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## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT DECEMBER 2021 – MARCH 2022

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Sisters, Brothers, and Friends:

In March 2020, our National Executive Board was meeting when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. It is incredible to look back and see how much our workplaces, our communities, our lives have changed in these last two years.

This winter saw yet another variant of the virus, yet another wave of public health restrictions, hospitalizations, deaths. And yet another layer of stress and strain on our members working on the frontlines in health care, education, and other critical public services across the country.

While public health officials across the country are loosening restrictions – and in some cases eliminating them all together – we will always be watching for the next outbreak and the next variant. Vaccination continues to be the best way to prevent serious illness, and to slow the spread and mutation of the virus, all of which will protect our health care system and our health care workers from being overwhelmed, and also protect the most vulnerable among us. As we move through the remaining stages of the pandemic, we will continue to prioritize the health, and the safety, of our members and our communities.

It's not just our members who are feeling the strain of this pandemic. In communities across the country, there is a growing unrest and uncertainty. People are feeling frustrated and let down by their governments, and some of them are looking for an outlet for that frustration. And earlier this year, they found that outlet in a roughly organized political movement that we have come to call the "Freedom Convoy".

There is no doubt that this movement is following in the footsteps of the one built by Donald Trump in the United States. Trump tapped into widespread anger and frustration, along with racism, misogyny and intolerance, and turned it into a political movement that handed him the keys to the White House. And he filled our world with anger and intolerance and hate.

**MARK HANCOCK**

National President/Président national

**CANDACE RENNICK**

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

**PATRICK GLOUTNEY, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER, LEE-ANN KALEN**

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

We thought, maybe, that what happened in the US couldn't happen here. We were wrong.

Organizers on the far-right of our political spectrum learned from what happened south of the border, and through the pandemic they have been building networks so that they, too, could take advantage of growing frustration here in Canada.

They have used social media platforms and online forums to promote their propaganda and conspiracy theories, to sow division, to promote hate, all in the guise of standing up for "rights and freedoms". It's clear that many of the people who have been sucked into this movement are workers.

Conservative politicians across the country are also trying to take advantage of this frustration among the working class, catering their messages to workers and trying to position themselves as the champions of workers.

We know that frustration is only going to grow as a wave of inflation makes life even less affordable for working families.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, as a union and as a movement, if we are going to turn back this tide of intolerance and hate.

One of our most important roles in the coming months is to help turn the frustration and neglect and uncertainty that workers are feeling into hope and action. We need to reinforce our role, as a labour movement, in building and maintaining a society based on empathy, equity, and solidarity.

These are conversations I am having with other union leaders through the Canadian Labour Congress, and conversations we are having with allies in progressive movements and community coalitions across the country.

As Canada's largest union, another key role we have is in representing our members at the bargaining table. We know, coming out of the pandemic, that we will see governments and employers establish austerity agendas and try to impose these agendas on our members through legislation, but also at the bargaining table.

We can fight austerity, and win, when we do it together. It is more important than ever that we begin preparations for bargaining early, by engaging our members and letting them know what is at stake. We need to create strategic plans and coordinate our bargaining within regions and across sectors. And it means being prepared to go on strike. CUPE's [Bargaining Policy](#) is a good place to start, but we have many more bargaining resources available to you.

When you are at the bargaining table, know that your committee has the full strength of CUPE with you at the bargaining table and, if it comes to it, on the picket line.

## **Public Services International**

The challenges we face as a union are shared by the labour movement around the world. Which is why our continued participation in global union federations is so important. Participating in meetings with international trade union leaders also serves as a good reminder that unions around the world often face far greater challenges than we do here in Canada.

On March 2, I joined a meeting of Public Services International, where public sector union leaders around the world listened to our colleagues in eastern Europe share their immediate concerns and experiences in the early days of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine.

I listened as representatives from Ukrainian unions spoke about the dangerous and untenable situations their members working in health care were facing, and how their members in the energy sector were working to keep nuclear power plants safe, even as they came under Russian control. And I heard leaders from countries that share borders with Ukraine speak to the efforts of their members to aid in the refugee crisis being created as families flee Ukraine in search of safety.

