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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT JUNE 2022 – SEPTEMBER 2022

Sisters, Brothers, and Friends:

As summer comes to an end, I hope you were able to take some time to relax and reconnect with family and friends, and set aside for at least a moment the many challenges we face. Because it is going to be a busy fall for CUPE members, activists, leaders, and staff.

The impacts of the global pandemic, now 31 months old, continue to affect our workplaces, our communities, the economy, and the political landscape.

Workers, especially those providing frontline services, are weary and frustrated, and many are walking away. And there are not enough people ready to step in and fill those vacancies. In almost every sector of the economy, we are facing a labour shortage. For our members, that means working short, working more hours, and having leaves cancelled.

Many of the public services our neighbours rely on are being stretched too thin. We have seen this especially in health care and emergency services, but it is also true in sectors like child care – it's just that a shortage of child care workers is less likely to make the news.

At the same time, workers are also dealing with inflation. The cost of pretty much everything is rising these days and almost everyone is struggling to keep up. Combine labour shortages with inflation, and the obvious answer is that employers should be paying their workers more. Obvious to us anyways.

Most employers and governments don't see it that way. This isn't exactly shocking, and it's one of the reasons the work we do as a union is so important, and still relevant. I was surprised, though, to hear the Governor of the Bank of Canada weigh in this August, telling employers to hold the line on wage costs. It's short-sighted guidance, and it's also a huge overstep for him to meddle in labour relations. Now, I don't expect a banker to weigh in on the side of workers, but for someone so worried about people earning too much money in the current economy, I didn't hear him cautioning business leaders to cap their own salaries or cut out their cash bonuses and dividend payouts. It's pretty clear whose side he's on.

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

In this economic climate, good wage increases won't just help workers ensure their families are fed and housed – they are actually good for the economy.

With more than 700,000 members in almost 4,000 bargaining units across the country, CUPE is always at the bargaining table somewhere. But the pandemic slowed bargaining in many jurisdictions, and this means that more than half of our collective agreements are either open now or will be by the end of the year.

CUPE has the strength and experience to negotiate good wage increases in these difficult times. Local leaders and bargaining committees have access to the tools and supports they need to prepare for negotiations and secure fair collective agreements for our members. Our bargaining policy is there to support you, as are our staff – whether they join you at the table or work behind the scenes.

With difficult bargaining ahead, it's more important than ever that we reach out to all of our members, not just the ones that show up to meetings. There really is strength in numbers, and we need to engage with our members and mobilize them to support our bargaining teams.

We also need to engage with our members about the political landscape in which we bargain. This means talking to them about elections and why they matter to us as workers – and especially workers in the public sector. Who we elect to lead governments, at every level, has an impact on our rights as workers, on the services we deliver, and on our collective agreements. With a provincial election now underway in Quebec, and local government elections in several provinces this fall, we have opportunities to elect people who can make our negotiations a little easier.

Elections matter at the federal level too. While an agreement between the NDP and Liberals has stabilized the minority parliament for now, we cannot count on it lasting until the next election, scheduled for October 2025. Which is why the recent election of Pierre Poilievre as leader of the Conservative Party of Canada is so concerning.

Poilievre's track record speaks for itself. He has always supported anti-union and anti-worker legislation, and he aligned himself with leaders of the far-right when they occupied Ottawa earlier this year. He will fundamentally change the party he was elected to lead, shifting it and the entire political landscape further to the right. And that is a very dangerous thing for our members and workers across the country.

Canadian Labour Congress

I continue to work closely with the elected leaders of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) on national and international labour issues, and value the strong relationships we have built over the 15 months since their election. The next triennial convention of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will be held in Montreal from May 8 – 12, 2023. All CUPE locals are affiliated to the CLC directly through the national union and will be receiving information about convention registration and credentials directly from CUPE later this year. As you plan your local budgets for next year, I encourage you to plan to participate by sending delegates to this important convention.

As Canada's largest union, it's important that CUPE participates in the work of the CLC in our provinces and communities as well. If it is not already, we ask your local to affiliate to your provincial federation of labour, and to get engaged in your local labour council.

