



# Reports of Committees and Working Groups



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## NATIONAL INDIGENOUS COUNCIL

### *Mandate*

Established at the 2005 CUPE National Convention in Winnipeg, the National Indigenous Council's (NIC) mandate is to promote and defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples in our union and communities, locally, nationally, and internationally. The following priorities were initiated at the Council's inaugural meeting and continue to be relevant today:

- Organizing Indigenous workers
- Under-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the workplace and CUPE
- Indigenous awareness training

The Council is made up of elected Indigenous individuals from regions that have established provincial or regional councils. Appointments are made for Maritimes and Atlantic representatives to the Council, as there is no formalized structure yet in these regions. However, there has been work towards the creation of a CUPE Atlantic/Maritime Indigenous Council (CAMIC). The NIC continues to support the creation of CAMIC. In 2020 amendments were passed by the New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island Division Conventions. The Nova Scotia Division Convention was limited to elections and thus an amendment was not passed, but there appears to be support, to pass an amendment when it is possible to do so. As of now, CAMIC is not officially formed, but council members eagerly await its endorsement.

The Council's composition also reflects Indigenous traditional governance ensuring gender parity, elder advice, and consensus decision-making.

### *Elders*

The Council recognizes late Elder John Shingoose who opened our inaugural meeting held in Saskatoon in 2006, and Elder Thomas Louttit who continues to guide our proceedings.

### *Diversity Vice-President (DVP) Indigenous Workers*

The Diversity Vice-President (DVP) Indigenous Workers serves as the National Executive Board liaison to the Council. The DVP developed an action plan drawing from the ongoing work and the recommendations of the Council. This action plan focuses on building relationships with grassroots activists and leaders and promoting the role our union can have in supporting the work of

Indigenous Peoples on issues important to their communities.

### *Truth and Reconciliation*

Since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report in 2015, the movement towards reconciliation in Canada has been largely shaped by its Calls to Action. The historic report emphasized that true reconciliation is more than apologies; it's a responsibility for everyone to build a respectful relationship with Indigenous Peoples – governments, our union and the entire labour movement, and all Canadians. Canadian governments, particularly the Trudeau Liberal government, are not living up to the promise of reconciliation in full partnership with Indigenous Peoples.

The discovery of several mass unmarked graves of Indigenous children, located in proximity to former residential schools, has highlighted the urgency of fulfilling the Missing Children and Burial Information Calls to Action. The NIC mourns these discoveries along with Indigenous communities and urges the federal government to investigate the deaths and fund searches of all residential school sites.

Reconciliation requires immediate and concrete action. CUPE must hold our governments to account to fulfill its promises to Indigenous Peoples for justice and reconciliation. The Council is working to ensure our union fulfills its responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples and educating our members on what we can do to foster reconciliation in our workplaces and communities.

### *"Water is Life" Campaign*

Resolution 102 passed at the 2019, convention reflects the importance of water to Indigenous People. The resolution called for CUPE to recognize that 'Water is Life', and a basic human right to all peoples, and to develop a campaign to educate and mobilize locals and members in support of Indigenous Peoples and environmental allies in protecting and ensuring access to clean the water. At the time of writing this report, the council is preparing a campaign that will feature Indigenous CUPE members from across Canada.

### *Promoting fair public services for Indigenous Peoples and communities*

Canada has a proven history of underfunding services and infrastructure for Indigenous peoples, creating injustice and crisis in Indigenous communities. Indigenous people

deserve the same quality public services and infrastructure available to others in Canada. Indigenous communities, both on and off-reserve and in urban centres, have a right to control the services their people depend on. Our union must use our expertise to highlight the negative effects the privatization of public services and infrastructure has on Indigenous Peoples. We must pressure all levels of government to protect community-controlled infrastructure – including water and wastewater systems – and social services in Indigenous communities, and ensure all Indigenous peoples have fair and equal access to public services regardless of where they live. The Council will work with Indigenous Peoples, the labour movement, and allies to protect water from harmful development.

*Supporting a National Anti-Racism Strategy*

The Council has supported of the creation of a National Anti-Racism Strategy since resolution 4 was passed at the 2019 National Convention. The Council participated in the first consultation in conjunction with the National Rainbow Committee. The Council also supported the consultations in the regions by encouraging Indigenous CUPE members to participate. The consultations were very successful and included many Indigenous CUPE members contributing to the draft National Anti-Racism Strategy.

*MMIWG2S and the Calls to Justice*

The Council is committed to continuing to support the MMIWG2S movement across Canada. The Council has expressed its frustration with the federal government’s inaction on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report Calls to Justice. The Council supported CUPE’s statement in 2020 which urged the federal government to take swift action on implementing the Calls to Justice.