CUPE condemns Russia's military invasion. The most effective way to end this humanitarian crisis and ensure the safety and security of innocent civilians is for all Russian forces to leave Ukraine immediately. We continue to call on the Canadian government to make every effort to de-escalate this situation, and to seek diplomatic non-military solutions leading to peace.

CUPE has donated \$50,000 to the global labour movement's humanitarian relief effort in Ukraine. Our union joins Public Services International (PSI) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) in supporting workers and their families affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Donations are going to a common solidarity fund established by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

If your local wants to contribute as well, information is available online [here](#).

## **Division Conventions**

I had the pleasure of joining members of CUPE Alberta's executive board in Edmonton for their annual division convention in mid-March, which was held virtually. As always, I enjoyed listening to the deliberations and debate. And I was impressed by the dedication and commitment of the executive board members who worked hard behind the scenes to ensure a successful convention.

These conventions provide important opportunities for our members to participate in the work of our union, to share their successes, and to learn from each other. They are also our opportunity to ensure transparency and accountability within our union. Whether your division convention is being held virtually or in-person, I look forward to joining you!

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

<b>PROVINCE</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>EMPLOYER</b>	<b># OF MEMBERS</b>	<b>STRIKE BEGAN</b>	<b>DURATION (days)</b>
Quebec	7300	Emergency Services Corporation	600	March 31, 2020	Ongoing
Quebec	5959	Société Transport de Laval (STL)	625	Rotating, November 3, 2021	Ongoing
Manitoba	1630	Rolling River School Division	21	November 1, 2021	92 days

### **Strikes and Lockouts**

#### **CUPE 7300**

CUPE 7300, the Fraternité des travailleurs du préhospitalier du Québec (FTPQ), representing over 600 members who work as paramedics across six regions in Quebec has been without a contract since March 31, 2020. Bargaining has been bogged down over wages, with paramedics asking for 3% for each year of the contract, while the government has countered with 2%. In addition to wages being unresolved, paramedics are seeking a classification review, and a lower retirement age. Members began strike action on February 5, in accordance with the essential service orders established by the Quebec Labour Tribunal. Members have held information pickets and visibility actions, and are refusing to perform administrative tasks that do not endanger public safety. The strike action continues while the local seeks a negotiated agreement.

#### **CUPE 5959**

Members of CUPE 5959, representing bus drivers employed by the Société de Transport de Laval (STL) began rotating strikes on November 3, 2021. The Laval bus drivers' union has expressed great disappointment over the mayor's refusal to meet with them.

Talks have bogged down particularly over insufficient wage offers from STL, which, in these inflationary times, will mean greater poverty for the membership. CUPE 5959 have struck for five days to date.

## **CUPE 1630**

After 92 days on the picket line, members of CUPE 1630 at the Rolling River School Division are back at work.

On January 31, 2022, the labour board in Manitoba issued an order to terminate the strike, reinstate the workers, and settle the provisions of a collective agreement. The parties can either appoint an arbitrator or the board will review their respective proposals and aid in settling a new collective agreement within the next 90 days.

### **Collective Bargaining**

CUPE members working as community care assistants (CCAs) in long-term care and home care in Nova Scotia will see an increase of pay, as the province commits to investing approximately \$65 million in health care workers.

Wages in the publicly funded sector will increase by approximately 23% effective February 10, 2022, bringing the top annual salary to \$48,419. For most full-time CCAs, this is an annual salary increase close to \$9,000 a year, making them the highest paid in Atlantic Canada.

Locals currently bargaining on behalf of CCAs will not have to wait until bargaining concludes to receive the increase, although details and timing of implementation will be determined employer by employer, in consultation with the unions.

After rejecting a tentative agreement on November 29, 2021, members of CUPE 3535 working at Quebec's provincial liquor board Société des alcools (SAQ), ratified a new contract on December 18. The deal came after a short strike that led to depleted liquor store shelves as the holiday season approached.

Their strategic strike action netted them a six-year contract that provides a 3% wage increase annually. Wages, overtime pay, and the precarious status of employees had been the main sticking points in negotiations with the union representing the crown corporation's 800 warehouse and delivery employees.