Unifor held their third national convention in Toronto in August, and elected Lana Payne as their second National President; she is the first women to lead a major private sector union in Canada. I congratulate Lana on her victory and look forward to working with her as she seeks to fulfill her campaign promise of bringing Unifor back into the Canadian Labour Congress.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
Quebec	5454	Société québécoise du cannabis	300	May 20, 2022	Ongoing
Newfoundland and Labrador	2099	City of Mount Pearl	545	July 7, 2022	Ongoing
Quebec	2614	Société des arrimeurs	81	Locked-out September 15, 2022	Ongoing

Strikes and Lockouts

CUPE 5454

CUPE 5454, employees of the Société Québécoise du Cannabis (SQDC), have been on strike since May 17, 2022.

These members are calling for salaries and benefits similar to those working in comparable crown corporations, including the Quebec Liquor Corp (SAQ).

These SQDC workers earn \$17/hour upon hiring and the majority have no full-time position or job security, which puts them in an untenable and precarious position. Yet these striking members are responsible for informing and educating consumers on how to minimize the impact of cannabis on their health, which is the official mandate of the SQDC. They would like their remuneration to reflect this.

CUPE 2099

CUPE 2099, representing more than 200 municipal workers at the City of Mount Pearl in Newfoundland and Labrador, took strike action on July 7, 2022. These members provide important public services to their community including recreation, administration, planning, road maintenance, water and sewage services, facilities maintenance, landscaping and parks maintenance, and more.

The city refuses to bargain a fair collective agreement. After almost four months of trying to reach a deal with a difficult and unreasonable employer, the members of CUPE 2099 made the difficult decision to take job action. Until a new agreement is reached, city services, programs, events, and facilities will continue to be negatively impacted.

One of the key issues is that the city wants to set-up a two-tier system with inferior benefits for new hires. The members of CUPE 2099 will not accept a contract that doesn't provide the same rights and benefits for all workers.

With inflation the highest it has been in 40 years, these workers are also fighting for a reasonable wage adjustment. But the City of Mount Pearl doesn't care about these workers and their families, or good jobs and quality services.

CUPE 2614

81 members of CUPE 2614, representing longshore workers at the Port de Québec in Québec City, were locked out at noon on September 15, 2022. The employer, Société des arrimeurs, made the decision to lock these members out despite the fact the parties were still engaged in negotiations. CUPE 2614 and their employer have been bargaining since June 2022.

The local continues to push back against the employer's demand for 12-hour work shifts. CUPE 2614 is determined to safeguard work-life balance, a key issue for their members. Like many other workplaces, there are staff shortages at the Port de Québec and rather than focusing on recruitment and retention, the employer insists on placing this burden on the longshore workers. The local is adamant that solutions can be found to address the differences between the parties, but for that to happen the employer needs to end the lock out and return to the bargaining table.

Collective Bargaining

On August 15, CUPE 3939 reached a tentative agreement with the Casino de Montreal. These 545 members had been without a collective agreement since April 1, 2020 and took strike action on May 21, 2022.

The key issue for members of CUPE 3939 was a change in schedules to allow more breaks as a preventive health and safety measure. The local was successful in getting a 30 minute paid break for every hour worked, a precedent-setting gain in this sector. Vacation entitlements were increased, as was the night shift premium. Wage adjustments range from 2% to 4.5% per year over the life of this five-year agreement.

Members of CUPE 229 working in hospitality and food services at Donald Gordon Centre at Queen's University ratified a collective agreement on August 30, 2022 that will see wages increase by up to 40% over three years. The new contract will bring these CUPE members closer to a living wage. Over its term, the negotiated settlement equalizes workers' pay with the wages earned by their colleagues employed by Aramark on other Queen's campuses.

Members of CUPE 5313, the Municipality of Saint-Esprit in the Lanaudière region of Quebec signed a new collective agreement. The members unanimously ratified the tentative agreement on August 11.

The previous agreement expired on December 31, 2021. The new five-year contract calls for wage hikes of 5% for 2022 and wage catch-up over two years for more than half of the members. For the following four years, the contract contains an indexing clause based on the Consumer Price Index with a minimum of 3% per year.

Other gains include job security, the establishment of an employment floor, improved vacation allotments and payment of overtime, a higher benefit percentage for temporary or part-time employees, increased percentage of pension plan benefits and the possibility of introducing the FTQ payroll deduction pension plan.