*Defending the land and environment*

Many Indigenous people define their relationship as belonging to the land, and they see their well-being intrinsically linked to the well-being of the environment. We need to continue to pressure Canadian governments and resource extraction industries to acknowledge the rights of Indigenous Peoples to protect their traditional territories, especially in light of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. CUPE must continue efforts to partner with Indigenous Peoples, communities, organizations, and allies to work on environmental issues and the protection of water. Indigenous Peoples are the stewards and protectors of the waters of their traditional, unceded territories. The Council

will work with Indigenous Peoples, the labour movement, and allies to protect our water from harmful development.

*Building allyship with Indigenous communities and organizations*

It is vital that our union continue to build and strengthen our relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities. We have much to offer Indigenous allies and much more to learn. Our union has a responsibility to advocate for all Indigenous workers and their rights to decent pay, fair pensions, and safe workplaces. We must also follow the leads of Indigenous communities in their fights for justice, respect, a healthy environment, and excellent public services.

*Working with the Canadian Labour Congress*

It is vital that our union continue to work with the Canadian Labour Congress and other affiliates on advancing the interests of Indigenous Peoples. We must ensure that the issues affecting Indigenous Peoples in workplaces, and our communities, are a priority for the labour movement.

The Council thanks the National Officers, the National Executive Board, staff, and the members at National Convention for their support, and their commitment to supporting the work of Indigenous Peoples to achieve justice and equality.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Indigenous Council:**

- Brandice Blanchard ..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Scott Quilty..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Denise Hubbard..... Nova Scotia
- Leo Cheverie..... Prince Edward Island
- Marie Doyle..... Prince Edward Island
- Delphine Barnaby.....New Brunswick
- Nathalie Claveau ..... Quebec
- Dawn C. Bellerose ..... Ontario
- Luc Cyr ..... Ontario
- Tricia Merritt
- Co-chair .....Manitoba
- Jillian Seeback ..... Saskatchewan
- John MacDonald..... Saskatchewan
- Don Monroe
- Co-chair ..... Alberta
- Sherry Elliott..... Alberta
- Danica Hansen-Hugues ..... British Columbia
- Mike Lupo..... British Columbia
- Teresa Roe..... HEU, British Columbia
- Debra Merrier .....NEB Liaison
- Dana Wesley.....Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PENSIONS

The members of the National Advisory Committee on Pensions are pleased to offer the following report on our work for the 2021 convention:

### **Make Revera Public**

The committee held extensive discussions about the ongoing issues pertaining to pension fund investments in privatization schemes. We held a joint session with CUPE's National Contracting Out and Privatization Coordinating Committee to discuss this problem. The committee was very glad to review CUPE's new toolkit on this topic entitled "Keep Our Pensions Out of Privatization: A guide for CUPE members, trustees and other pension representatives." The committee recognizes that this is a very complicated problem and urges CUPE to find creative ways to intervene in this space. We were shocked to learn that Revera, one of the worst private long-term care employers, and the second-largest private long-term care (LTC) operator in the country, is wholly owned by the investment arm of the Federal Public Service Pension Plan (a federal crown corporation known as PSP Investments). The worst failings of private LTC, and Revera in particular, have been in the public eye in very painful ways during this COVID year. The committee was glad to hear that federal public sector unions, including PSAC and PIPSC, have called on their pension fund and the government to do the right thing and "Make Revera Public". In late March, a letter to this effect was co-signed by 14 of the federal public service unions representing over 98 per cent of the unionized members of the federal public service superannuation plan. The Make Revera Public campaign has also been supported by our Health Coalition allies and the NDP. CUPE's new members with the RCMP (CUPE 104) are members of the Public Service Pension Plan, and that local has also co-signed the new letter. Continued support for this campaign is essential.

### **CPPIB and AIMCo Investment in Brazil Water Privatization**

The committee heard a detailed report on the disturbing investment by Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) and Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo) pension funds into a private Brazilian water company that has been involved in privatizations and take-overs of water public-private partnerships in Brazil. The company, called Iguá Saneamento, was also the successful bidder in a major privatization of the public water utility of Rio de Janeiro state on April 30, 2021. Brazil's far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, was a significant promoter of the privatization and held the gavel at the final sale in the auction. CUPE's counterpart municipal union, known by their Portuguese acronym FNU, appealed to CUPE and the

Canadian labour movement in early April to support their effort to fight this privatization by publicly opposing the CPPIB's role, and supporting their call to keep this water utility public. CUPE responded by sending a letter to the CPPIB calling on the Board to withdraw from any investments in water privatization and for-profit management. CUPE also published urgent updates on this development on our Website, and alerted the media to what was unfolding. Notwithstanding the April 30<sup>th</sup> auction, efforts to fight this process are ongoing, and the social resistance by affected unions and movement organizations is expected to continue, and to need CUPE's support. The committee supports ongoing efforts to oppose the CPPIB and AIMCo's privatization of water, and to build further on the work of the 'Keep our pensions out of privatization toolkit'.

