including 1,232 workers in education.

Saskatchewan has 20 active campaigns in various sectors, where we hope to bring 1,802 new workers into CUPE, 1,542 of which are education workers.

The Alberta region was busy with 10 active organizing campaigns that could bring in 7,424 new members into CUPE. Six of the ongoing campaigns are in the education sector where CUPE is hoping to add 7,107 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 16,726 new members.

In Memoriam/Personal

Members

Richard Anstett	CUPE 79 – ON
Neil Harris	CUPE 54 – ON
Joel Duff	CUPE 54 – ON
Rhonda Akan	CUPE 3766 – SK
Rodney Winsor	CUPE 1349 – NL
Maciej (Matthew) Zawadski	CUPE 1870 – PEI
Joanne McMullan	CUPE 2020 – BC
Walter Kornacki	CUPE 122 – ON
Anne Patridge	CUPE 87 – ON

Retired staff

Joan MacNeil	Secretary Sydney Area Office
Johnny Pizar	National Representative Quebec Area Office
Elsie Doris Dixon	National Representative BC Regional Office
Colin Lambert	Director – Health and Safety Branch National Office

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

:sg/ceu