The parties also agreed on the implementation of an on-call premium for outside workers and a teleworking policy for certain jobs.

CUPE is launching a guide that will help locals break new ground by negotiating collective agreement provisions to protect and support Two-spirit, trans, non-binary and other gender diverse members.

Bargaining beyond the binary: A negotiating guide for trans inclusion and gender diversity features examples of trans inclusive language from CUPE collective agreements that negotiating teams can use to develop their own proposals.

Locals should bargain trans inclusive language, protections, and supports, whether they are aware of trans members in their workplaces or not. The guide includes information on important terms, understanding gender diversity in the workplace, resources on transitioning at work, and sample collective agreement language.

Regional Updates

Maritimes Region

New Brunswick

CUPE New Brunswick is fighting a push from government to privatize health services as a solution to labour shortages. The crisis was manufactured by right-wing governments and their austerity agendas, through years of attrition, cuts, and increased reliance on casual and precarious workers. The solution is obvious: improving working conditions, not privatizing the delivery of services. CUPE is collecting front-line stories to highlight this, and there is no shortage of stories!

Working with CUPE 1252 and the NB Healthcare Coalition, CUPE NB is pushing back on the Higgs government plans of rural service cuts. To make things easier for himself, Higgs is firing his opponents in top management in health care. The boards of Vitalité Health Network and Horizon Health Network were dissolved, with elected board members removed and replaced by a pro-privatization trustee per board. This is an unlawful attack on the fundamental democratic principles of transparency and accountability.

It is in this context that New Brunswick locals are going back to the bargaining table in the public sector. As it had one of the oldest expired agreements at the time of the 2021 strike, CUPE 1190 is starting talks early this fall. Members want to prioritize wages that go above cost of living increases, benefits for casuals, posting language and push back on high essential services levels that reduce the effectiveness of strike action.

In the municipal sector, a reform is quietly underway. Towns and regions were merged and are restructuring. Small communities will have more stable revenues and increased capacity, but also more responsibilities now fall on municipalities. There is a great opportunity to make gains at the bargaining tables in this sector, but we will need to remain vigilant and resist contracting-out initiatives where they occur.

Prince Edward Island

CUPE PEI had a busy summer with community events and outreach to the public. The Division is also active on the legislative front, currently working on submissions for the Minimum Wage Review Board as well as participating in the long-term care review process.

Collaborating with CUPE NB, our members in PEI are also pushing back on privatization in the health sector. Facing major recruitment and retention issues, the false solution of transferring the broken system to the private sector is also being considered in PEI. CUPE has the tools and the experience to demonstrate that the solution lies elsewhere: improving the working conditions of workers will bring them back in full force. PEI Health Council members are working with the Division to push the provincial government in the right direction.

In post-secondary education, our members working at the University of Prince Edward Island are having a difficult round of bargaining. The employer is demanding concessions on retirement pay and retiree benefits, and that no real wage adjustments be made. A campaign to build a united front with other unions on campus is under way.

Atlantic Region

Newfoundland and Labrador

Members in Newfoundland and Labrador participated in great Labour Day events in Corner Brook and in St. John's. Workers on strike in Mount Pearl, represented by CUPE 2099, were honoured and received a strong show of solidarity.

I urge locals across the country to make a financial contribution to support members of CUPE 2099 who have been on the picket lines all summer, facing a very hostile employer who regularly uses threats of retaliation against union representatives. The employer is seeking concessions and two-tiered benefits, and proposes language that weakens the collective agreement. The management-side negotiator describes himself on his web site as a professional specialized in "union avoidance" and "strike management", which shows what our members are facing at the table.

Early August, members of CUPE 569, outside workers at the City of St. John's, voted to accept a new collective agreement. Bargaining began on May 31 and this round of negotiations was successfully completed in two months. Both sides were committed to reaching an agreement that's fair for both workers and for the city. Wages were a priority for the local, and the agreement includes a wage increase of 11% over four years with a \$1,000 signing bonus. Other improvements to the contract include language on bereavement leave, shift premiums, and training.

In the health sector, the implementation plan from the Health Accord Newfoundland and Labrador Task Force was released last June and contains recommendations focused on the social determinants of health, and «rebalancing the health care system». Considering the context of the Premier's Economics Recovery Team Report and the Big Reset, the recommendations fall short from a commitment to universal public health care. Mergers are on the horizon, which brings uncertainty for our members. CUPE NL's Reject the Reset is more relevant than ever!