Members of CUPE 5472 (Youthdale Treatment Services) in Toronto, Ontario ratified a first collective agreement on December 21, 2021. This was a successful conclusion to a challenging round of negotiations coupled with significant turnover in the membership (1/3 of members had left in the previous nine months).

The local achieved significant wage adjustments retroactive to April 1 and December 1, 2021, limits on the use of temporary agency workers, improvements to paid holidays, sick days, benefits, and mental health supports, along with an increase to the employer's share of the benefit premiums. CUPE 5472 was certified in September of 2020.

Three hundred members of CUPE 417 workers at the Red Deer Catholic School District in Alberta have a first contract with their employer. The settlement provides a modest wage increase, job protection and seniority provisions, and a means to settle disputes when they arise between employees and the employer.

The Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU) is preparing for province-wide bargaining on behalf of its 55,000 members. The current collective agreement expires on August 31, 2022, and OSBCU is coordinating bargaining proposals with locals across the province to put them in the best strategic position at the bargaining table. They are also working with local leaders to ensure all members in the sector are aware of what's at stake in this round of negotiations.

CUPE's health care locals in Manitoba, working as a joint negotiating committee, has had several meetings with representatives of the Provincial Health Labour Relations Services so far this winter, with more bargaining dates scheduled into the spring. After a frustrating fall, they have seen positive movement at the bargaining table of late, thanks to a high level of coordination among the locals and significant engagement of and support from their members.

The locals have launched a petition calling on the provincial government to prioritize bargaining for health care support workers and provide support to front-line staff. In just a short time, close to 5,000 petitions have been submitted.

## **Regional Updates**

### **Maritimes Region**

#### **New Brunswick**

Following the tremendous success achieved in bargaining last fall, CUPE locals have had to file a formal complaint with the New Brunswick Labour and Employment Board to demand immediate payment of retroactive pay owed to close to more than 4,100 active CUPE members in Locals 1190, 1251, 1418 and 1840. That's because the government has failed to meet its own legal obligations to implement provisions of the new collective agreements within ninety days from the date of signing. That includes making retroactive payments to workers – that means pay for work already done. The Government should have foreseen the obvious need to prepare for eventual retro-pay adjustments, as the government had let the collective agreements of most locals remain expired for over 4 years.

CUPE is continuing the fight for defined benefits pension plans and proper funding by the province. The latest development in a series of legal battles involves CUPE 1253, who won an important arbitration award last summer. The arbitrator ordered Higgs' government to begin paying the \$69+ million dollars owed to their pension plan. Instead of complying, the province filed for judicial review and has been stalling things since, not even respecting court deadlines. These unnecessary delays will only cost the province even more. Local 1253 ratified the tentative agreement concluded with Government at the end of February after obtaining extra protections for members who are close to retirement.

CUPE New Brunswick prepared a detailed pre-budget submission, as the government sits on a projected \$487 million dollar surplus, saying it's time to invest in the province's most precious resource: its people. Recommendations include: fair wages and wage increases that go above the rise in cost of living; ensuring access to universal, public affordable childcare, as this is critical for a feminist recovery; making long-term care public and getting rid of the patchwork delivery system; keeping energy rates and housing affordable. The solutions are available, and the money is there. It's now time to shift priorities.

CUPE 1905, representing the Kennebecasis Regional Police Force, negotiated a reopener for 2023 that resulted in a 2% wage increase and the creation of four new officer positions that will be filled this spring. CUPE 4632 has concluded a collective agreement with the City of Bathurst for KC Irving Centre employees. It provides 1.6% yearly wage increases for four years, and retro pay.

### **Prince Edward Island**

Last fall, members in the education sector in PEI voted overwhelmingly in favour of a memorandum of agreement between CUPE and the government to enroll all active members in the Education Sector Pension Plan into the PEI Public Sector Pension Plan. After months of hard work dealing with implementation issues, the transfer of all assets and liabilities of the Education Plan was completed as of January 1, 2022. This is a great achievement for CUPE members who have been moved from a small targeted plan to a larger defined benefit plan that is currently well funded. Another benefit of the transfer is that the administration of the PEI Public Sector Pension Plan is done by unionized provincial government staff which is much more cost efficient compared to outsourcing to a private firm like the previous plan did. Congratulations on a job well done to members and staff who worked very hard on this project.