### **Public pensions should be paid from age 65**

For more than a half-century, CUPE has championed improvements in Canada's public pension system. Despite an important and historic victory of an expansion of the Canada Pension Plan in 2016, our public pension system remains too small. Most workers in Canada do not have a pension at work and those who do are facing ongoing employer efforts to attack the security and adequacy of those plans. In Budget 2021, the federal Liberal government announced they were moving forward with a 10 per cent increase to Old Age Security (OAS) payments. However, this increase would only begin at age 75, instead of at age 65 – the longstanding age of retirement for the OAS and CPP/QPP programs. While CUPE strongly supports further expansions of our public pension, we see no reason why retirees who would receive these additional payments should have to wait until age 75. Increased OAS benefits should begin at age 65. OAS benefits are particularly important for lower-income seniors, many of whom cannot wait until age 75 for the improvements to retirement security they desperately need. Moving away from a single benefit provision across all ages of retirement may also open a backdoor to future cuts to benefits at certain ages, or renew efforts to increase the age of retirement for the program as a whole. CUPE should continue fighting for universal improvements to our public pension system, and CUPE should vigorously defend a retirement age of 65 for these universal benefits.

### **Public Sector Accounting Board Threats**

The committee held numerous discussions about a series of potential changes to public sector accounting standards pertaining to pensions. Canada's Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) sets the accounting rules under which

governments across our country at all levels must prepare their financial statements (the “government books”). Defined Benefit pension promises to appear on these statements as liabilities and as annual costs. The PSAB is considering a series of historic changes to how these pension liabilities and costs are calculated. The changes under consideration could result in dramatic increases in pension liabilities and costs, which would mean dramatic increases to the reporting of government debt and deficit. In the Committee’s view, the political pressures that would follow, if these changes are passed, would pose a very serious political threat not only to our members’ pension plans, but also to their jobs and wages. PSAB publicly-released an interim draft of the revised accounting standards in mid-2021. The draft standards suggest that PSAB appears to be siding with CUPE on many of the issues under consideration, but these standards are not yet final.

The committee is glad that CUPE has been a leader in the labour movement in this process to date, and we hope that CUPE will continue to pressure the PSAB to not adopt changes that would be detrimental to Defined Benefit plans in Canada.

### **More Attacks Coming**

After the financial crisis more than a decade ago, it was often said that pension plans faced a “perfect storm” of converging factors: huge market losses, low-interest rates, fiscal pressure on governments, and pension plans recognizing the improvements to life expectancy. Employers and governments around the country seized on these challenges to claim that Defined Benefit plans were “broken” and in many cases were successful in their attacks on these plans.

The committee is concerned that a new developing convergence of factors may lead to a similar pattern of attacks. These factors include: 1) market volatility from COVID-19; 2) long-term interest rates at historic lows; 3) PSAB accounting standard changes being considered; 4) governments further in debt/deficit due to COVID; 5) renewed push for more austerity coming. The committee does not want to see CUPE members forced on the defensive against another round of employer attacks and will support CUPE to do everything the union can to prepare for this looming pensions crisis.

### **Holding Investment Executives and Managers Responsible**

CUPE members in two provinces experienced particularly noteworthy investment issues in 2020. The Alberta pension fund investment manager AIMCo had a highly publicized investment failure in the depths of the COVID-related

market stress of early 2020. The fund had made some financial bets that went spectacularly wrong, resulting in billions of dollars lost. Thankfully the main CUPE plan in the province, the Local Authorities Pension Plan, had made some investment decisions of its own that partially-insulated the pension plan from these losses. In Ontario, CUPE’s largest pension plan, OMERS, also reported a significant loss in 2020 of -2.7 per cent, while most other plans reported very good performance at the end of 2020. This loss for OMERS is another chapter in a long history of underperformance for CUPE’s largest pension plan. Poor investment returns do not serve CUPE members well. They drive pension funding levels down, and they put pressure on contribution rates and plan benefits. For “target benefit” plans or for defined benefit plans with target benefit provisions (like non-guaranteed indexation), poor investment returns can directly lead to plan benefit reductions. Our committee has serious concerns about a lack of accountability and proper oversight in too many cases we discussed. CUPE should continue to support regions and pension activists to hold pension investment executives and managers accountable and responsible to members’ best interests.