Nova Scotia

Members of CUPE 8920 have ratified a new collective agreement with the Nova Scotia Health Authority and IWK Health, with the largest increases for the lowest-paid workers. Members received an overall wage increase of 6.5%, with an additional dollar increase for those at the lower wage to bring all members to \$20/hour. Talks between the parties reached an impasse in May 2022, and the unions filed for conciliation. A tentative agreement was reached through conciliation in mid-August. Achieving a living wage for all workers covered by this agreement shows that workers have tremendous power when we work together to lift each other up. Improving jobs in health care works is good for both workers and patients, as it alleviates the pressures of labour shortages.

The Nova Scotia Highway Workers represented by CUPE 1867, reached a tentative three-year agreement at the end of July after a lengthy round of bargaining, with the assistance of a conciliator. The agreement provides for wage increases of 6.5% over three years and good language improvements. Unit meetings will take place throughout September and the members will be voting on this tentative deal in October.

In the education sector, CUPE Nova Scotia urged the provincial government to release details of the compensation framework for early childhood educators (ECEs) that was promised to begin this fall. ECEs are beyond frustrated with the lack of clarity and transparency around the bilateral agreement that was signed more than 17 months ago. Child care workers in Halifax and across the province held a day of action on September 8 to remind the government that ECEs, who are mostly women, can't wait any longer. The median wage of \$17 an hour is not enough to cover rent, bills and put food on the table.

A 2019 study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that 82 per cent of the licensed child care facilities surveyed had trouble recruiting and retaining qualified staff, and that ECEs felt unappreciated and underpaid. It's obvious we can't continue to place the burden of child care on the backs of underpaid workers. There was great turnout at a September day of action, and that is just the beginning. CUPE members in Nova Scotia will continue to mobilize for fair and decent working conditions for ECEs.

Québec

At the time of writing this report, Quebec is in the midst of a provincial election. The CAQ government is hoping to renew their majority mandate by offering continuity. According to the polls, Quebecers who want change seem to be looking for it to the left and to the right. The most progressive party, Québec solidaire, is consolidating its support while a very right-wing conservative party is emerging in quite a worrying way. Its leader published a book a few years ago entitled "Libérez nous des syndicats" (Free us from Unions) in which he wrote that "Unions have truly become the main force of inertia that is preventing Quebec from modernizing".

The CAQ government has not been an ally of the labour movement either. In fact, the Labour Tribunal issued a decision on August 9 that the government negotiated in bad faith with its unions during the pandemic and interfered with union representation. Our members in the health and education sectors are now preparing for the next round of bargaining with this hostile government if it's reelected.

The Provincial Ground Transportation Council will address the underfunding of transportation companies during this election, as it should be a priority for all political parties. As for negotiations in this sector, the drivers of the Réseau transport de Longueuil, members of CUPE 3333, ratified an extension of their agreement with some adjustments and obtained increases of 4% per year for three years, in addition to a COLA clause for 2023 to a maximum of 5%.

The energy sector is also mobilizing during the provincial election on the issues of energy insecurity, and on the agreement between Hydro-Québec and Energir. This agreement makes Hydro-Québec's electricity consumers pay for a portion of the natural gas use of Energir's customers, depriving Hydro-Québec of important revenues as the next round of bargaining approaches.

In the municipal sector, we've had several successful negotiations recently. For example, CUPE 2795, which represents the employees of the Rivière-du-Loup MRC, reached an agreement that significantly improves the working conditions of its members. The parties proceeded with a complete job evaluation followed by a revision of the wage structure, which resulted in monetary gains of 6.5% on average, starting in 2022. In addition, annual salary increases will be linked to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is likely to be around 7-8% for 2023. Negotiations were respectful, with attraction and retention of workers being a central concern for both the municipality and the union.

Ontario

Ontario re-elected Doug Ford and his Conservatives with an expanded majority government on June 2, 2022. The Ford government will continue its path of destruction, underfunding, and privatizing public services and bringing in legislation that will hurt seniors, children, and workers. They failed to take advantage of a late-summer legislative session to address the escalating cost of living facing Ontarians as inflation balloons beyond real wage growth.