Employees of the Town of Kensington represented by CUPE 4893 ratified a new collective agreement in February 2022 which includes wage increases of 2.5% per year for the period of April 2021 to May 2025.

CUPE 3324 representing Island EMS Paramedics reached a tentative agreement providing for a 7.75% wage increase over four years, with the contract expiring in 2022. Staff shortages continue as IEMS takes on more and more responsibilities related to the public health system (i.e., COVID testing sites, mobile mental health unit, and emergency room coverage). Workload is an important issue for our members who are not valued for the work they do, and it needs to be addressed. In addition to preparing for this next round of bargaining, CUPE 3324 and CUPE PEI will begin a campaign to bring this service into the public sector.

## **Atlantic Region**

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

In early January, CUPE NL President Sherry Hillier and Atlantic Regional Director Tracey Pinder represented labour during the Employment Insurance consultations that took place with federal Minister of Employment Carla Qualtrough. The federal government undertook consultations across the country and CUPE NL took part in a regional stakeholder roundtable. For decades, EI has excluded many workers and paid benefits that are too low to survive on. The message during the consultation was: it's time to rebuild this essential part of Canada's social safety net, as the pandemic showed EI could not meet workers' needs. Canada's COVID-19 response also highlighted what's possible when governments put resources into expanding income supports.

The first months of 2022 saw an unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases in our workplaces. At one point, almost all health facilities staffed by CUPE members had been hit with COVID-19 and staffing shortages because workers were isolating or had tested positive.

It is with this difficult experience in mind that CUPE and its allies will be responding to the Health Accord Report. The report focuses on transforming healthcare by moving services out of small and rural communities and into larger hubs of St. John's on the east coast and Corner Brook on the west. The center of the island would remain underserved. The report proposes virtual care, but without the infrastructure to make it fully accessible to rural Newfoundland and Labrador. The restructuring would impact employment as well.

CUPE will have four major collective agreements expiring in 2022 in the municipal sector: CUPE 569 (outside workers) and CUPE 1289 (inside workers) with the City of St. John's, and CUPE 2099 (Mount Pearl) will see their contracts expire at the end of June. CUPE 3034's collective agreement (Conception Bay) will expire at the end of the year. With the provincial collective agreements expiring at the end of March, it will be an exceptional year for bargaining and a great opportunity to coordinate actions.

## **Nova Scotia**

Nova Scotia was one of the first provinces to sign an Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with the federal government last summer, and we are now seeing its early implementation unfold in the province. Government announced it would start lowering the parent fees by 25% in April retroactive to January 2022. This was the first major move of the Government to publicly announce it was moving forward for families towards its average of \$10.00 a day childcare for Nova Scotians.

Credit is due to the federal and provincial governments for finally implementing a universal not-for-profit model for childcare services, but the province missed the mark in its communication with stakeholder groups. Transitioning childcare from a subsidized business into a fully funded public service needs to be done fairly, and not on the backs of early childhood educators (ECE) and support staff, on whose labour these businesses have been built,

Early learning and childcare in Nova Scotia currently operate in a critical state. Retention and recruitment have been at crisis levels for years due to a patchwork system. Government promised to develop a compensation framework, outlined in the bilateral agreement and provided vague language in the workforce strategy that both commit to addressing these issues by the end of 2022. With expansions planned for early fall and the promise of 9,500 new spaces, this promise risks coming too late. But we can work together to make this a success if the province is serious about transforming childcare in Nova Scotia.

The government finally began addressing staffing issues in health care, including long term care, hospitals and home support, by adjusting the wages of continuing care assistants (CCAs) by roughly 23%. This is a good start for these workers who will be one step closer to receiving decent wages, but it does not address all the issues and job classifications. CUPE is ready to address those at the bargaining table. It takes a team to provide quality care and that includes many workers in many different roles.