### **More pension training**

Over the past decade, pension plans have become increasingly complicated. New methods of actuarial projection, more complex pension funding rules and increasing sophistication of employer attacks have made defending our pension plans as much of a technical exercise as a political one. At the same time, CUPE continues to make important strides in winning joint control over many large pension plans around the country. What this means is that CUPE is appointing a growing number of pension activists into both formal and less-formal decision-making roles in increasingly complicated pension plans across the country. While many of our activists can access pension industry training opportunities through these positions, we recognize that many of these sessions may not necessarily present a pro-worker perspective on pensions, while others directly advance employer pension agendas. Our fights are increasingly technical, and we need to ensure that our pension activists and trustee board appointees are properly trained for pension disputes, which are happening around boardroom tables more often than on picket lines.

CUPE has developed an important weeklong training course for new pension trustees and activists. and the committee believes our pension activists need regular, ongoing pension training on emerging issues in pension debates if they are to best serve the interests of their members. Our collective experience in the COVID pandemic has demonstrated that we are able to gather

members from across the country virtually for education. The committee supports the development of more online training opportunities for CUPE pension activists from around the country and exploring new ways of educating rank-and-file CUPE members about the basics of their pension plans. There is an increased need for such education, given that pension plans have become so much more complex. Members will be better equipped to fight to protect their plans if they understand them well. Expanding CUPE's strong and proud record on pension training will serve our members well.

**Conclusion**

The members of the National Advisory Committee on Pensions want to thank the NEB and the members of CUPE everywhere for the opportunity to serve our union on this important topic.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Advisory Committee on Pensions:**

Terri-Lynn Cooper ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Chris Melanson ..... Nova Scotia  
Karen Tsistinas ..... Prince Edward Island  
Marilyn MacCormack..... New Brunswick  
Jocelyn Bourdon ..... Quebec  
Jason Chan  
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Philip Dembicki ..... Manitoba  
Janice Wolfmueller  
Co-chair ..... Saskatchewan  
Cyril Wilson ..... Alberta  
Karl Fultz ..... British Columbia (retiree)  
Talitha Dekker ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Rory Gill..... NEB Liaison  
Mark Janson..... Staff Advisor  
Kevin Skerrett ..... Staff Advisor



## NATIONAL CHILD CARE WORKING GROUP

There are 12,000 CUPE members working in early childhood education. CUPE child care members can be found in primary schools, daycare centres, and early start programs. Our members are cooks, cleaners, assistants, and educators.

As a mostly female-dominated workforce employed in a caring profession, child care workers often have low pay and few benefits. For decades workers have been subsidizing parents' child care fees by keeping their own pay low. Provincial and federal governments (with the exception of Quebec) have broadly left child care to the whim of the capitalist market. With too few spaces, parents and guardians have been paying skyrocketing prices grateful to have any child care at all.

Building off the most successful universal child care program in Quebec, progressive provincial governments, like Rachel Notley's NDP government in Alberta and John Horgan's NDP government in BC began implementing universal child care in their provinces. These programs offered high-quality child care and gave parents some relief from the high cost of care. British Columbia's \$10/day plan is still rolling out, but Alberta's new regressive government led by Jason Kenney quickly abolished that plan when they came to power.

When the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hit, child care workers were on the frontline. During each wave, child care was one of the last services to close and the first to open – if they shut down at all. Most provinces kept child care open for at least essential care workers. Due to these shutdowns, women left the workplace at an alarming rate. The common refrain of the pandemic recovery was “there is no recovery without a she-covey. There is no she-covey without child care.” It was up to child care workers to provide the essential care service that let the rest of the country work.

In Budget 2021, the federal priority that families have been waiting 50 years for had finally arrived, universal child care. Over the next five years, with provincial cooperation, Canada will witness the building of the first pan-Canadian universal program since the creation of Medicare. It is an exciting time for our country. It is a hopeful time for families and especially for women who still bear most of the responsibility for raising children. A huge congratulations to all CUPE child care advocates who have been at the forefront of pushing for a universal child care plan!

Unfortunately, the federal government's plan for universal child care relies heavily on buy-in from the provinces.

While some provinces will be quick to reach a deal, others will be reluctant and will need advocates to continue pushing for this program. The working group will continue to work with Child Care Now to advocate for universal child care for all and better wages for workers.