On August 31, 2022, the Ford government passed Bill 7 without public hearings or consultations. This legislation will force hospital patients awaiting long-term care into facilities not of their choosing. The government has refused to answer questions about how far hospital patients might be moved from their families into a long-term care home.

Under Bill 7, a hospital patient designated “alternate level of care” may be moved to a long-term care home without consent. If they resist transfer, they can be charged hundreds or even thousands of dollars for every day they remain in hospital. CUPE Ontario, along with the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) and a coalition of advocacy groups, are calling for the Ontario Human Rights Commission to launch a formal inquiry into the potential systemic discrimination based on age that will result from this legislation.

As in other regions, Ontario has seen the closure of hospital emergency rooms across the province, with more than 20 closures over one weekend alone. In some places, we have also seen the closure of critical care units. These closures are symptoms of the staffing crisis being experienced across the sector. CUPE Ontario and OCHU continue to advocate for the hiring of more hospital workers to avoid closures and service reductions, and to fight Bill 124, the wage restraint legislation that capped wages for public sector workers at 1%. These wage restrictions have added to the existing stress on the health care workforce caused by underfunding of the public health system, untenable workloads and working conditions, and staff burnout. Ontario’s health care system is in crisis, and the government has done nothing to address it.

The Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU), representing more than 55,000 education workers across the province, is currently in negotiations. Since 2012, these workers have seen wage restrictions imposed by the government that have caused wages to fall behind. Education workers’ wages have increased by a mere 8.8% since 2012 while inflation in Ontario has been over 19.5% for that same period.

OSBCU and its members are demanding a fair wage settlement this round of bargaining and presented their proposal of a fair wage enhancement of \$3.25 an hour in each year of the agreement. The government countered with a 2% average wage increase for those earning under \$40,000 per year and a 1.25% for those earning over \$40,000 – a proposal which is well below the rate of inflation. OSBCU has been clear that education workers cannot afford to accept another pay cut.

OSBCU has filed for conciliation in hopes that this outside assistance will help them secure a fair negotiated central agreement. In the meantime, OSBCU is mobilizing to engage members and ensure they are aware of what is happening at the bargaining table in advance of a province-wide strike vote later this month.

The CUPE Ontario Executive Board came together over three days in early September for their strategic planning session. Board members participated in diversity training and established priorities for the coming months through facilitated discussions. These priorities include supporting locals in their efforts for fair wages and no-concession bargaining, organizing against the health care crisis and stopping the privatization of health care, and ongoing work on the division’s Anti-Racism Organizational Action Plan.

Manitoba

CUPE 500 has been at the bargaining table with the City of Winnipeg since March 2021. On July 12, 2022, the local received a strong strike mandate from its members. While there were no concessions on the table, the strike vote sent a clear signal to the employer that their monetary offer was not enough, and needed significant improvement before it would even be considered. The employer's lead negotiator was forced to return to the city's Executive Policy Committee for a better mandate. The parties are currently in conciliation, awaiting a new offer from the employer. Strike preparations are underway, including picket captain training. The local has also secured and set up their strike headquarters. Civic elections, with a hotly contested mayoral race, are being held on October 26 and local leaders are actively engaging with candidates.

After more than 20 months of challenging bargaining, CUPE reached a settlement agreement for 18,000 healthcare workers across the province. This was the first negotiations following the wholesale reorganization of health care in the province and government-forced representation votes. The result of the reorganization was that almost 200 collective agreements were being folded in to an existing "receiving agreement" which added complexity to a bargaining table already set with pandemic exhaustion, recruitment and retention issues, and inflationary pressures.

The tentative agreement achieves general wage increases that breach the government's wage mandate and match those achieved by other health care unions, as well as market adjustments worth 24 million dollars. Homecare workers will be brought into the defined benefit pension plan afforded other healthcare workers and gain paid sick days. The agreement also delivers on a number of promises made during healthcare representation votes.

The agreement could not have been achieved without close coordination between our health care locals and strong solidarity by local leaders around a common bargaining table. Members are reviewing the agreement in advance of ratification votes.