Members of CUPE 759, representing about 300 outside workers employed by the Cape Breton Regional Municipality have ratified a new four-year collective agreement, avoiding a lockout or strike. The agreement is effective retroactively from November 1, 2020, until October 31, 2024.

## **Québec**

CUPE 2279, which represents outside workers at the City of Sherbrooke, is conducting a campaign to remind the City's population that, more than ever, city workers are there to serve the public. The local is currently in bargaining, where the key issue at stake is job precarity. Less than half of Sherbrooke's blue-collar workers have permanent employee status. Improving the City's ability to recruit is essential, because without services being provided internally, the City will become beholden to private contractors, and costs would skyrocket.

The three CUPE locals at the Lac-Leamy Casino recently signed agreements with Loto-Québec. The most recent one was ratified by Local 3959, and it includes retroactive wage increases of 2% for 2018, 2019 and 2020; 3% respectively for 2021 and 2022; 2.5% for 2023 and 2% for 2024. In addition, the hourly premium of \$0.91 for weekend work will jump to \$2.50. With the ratification of this third agreement, the work environment is slowly but surely improving at the Lac-Leamy Casino where, not that long ago, the three locals had begun various job actions.

Unfortunately, the situation is quite the opposite at the Montreal Casino, where the members of CUPE 3939 voted 97.4% in favour of job action, up to going out on strike. The employer refuses to recall all the employees back to work, which has seriously undermined the operations of the casino. The local is worried that the employer is not reopening the gaming tables and that the clients will likely go elsewhere. The delay in recalling the croupiers back to work puts their job security at risk, because the employment relationship is no longer guaranteed after two years of absence. The employer thus seems to be engaged in a layoff process, but in a disingenuous fashion.

Just recently, the Saguenay Auditor General issued a devastating report on the Saguenay Transit Corporation (STC). The Saguenay Bus Drivers Union (CUPE 3124) applauded the fact that it's no longer the only voice denouncing the numerous deficiencies in the employer's management practices. Indeed, the local has been sounding the alarm for several years now. The auditor moreover issued some 70 recommendations. Meanwhile, the local had previously drawn attention to several of these same matters at the Board of Directors, but their observations were sidestepped and ignored. The STC has no development plan nor any kind of long-term vision. No investments have been made to benefit the public transit users for many years now. To keep their clientele, the STC must innovate, not only cut back. Public transit is essential both for the environment and to facilitate the mobility of the region's citizens.

At the beginning of March, the Eastern Townships CIUSSS – CHUS confirmed that more than 3,000 of the 21,000 members making up their personnel had resigned in 2021. Meanwhile, the rate of people leaving for retirement has remained stable at 300 people. This is a record. In the bargaining unit represented by CUPE 4475, more than 1,300 of the members resigned in 2021, which means nearly a quarter of our 6,000 members. Unfortunately, the employer does not appear to want to take into consideration the union proposals to improve retention. Solutions to reduce these massive resignations do exist: improving staffing tools, introducing atypical work schedules, implementing attraction and retention structuring measures, to name a few. The outlook for 2022 does not appear any better at the Eastern Townships CIUSSS – CHUS, but CUPE is determined to do its utmost to identify and implement solutions.

## Ontario

Much like the rest of the country, Ontario experienced the full wrath of Omicron over the last three months, as the fifth wave of COVID swept through the province. This resulted in record breaking case numbers of COVID sending the province spiraling into ongoing shutdowns, the ramping up of booster shots, and major workplaces in the health care, long term care, social services sectors and others experiencing severe staff shortages that amplified the many challenges these sectors were already experiencing pre-pandemic.

Even though social services are the most underfunded sector in Ontario, sector leaders and staff remain focused on addressing the chronic challenges that have continually plagued our workplaces, and our members, in the sector.

A new online member engagement series, titled '*Forgotten on the Frontline*', is being hosted by the SSWCC (Social Service Workers' Coordinating Committee) to inform, involve, and rally our members from the five sub-sectors, including childcare, municipal social services, developmental services, Children's Aid Society and community agencies. These sessions are designed to allow members an opportunity to connect, collaborate and communicate their challenges and issues to the sector team to help formulate and focus the sector's next steps and demands as the provincial election looms.