### *National Child Care Working Group activities*

Over the past two years, we undertook the following activities:

- Campaigned for universal child care;
- Participated in Child Care Now's across Canada virtual MP lobby month on universal child care;
- Advocated for non-profit child care through collaboration with Child Care Resource and Research Unit on a CUPE-supported report;
- Fought for better wages and benefits for child care workers in the new universal child care program. No longer should workers' wages be used to subsidize the cost of child care;
- Learned about building solidarity amongst care workers across Canada and internationally.

### *National Child Care Sector Council Conference*

CUPE members from across Canada met virtually on October 5, 2020, for the National Sector Council Conference. Members came together to share information about current challenges facing child care workers and the ongoing campaigns happening in regions to bring about universal child care. We heard different approaches to universal care from British Columbia's expanded public school system, to Quebec's well-established universal child care, to Nova Scotia's bumpy road expanding universal pre-primary. Members were introduced to the success and challenges of these three unique models of universal care.

### *Collective bargaining and local issues*

Child care workers are thrilled with the announcement of a universal child care program; however, several concerns remain: 1) Will workers' wages still be tied to child care fees? 2) Where will all of the new child care workers come from?

For decades, the market, not the government, has provided much of the child care in Canada. As a result, workers' wages have been tied to parents' fees. Knowing the struggle of high child care fees for guardians, child care workers have not been asking for the amount of pay they should be earning. Municipal child care centres, where child care workers receive better compensation, have started to shutter due to austerity budgets. In Ontario,

CUPE has been hard at work campaigning to stop the closure of these much-needed municipal child care spaces. But for the spaces that have already gone, the market will fill the need with lower-paid child care work.

Likely because the pay is low and the work is undervalued, there is a shortage of child care workers in Canada. Workers and governments have known about this for years, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, it became a significant issue when sick workers had to isolate and could not find a replacement. With the plan to roll out a national universal child care program, workers are wondering where provincial governments will find qualified child care workers.

In Nova Scotia, CUPE felt this acutely when the government expanded K-12 education to cover pre-primary (age 4). Child care workers have been meeting with Members of the Legislative Assembly to explain the stress placed on the child care workforce when ECEs were offered positions in schools that paid significantly more and offered preferential benefits and pensions. If universal child care program is to be successful, more child care workers are going to be quickly needed.

The federal fall stimulus plan in 2020 acknowledged this shortage in the workforce. It announced new funding to provinces and territories to cover the cost of training early childhood educators and educational assistants, but the amount of money was far too small to train the number of workers that will be required. Quebec is another province having a difficult time recruiting and retaining enough qualified workers in their child care sector. Many workers are going to the school system and child care centres are closing. Waitlists are getting longer. Across Canada, only 36 per cent of trained child care workers enter the sector. The wages and benefits are too low. The recruitment and retention of child care workers must be quickly addressed especially if we are to begin a national universal child care program.

Across Canada, austerity budgets are being passed in the name of economic recovery and jeopardizing the quality and safety of child care workers. Ontario has experienced a net loss of nearly 60 child care centres. Some of these were municipal centres that offered the highest quality of care and specialised programming for children with special needs. In Newfoundland and Labrador, CUPE 3017 had to grieve to get access to the uniforms they are granted in their collective agreement so they could have extra clothes on-site during COVID-19. Proper Personal Protective Equipment is not getting to child care workers in Quebec. More resources must immediately go into child care to protect it before we can expand.

British Columbia has already been establishing their universal child care plan. In BC, CUPE has been

campaigning for an expanded K-12 education system that would include early childhood education. With before and after school programming built into the day, child care workers and Educational Assistants would have an opportunity to work more full-time hours, and parents would be able to drop off and pick up their children at daycare and elementary school with just one stop.

Child care workers across the country have been pushing to get added to the early vaccination lists for COVID-19. Children in child care are often too young to wear a mask which leaves workers especially vulnerable to COVID-19. They are frequently in very close contact with children and have little ability to protect themselves.

The major issues impacting members across Canada are low wages, few benefits or pension, an increased workload, especially with new protocols due to COVID-19, an inability to recruit and retain workers, a societal undervaluing of care work, the rise of for-profit child care centres, and austerity budgets that do not prioritize the education of early learners and child care workers.

*The continued push for universal child care*

CUPE will continue working closely with allies, such as Child Care Now, to advocate for public, universal child care for all that will offer high-quality child care with decent wages and fair benefits.