Saskatchewan

Premier Scott Moe and his Saskatchewan Party government continues to betray working families across the province. As workers across the province struggle to make ends meet in an uncertain economic climate, Moe's government approved SaskPower's 8% energy rate hike. On July 25, the 60th anniversary of medicare in the province, Moe announced a move to build a new private-for-profit surgical clinic to address a backlog of surgeries, and that in the meantime they would be sending patients to out-of-province private clinics. And at the end of August, he announced that every adult in the province would receive a \$500 "affordability cheque", rather than ensuring support is available to those who need it most.

The Saskatchewan NDP caucus, and their new leader Carla Beck, are working with labour, farmers, small business representatives and the impacted communities to fight back against this government, and CUPE Saskatchewan continues to call for the Moe government to prioritize investing in the public services people need, and the workers who deliver them.

Like other provinces, Saskatchewan's health care system has been rife with service disruptions and temporary closures as the staffing crisis in the sector worsens, especially in rural Saskatchewan. CUPE 5430, representing close to 13,000 health care workers across the province, was surprised to learn that information about the disruptions was not being tracked and shared with the public in a transparent way.

Frustrated by the lack transparency and consistent reporting, the local formally requested that information from the Ministry of Health and the SHA, and were shocked to learn they would have to pay almost \$10,000 to process their Freedom of Information request. Rather than pay an exorbitant fee for information that should be readily available, the local launched a public survey to gather the information directly from the public. The information, once compiled, will help the local better understand the impact this was having on their members and the communities they serve.

Alberta

Bill 32, legislation that requires unions in Alberta to identify all expenditures as either "core" or "non-core" to the purposes of the union as defined in government regulations, came fully into effect on August 1, 2022. After incredible work by our local leaders and staff through the spring and summer, all of our locals are in compliance with the legislation and will be able to continue collecting 100% of their union dues.

We continue to support our locals with tools, meetings and workshops. This will ensure we are aware of issues and problems as they arise, and support locals through any transition in leadership changes. We anticipate anti-union forces to seek and support members to challenge our locals' decisions to declare all union expenditures as "core" at the labour board, and we are prepared to defend those decisions.

In the meantime, unions continue to discuss coordination of a potential *Charter* challenge to Bill 32.

The new leader of the governing United Conservative Party and successor to Jason Kenney will be announced on October 6 following a mail-in, preferential ballot. Leela Aheer, Brian Jean, Todd Loewen, Rajan Sawhney, Rebecca Schulz, Travis Toews, and Danielle Smith are all vying to be the next premier. Danielle Smith is the perceived front-runner, though her campaign has drawn much criticism. Smith has promised to immediately bring in a 'Sovereignty Act' if elected that she says would allow the provincial government to ignore any federal legislation it feels is against the interest of Albertans.

The Alberta NDP continues to lead in most provincial polls. By legislation, the next provincial election must be held by the end of May 2023.

British Columbia

Bargaining, organizing, and local government elections continue to keep our members, leaders, and staff in BC busy this year.

In June, Bill 10, the Labour Relations Code Amendment Act 2022, received royal assent. The legislation returned card check (now known as single-step certification) to BC's labour relations code and along with it restored balance to organizing drives. The changes make it easier for workers to form a union, and more difficult for employers to interfere. As a result, we are assessing new organizing opportunities with a view to bringing new workers into CUPE.

CUPE is the lead union at the multi-union provincial K-12 bargaining table. After disappointing monetary offers in the spring, our locals in this sector focused instead on opening negotiations at local tables, member engagement and mobilization, and strike preparation workshops. With tentative provincial agreements reached earlier this month in the health facilities sector and the provincial public service, we are hopeful that mid-September bargaining dates will net a tentative provincial agreement that will allow us to proceed with local negotiations.

Provincial bargaining continues for locals in the Community Health Bargaining Association, the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association, and the Community Social Services Bargaining Association. Our university and college locals are also preparing to open bargaining with their employers, as are many municipal and library locals across the province. At every table, our priorities include securing inflationary protections and agreements that recognize the rising cost of living.