Ontario is the only province that has not signed on to the federal bilateral childcare agreement. A postcard campaign is currently underway with tens of thousands of childcare workers calling on Premier Ford to sign and honour the federal child care agreement. The postcard outlines our demand to create an affordable, accessible, not-for-profit, and universal child care and early learning program that includes affordable fees, decent work and pay for child care and early learning workers and expanded public/non-profit child care and the elimination of for-profit child care.

A campaign for CUPE 2141 to stop the closing of two child care centres and save good child care jobs in Sioux Lookout is underway. In a surprising move, in early February, the Kenora District Services Board announced the centres will close on March 31, 2022. Staff and local leaders are working with members, parents, and community allies to apply pressure to the local council to keep the centres open.

With the June 2 provincial election looming on the horizon, CUPE Ontario is now in full preparation mode as staff and elected officials aim to defeat the Ford government. Many sectors in the province have incorporated political action into their campaign plans and will highlight election issues that are important to our members and working people.

While the Ford government continues to maintain a lead in the polls, the Premier remains a polarizing figure and his cynical attempts to buy votes are being noticed by Ontarians. In his bid to win re-election, Ford has removed the need to pay for vehicle license renewal and has removed tolls on two highway arteries, resulting in more than a billion dollars annually being taken away from the provincial treasury without any indication of how this revenue will be replaced. This is money that could have been used to revamp aging hospitals and schools, and improve critical public infrastructure, money which could have been used to enhance workers' wages in the public sector and provide proper protective equipment. Ford's antics give our union and the broader labour movement an opportunity to work with and support the Ontario NDP, to topple the PCs from power and help the NDP form government.

## **Manitoba**

Public sector unions in Manitoba had formed a "Partnership to Defend Public Services" in the face of the introduction of the *Public Services Sustainability Act* which essentially imposed wage controls on public sector workers in the province. They recently sought leave to the Supreme Court of Canada to oppose the decision of the Manitoba Court of Appeal pertaining to the *Public Services Sustainability Act*. On January 27, 2022, the conservative provincial government opposed the appeal by the Partnership of Unions, which is a clean sign that the new conservative Premier Stefanson has no intention of supporting public sector workers or free collective bargaining. On February 7, 2022, the Partnership of Unions filed its reply seeking, ultimately, a ruling by the Supreme Court.

A commitment to strategic and coordinated bargaining among CUPE locals in Manitoba has strengthened our ability to make gains and resist concessions in the face of this anti-worker government. We are seeing shared success as a result, with our health care locals putting up a solid front in bargaining, and our school division locals sticking to their solidarity pact.

The Manitoba Teachers' Association has helped establish a provincial trend that includes wage increases of 1.6%, 1.4%, 0.5% plus a cost of living allowance, which has been determined to be 3.3%. This is far more than the mandate set by the provincial government. To date, 25 of our school division locals have achieved this settlement as well.

CUPE 998, representing workers at Manitoba Hydro, is continuing its campaign to ensure this energy crown corporation remains in public hands. The campaign included a research project with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives that resulted in a written report supporting the continuation of Manitoba Hydro as a public utility, and engaging both members and the public in support of the campaign, with more than 1,500 lawn signs distributed for display in communities across the province.

## **Saskatchewan**

Surprisingly, the provincial government actually enacted some positive changes to the *Saskatchewan Employment Act*. The workplace health and safety section of the *Act* includes a new definition of sexual harassment and extends the provisions to independent contractors, secondary and post-secondary students, and volunteers.

Unions also achieved a major victory with the new legislation. In 2016, regressive changes had been made to the *Act* which excluded supervisory employees from the same bargaining unit as those they supervise. In the intervening six years, CUPE and other unions have filed numerous applications to the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board. The provincial government has now repealed these provisions.

Of course, this is a single positive move from a Saskatchewan Party government that has failed workers at almost every turn since they first gained power in 2007, and has spent the last two years competing for the worst public health response to the pandemic in the country.