The working group would like to thank the National Executive Board for its support for child care issues over the past two years, and the members and staff who work hard to defend working conditions in child care.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Child Care Working Group:**

- Gail Brinston ..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Margot Nickerson  
Co-chair ..... Nova Scotia
- Sarah Burke.....Prince Edward Island
- Kimberly Copp..... New Brunswick
- Paule Turgeon.....Quebec
- Shellie Bird .....Ontario
- Carolyn Ferns .....Ontario
- Margaret (Peggy) Robichaud .....Manitoba
- Karla Sastaunik..... Saskatchewan
- Tiffany Out ..... Alberta
- Lee-Ann Lalli  
Co-chair .....British Columbia
- Baldeesh Sandhu ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Debra Merrier .....NEB Liaison
- Adrienne Silnicki ..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL CONTRACTING OUT AND PRIVATIZATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Privatization threats continue to occur in every sector across the country from expanded public-private partnerships, growth of social impact bonds (SIBs), and contracting out of services and jobs. CUPE locals and members remain at the forefront of struggles to maintain quality public services.

This year, marks 34 years since the National Contracting Out and Privatization Coordinating Committee was formed. The committee is comprised of anti-privatization activists from a variety of sectors, including municipal, school board, health care, social services, energy and transportation, and across all provinces. Committee members are leaders in their locals and in their regions, and many participate in their provincial anti-privatization committees. They share comprehensive reports on privatization and contracting out developments in their regions, discuss challenges and successes as well as flag emerging issues and opportunities. Despite challenges and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in members' work and lives, the committee remained focused on promoting and defending public services and working against contracting out and privatization throughout the reporting period.

CUPE continually develops resources to better equip locals and members with the necessary tools to fight proposed contracting out and privatization of public services, and to campaign for bringing privatized services back into the public domain. Committee members provide invaluable feedback that shapes the development and implementation of these resources, informed by many years of on-the-ground experiences and insights.

Education has been a key focus of the committee throughout the reporting period. Committee members work diligently to continually educate themselves about new forms and frontiers of privatization. The committee also focuses on improving campaigning skills and knowledge in order to engage in anti-privatization campaigns. For example, members reflected on campaign successes and learned from CUPE Communications specialists how to effectively communicate to members and the public about privatization and public services.

CUPE continues to be the leading critic of the troubled Canada Infrastructure Bank. The Bank is a Crown Corporation created by the Liberal government in 2017 with \$35 billion in public funds to help private investors finance, design, operate, and own public infrastructure projects for a profit. The Canada Infrastructure Bank is a broker, and promoter, of high-priced privatization projects.

The union's advocacy is multi-faceted, from a strong media relations strategy to testifying to the House of Commons, to member education and mobilization. CUPE continues to push for a truly public infrastructure bank that would provide low-cost public financing to cities and towns to build and upgrade public infrastructure.

CUPE also demands transparency from the Canada Infrastructure Bank and sounds the alarm on its many failings. Each meeting of the committee touches on activities and developments related to the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

The committee's activities in this mandate also included:

- Piloted the Union Education online workshop "Preventing privatization at work: Protecting public services during the COVID-19 pandemic", providing feedback on its content and advice on its roll-out.
- Investigated Canada's promotion of privatization abroad.
- Collaborated with the CUPE National Advisory Committee on Pensions to study the role of pension funds in privatization and to strategize on the implementation of CUPE's new "Keep Our Pensions out of Privatization" toolkit.
- Investigated the issue of water privatization in Canada and globally. Specifically, the committee delved into the lack of access to safe, public water in many Indigenous communities, results from a recent CUPE municipal water survey, the successful community campaign that prevented the privatization of local water in Mapleton, Ontario, and global campaigns to keep water public.
- Explored emerging and expanding forms of privatization, such as social impact bonds. Social impact bonds allow private investors to profit from social services, education, and health care. Investors provide up-front financing for public programs like health prevention, child care, or ending homelessness. If certain outcomes are met, the government pays back investors for the initial program cost, plus a profit.
- Learned about the impact of privatization on people made vulnerable because of poverty, racism, colonialism, and other forms of discrimination.
- Solicited a list of all public-private partnerships (P3s) in Canada (from advertised to operational) to serve as a building block for future CUPE P3 database to improve P3 monitoring.

The committee would like to highlight new CUPE national anti-privatization resources for locals that have been developed since the union's last convention:

- Preventing privatization at work: Protecting public services during the COVID-19 pandemic (workshop).
- Checklist: Protecting public services during the pandemic and beyond.
- Asking the right questions: A guide for municipalities considering P3s.
- Keep our Pensions out of Privatization: A guide for CUPE members, trustees and other pension representatives.
- Solid foundation: A COVID-19 recovery built on public infrastructure (research report).
- P3s: False Claims, hidden costs (fact sheet).
- CUPE fact sheet on Canada Infrastructure Bank water privatization.

CUPE was also a significant contributor to the CLC report *For the Public Good: The Growing threat of privatization and workers' proposals to protect our future* as well as the Public Futures Database on mapping contracted in public services around the world.