Local government elections will be held across BC on October 15, and our members have been working since spring to ensure progressive candidates are putting their names forward. Efforts have been made to coordinate our endorsements with those of local labour councils, so that we elect officials at every level of local government who support public services and the workers who deliver them. With restrictive election financing legislation, our work is focused on communicating with our members and ensure they vote for candidates who share our priorities.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

On September 2, 2022, after months of bargaining, the Hospital Employees' Union-led Facilities Bargaining Association reached a tentative agreement on behalf of its nine unions and their 60,000 members. The three-year deal includes general wage increases that start with a flat rate increase and percentage increases that are linked to the cost of living as indicated by the BC Consumer Price Index (CPI). In 2022, all members will receive an increase of 25 cents an hour and an increase of 3.24%. 2023 will bring an increase of between 5.5% and 6.75% and 2024 will see increases of 2 to 3%, depending on the CPI.

The tentative agreement also includes increases to evening, night and weekend premiums, money to provide wage adjustments for the lowest-wage classifications, a commitment for 9.25 million hours of additional staffing for the bargaining unit with a focus on regularized and full-time positions, and investments in recruitment, retention, and education programs.

Occupational health and safety improvements include workers' input into care plans for aggressive patients or residents, and greater access to violence prevention training. The agreement also includes provisions to address harassment and bullying, promote trans inclusion, and to ensure culturally safe health care delivery.

HEU and the other unions in the association will be voting on the agreement over the coming weeks. This agreement, once ratified, is expected to set the standard for other provincial public sector settlements. Bargaining continues at the Community Health and Community Social Services tables.

HEU is holding their 33rd biennial convention in Vancouver from October 16-21. Following changes to the constitution adopted at their last convention to ensure their leadership structure is more representative of their membership, delegates to this convention will, for the first time, be electing five Diversity Vice-Presidents and a Young Worker Representative who will join their Provincial Executive.

Airlines

Members of the newly certified CUPE 5490, representing flight attendants at Pascan in Quebec ratified their first collective agreement. Pascan is a fast growing company and had many labour relations challenges. Achieving a fair first agreement in a relatively short period of time is a path in the right direction for this employer. Our members have made gains and have earned respect and structure in their working conditions.

Transport Canada held consultation meetings about the acquisition of Sunwing by Westjet. Locals 4070 and 4055 participated in stakeholder meetings to share our members' concerns about the transaction and its potential impacts.

The Air Canada Component has started negotiations for the second reopener of the 10-year collective agreement for flight attendants at Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge. The component executive is committed to a transparent bargaining process, keeping the membership well informed along the way, and it seems the employer is resisting this approach. We continue to reiterate that constant communication with members is key to upholding our democratic principles.

Organizing

For the reporting period of July 1 to September 30, 2022, CUPE welcomed 1527 new members in 31 bargaining units, including 176 in social services, 647 in the municipal sector, and 499 in health care.

There are currently 97 organizing campaigns underway that, if successful, would bring 34,340 new members to our union.

In the Maritimes region, there are 8 active campaigns with the potential to bring 890 workers into CUPE, including 300 security guards at Paladin Security.

In Quebec, 6 campaigns are underway that would see 327 new members join our CUPE family.

Organizers in Ontario are working on 25 active campaigns that could see 8,375 new members join CUPE, including 1,006 health care workers and more than 1,100 members in the social services sector.

Manitoba has 9 campaigns underway, which could see an additional 2,359 new members join our union, the bulk of those in the education sector.

Saskatchewan recently welcomed 184 new CUPE members and has 4 ongoing campaigns with the potential to bring another 84 workers into our CUPE family.

In Alberta, there are 8 active campaigns that could bring 12,973 new members into CUPE, focused on the social services sector. We recently welcomed 37 new members from the Town of Redcliff Library Board.

In British Columbia, CUPE continues to be busy with 29 campaigns across various sectors with the potential of adding close to 10,646 new members into our union, including 8,000 workers at the University of British Columbia.

HEU welcomed 469 new CUPE members from four bargaining units in the health care sector since the last reporting period. There are also 7 ongoing campaigns that, if successful, would see over 430 new members join CUPE.

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

- Annie McPhee CUPE 3324
- Wilmer Gonzalez CUPE 2740
- Randy St. Denis CUPE 59 retiree
- Linda Rose CUPE 79 – ON
- Brandi Lewis CUPE 1190 – NB

Retired Staff

- Clifford Letendre National Representative
Alberta Regional Office
- Beryl Zackon Research Assistant
National Office

Active Staff

- Kevin Rochon National Representative
Ottawa Area Office

In solidarity,



MARK HANCOCK
National President

:tp/ceu