More than 100 CUPE members attended a Political Action Summit in February hosted by CUPE Saskatchewan. They learned about the national political landscape and the challenges ahead as conservative governments across the country threaten to turn to austerity budgets. They also participated in a full day of workshops where they discussed why politics matter to workers, how to talk to our members about it, and other key political organizing skills.

## **Alberta**

CUPE leaders in Alberta have a lot to contend with these days, but some of the greatest challenges come in the form of concerted legislative attacks on the labour movement. A new piece of legislation that further constrains our political speech, activity and spending, Bill 82, was adopted in late December. The regulations for Bill 32 (*The restoring balance in Alberta's workplaces Act*) were also released in December.

As previously reported, Bill 32 requires unions to identify all expenditures as either “core” or “non-core” to the purpose of the union, not as defined by the union but as laid out in government regulation. With the regulations in place and coming fully into force on August 1, 2022, our locals in Alberta are preparing to communicate with all of their members about how they have designated their expenditures, and where they have “non-core” expenditures, asking each member to “opt in” to those expenditures.

CUPE is working to assist and train local officials to ensure they understand the Bill 32 regulations, how to be compliant with the legislation, and providing all tools necessary for them to do so. In the meantime, legal challenges are being pursued in conjunction with the Alberta Federation of Labour and other unions.

COVID-19 continued to hit our health care locals hard. Many of our workplaces are still experiencing active outbreaks. Most sites are facing staff shortages, with burnout and fatigue being significant and rising problems among our members. The provincial government is not making it easier. They continue with their privatization agenda – there are more than 100 proposed projects that could outsource up to 11,000 positions.

The government released the report of its long-term care review with mixed results. On a positive note, the report called for higher staffing levels, but suggests increased fees and private care to make up the additional costs.

## **British Columbia**

As university and college locals across BC prepare for collective bargaining, they have launched a campaign calling on the provincial government to address chronic underfunding of public post-secondary education. Underfunding has led to poor working conditions for our members, and poor learning conditions for our students. The campaign seeks investments in campus infrastructure and cleaning, and lower tuition so that post-secondary education is more accessible for students, which will lead to world class learning environments and help solve the skills shortage across BC.

Three campaign ads ran for four weeks on various digital outlets, and generated more than a million views, with almost 80 percent of viewers watching the whole ad. The digital ads drew more than 13,000 unique visits to the campaign site, [FundBCsFuture.ca](http://FundBCsFuture.ca) – almost twice what we expected.

Library sector locals hosted a virtual Library Bargaining Conference from January 26 to 28, 2022. Participants had the opportunity to learn new skills, discuss common issues and sector trends, and share bargaining experiences with each other. They walked away with new tools and strategies, and better prepared for coming rounds of bargaining.

CUPE 7000 won a significant arbitration award for their members working at SkyTrain that saw vehicle and support shop technicians awarded a \$3.81 wage increase retroactive to September 1, 2019. This arbitration, which was negotiated during the 2019 round of bargaining and impacts approximately 140 members, will cost SkyTrain approximately \$3.5 million in retro pay. The company has appealed the decision, despite the parties agreeing during bargaining that neither party shall have the right to appeal. CUPE 7000 has filed the decision with the court and is threatening to pursue contempt charges if the company does not comply with the decision while the appeal is decided.

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

More than 4,000 workers continue to be transitioned from private contractors into public employment with health authorities across the province, following a decision last summer by the BC NDP government to end 21 commercial contracts and bring those jobs back in house.

There is much to be celebrated, but there is also a lot of work involved in this transition, including ensuring our members are being supported through the various stages of the repatriation. The process is expected to be completed this fall.

HEU hosted an equity conference in early March, with more than 200 HEU members, facilitators, and staff participating in workshops and discussions on HEU's multi-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Project.

Participants also elected several members to HEU's six equity standing committees, and discussed the six new diversity vice-president positions created by delegates to the HEU convention last fall. Those positions will be filled by election at convention in October.