Committee members are grateful for the opportunity to serve on this Committee. We would also like to thank the

National Executive Board for continuing to prioritize anti-privatization work, including dedicated staff resources and funding for regional and national anti-privatization campaigns.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Contracting Out and Privatization Coordinating Committee:**

- Mike Tobin ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Pauline Chicarella..... Nova Scotia  
Nicole Couture  
Co-chair .....Prince Edward Island  
Christopher Watson  
Co-chair ..... New Brunswick  
Maryse Chrétien ..... Quebec  
Tammy Caswell ..... Ontario  
Michelle Bergen .....Manitoba  
Clayton Wilson ..... Saskatchewan  
Joyce Baker ..... Alberta  
Stephanie Goudie .....British Columbia  
Catherine Black ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Michelle Duhaney .....Airlines Division  
Bryan Keith.....NEB Liaison  
Emily Niles.....Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

CUPE's National Environment Committee provides advice and recommendations for action on environmental issues to CUPE members. Since the last National Convention, the committee has focused its work on confronting the climate change crisis, COVID response and just transition, banning plastics, reviewing CUPE's National Environment Policy, reviewing the federal government's climate change strategy, sustainable practices, green workplace initiatives, and support for good green and climate jobs through building alliances with other progressive organizations.

The committee was restricted by the pandemic, especially over the first half of its mandate when it was unable to meet. Thereafter, the committee switched to full online meetings from home to help ensure committee members' health and safety was a top priority. The committee has in the past met by videoconference, so it had little trouble moving to new online meeting platforms.

The following report to the Thirtieth Biennial CUPE National Convention summarizes the committee's activities and priorities.

### **Committee activities in the past two years**

#### *Confronting the climate change crisis*

Confronting the climate crisis was the centrepiece of the committee's work over the past two years, as we moved into a new decade and the climate change crisis grew ever more urgent. The Earth Day 2021 action focused on a new CUPE Climate Change Emergency Declaration that the environment committee helped develop. That declaration spelled out in clear language the central elements of the crisis, described steps CUPE locals can take to cut greenhouse gases that cause climate change, and asked local leadership to sign on and endorse the declaration as a way to commit to fighting climate change. Dozens of CUPE locals across Canada signed the declaration, initiating renewed efforts at the local level to confront the climate crisis.

CUPE's key climate change educational tool is also being revised and a new "level two" workshop is being developed with input from the committee. *"Starting to Talk: CUPE Climate Change Conversations"* is a workplace discussion platform for working people to learn about climate change, with recommended steps for action. Like the national environment policy, the tool needed an update, and a new version with current data is set to launch. The committee also recognized the need for a second-tier workshop and helped develop a climate change PowerPoint tool centred on political action for union members.

The National Environment Committee has also helped monitor the federal Liberal government's climate change strategies and proposed legislation, while keeping a close eye on whether Canada meets its international obligations to cut greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, in accordance with the Paris Agreement. To this point, Trudeau's Liberals are failing to aggressively cut emissions and to keep pace with other nations in the push to flatten the curve and establish a safe and stable geophysical climate for all working people.

#### *Assessing the COVID-19 pandemic and just transition*

The committee has helped respond to the health pandemic by assessing its impact on working people and tying COVID recovery to just transition principles. Labour/environmental activists have for years put just transition forward as a mechanism to help transform the economy and move it away from hazardous environmental practices. A just transition strategy is an environmental and economic program aimed at helping workers retain work as the economy shifts to greener ways of working.

Just transition principles include worker consultation, new education, training, and reskilling programs and opportunities and mechanisms to steer workers into new work. Just transition has among its goals decent work for all, social inclusion, and the eradication of poverty. The committee has helped look at ways just transition can be used to redirect CUPE members and other workers to new forms of work after their jobs were negatively affected by the pandemic. For example, the National Environment Committee met with the National Transportation Committee to discuss strategies and solutions for laid-off airline workers impacted by the pandemic. This demonstrates a more holistic understanding of worker justice, extrapolating beyond environmental issues to broader socio-economic factors, like the health crisis.

#### *Reviewing the CUPE National Environment Policy*

The committee has worked on reviewing CUPE's National Environment Policy, with the goal of having a revised, second edition of the policy adopted in the near future. The first edition of the policy was adopted in 2013. That policy helped guide CUPE's environmental work for close to a decade but with the climate crisis intensifying, along with issues like plastic waste and environmental racism emerging as deeper core concerns it is time to review and upgrade policy content.