## **Airlines**

WestJet and Sunwing announced early March that they had reached a definitive agreement under which the WestJet Group would acquire Sunwing Vacations and Sunwing Airlines. In times of uncertainty in the industry, this announcement was received with caution. WestJet indicated that it intended to continue to operate the airlines separately and expected Sunwing to grow in the coming years. The transaction must be approved by the competent authorities. CUPE will be monitoring things and making sure all of our members' rights are respected throughout the process.

As travel restrictions are being lifted across the world and testing requirements are being relaxed, travel is picking up and CUPE members are being recalled. I hope things will get better and better, and that we can all soon enjoy in-person events, visiting friends and family abroad, with CUPE flight attendants making sure everyone is safe in the air.

## **Organizing**

For the reporting period of January 1 to March 31, 2022, CUPE welcomed 427 new members in 15 bargaining units, including 152 in social services, 19 in the municipal sector, 92 in Education and 164 in Post Secondary Education.

There are currently 93 active campaigns underway that, if successful, would bring 26,263 new members to our union.

In the Atlantic region, we have welcomed 68 new members and currently have seven active campaigns that would see 567 new members join our union. CUPE continues efforts to bring in 380 new members at Paladin Security.

In the Maritimes, 12 active campaigns could, if successful, bring almost 2,000 workers into CUPE including 1,400 from longterm care. The Maritimes welcomed 12 new members at the University of Prince Edward Island.

In Quebec, 39 new members from three bargaining units joined CUPE and we continue to bring municipal firefighters into our union.

Ontario welcomed 251 new members into our union and has 30 active campaigns in various sectors that could bring us 7,547 new members.

There are seven active organizing campaigns in Manitoba in the Education, Post Secondary and Energy sectors that could see 500 new members join CUPE.

In Saskatchewan we have five active campaigns, including one at the City of Warman which would bring 80 public works, parks and recreation, and city hall workers into CUPE. We welcomed 4 new bargaining units consisting of 38 new CUPE members in the last quarter.

Alberta has 12 active organizing campaigns that could bring in 13,290 new members into CUPE, seven of these are ongoing campaigns in the Social Services sector.

Organizers in British Columbia continue to be busy with 25 active campaigns across various sectors including social services, recreation, culture and entertainment, and the municipal sector, with the potential of adding close to 2,721 new members to our union. CUPE welcomed social service workers from Richmond Society for Community Living and the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) as newly organized members.

## **In Memoriam/Personal**

I offer my sincere condolences to the families of the following CUPE members, former staff and retirees who have passed away in this reporting period.

### **Members**

- Doug Jones Local 79 – ON
- Gord Dolyniuk Local 1004 – BC
- Don Postar Local 5555 – ON
- Jim Papaevangelou Local 1196 – ON
- Wasyl Sydorenko Local 1230 – ON
- Leslie Sharpe Local 1091 – BC
- Richard “Blake” Adamson Local 59 – SK
- Patrick “Paddy” Duke Local 389 – BC
- Chris Abbott Local 5459 – NL
- Joel Panado Local 1091
- Rose McGowan Local 5167 – ON
- Wayne Stevenson Local 5459 – NL
- Ida Haggarty Local 2745 – NB
- Gwen Leighton Local 561 – BC
- CJ Mattson Local 2403 – BC
- Graham Tonks Local 798 – BC

### **Retired Staff**

- Guy Arseneault National Representative  
Fredericton Area Office
- Darcy Beggs Senior Officer  
National Office
- Maurice Boisvert National Representative  
Quebec Regional Office
- Joanne Harvey National Representative  
Ottawa Area Office
- Georges Landry National Representative  
Rouyn-Noranda Area Office
- Betty Jean Sutherland National Representative  
New Glasgow Area Office

- Susan Yuile-Assaly

National Representative  
Cornwall Area Office

- Gloria Forward

Secretary  
Peterborough Area Office

- Harold Johnson

Former Legal and Legislative  
Representative  
Saskatchewan Regional Office

- Anne Ravizza

Secretary – Ontario Region

In solidarity,

Handwritten signature of Mark Hancock in black ink.

MARK HANCOCK  
National President

:tp/ceu