### *Offering solutions to the plastics crisis*

The committee took up work on the global plastics waste crisis, acting directly on a resolution from the 2019 National Convention. Committee members provided examples of steps some CUPE locals have taken to curb and cut plastics waste in their workplaces and communities. Some of that information was shared nationally in a communication urging CUPE members to help solve the plastics crisis, which has escalated to a global concern as our oceans, beaches, and waterways in many instances have been overrun with plastic waste from domestic sources and industrial fishing gear. This problem threatens the viability of our oceans and demands actions from everyone.

### *Greening the workplace*

The committee has encouraged CUPE locals and all workplaces to make changes that reduce the harmful environmental impact of our work. The committee continues to promote a wide spectrum of tools to help workers and locals green their workplaces, from setting up and operating workplace environment committees, to conducting workplace environmental audits and pursuing green collective agreement language.

### *Sustainable practices*

The committee has continued to promote wise environmental organizational behaviour across all levels of our union. The pandemic forced millions of Canadians to work from home and for organizations to pivot and adopted online practices to conduct work. CUPE's National Environment Committee held all of its meetings using Zoom and recognized that by doing so, members' health and safety was ensured, and massive cuts to the committee's environmental footprint resulted. A full in-person meeting in Ottawa would emit approximately 6.4 carbon equivalent tonnes of greenhouse gases. A videoconference meeting (a practice often used in the past by the committee) would emit approximately 3.4 carbon equivalent tonnes of greenhouse gases if that meeting was held in two hub centres. Full online meetings emit zero carbon equivalent tonnes of greenhouse gases (only a very small amount of CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted to power home devices). The committee recognizes that a global health crisis is never a good thing but seeing CUPE members demonstrate resilience and adapt to new ways of working at committee meetings signals a positive step for ongoing virtual meetings and events across the union, thereby cutting emissions that cause climate change.

The committee was also instrumental in making changes to reduce the environmental impact of CUPE's national

convention. The 2019 CUPE National Convention was the fifth carbon neutral, thanks to an offsetting program recommended by the committee. Carbon offsets were paid to environmental partner organizations of CUPE, such as the Green Economy Network, to promote good jobs in a sustainable economy. The committee also encouraged other green steps at the convention, such as full auditing of carbon emissions, promoting green transportation options for delegates, reducing paper and other materials leading to less waste and energy consumption at the convention, and promoting public tap water.

### *Building environmental alliances*

The committee has continued to work with allies within labour and with environmental and social justice groups to strengthen actions taken on environmental issues. The committee works with the Canadian Labour Congress and its environment committee and provincial federations of labour and local labour councils. The committee also works with the Green Economy Network (GEN) and its provincial chapters as well as Climate Action Network – Canada.

### **Conclusion**

The National Environment Committee's work helps direct workers' roles in pressing for a sustainable economy and an equitable zero-carbon future. CUPE must play a leading role advocating for action on climate change, plastics, a fair and just recovery from COVID, environmental protection, green/climate jobs, and sustainability. The committee will work to embed environmental awareness and action into all elements of our union.

Respectfully submitted by,

### **The Members of the National Environment Committee:**

Erin Woodfine..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Donna Van Kroonenburg ..... Nova Scotia  
Ron Blue.....Prince Edward Island  
Brian Leclerc .....Quebec  
Tiffany Balducci.....Ontario  
Bailey Farrell .....Ontario, Local 1000  
Cameron Patrick .....Manitoba  
Derek Benson  
Co-chair..... Alberta  
Carol Nordby.....British Columbia  
Lisa Crema..... HEU, British Columbia  
Carina Ebnoether  
Co-chair..... Airline Division  
Benoît Bouchard .....NEB Liaison  
Matthew Firth.....Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL GLOBAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

CUPE's National Global Justice Committee is committed to international solidarity and engaging with the workers and activists around the world who are courageously fighting for the society we all want to live in. We are making every effort to unite with and to support workers who are resisting privatization, union busting, poverty, austerity, corruption and war; and in the process, we are learning more about the world and the conditions of the world's people.

Our experiences at the bargaining table in Canada are affected by the same global economic system negatively affecting workers globally. Through our global solidarity, we are connecting with workers who share our aspiration for universal public services, decent work, democracy, justice and peace. To be successful in our fight here in Canada, we rely on movements around the world to be vibrant and strong.

COVID-19 has exposed the stark inequality between the rich and the poor and among marginalized communities. The injustice of this inequality within countries, and between countries of the Global South and the North, is unsustainable, unacceptable and has inspired solidarity and resistance around the world. CUPE belongs to the international movement challenging the systemic inequities that have denied so many of our sisters, brothers and comrades access to human and labour rights, including basic health care and access to vaccines during the pandemic.

As we witness resistance movements growing and become stronger in many countries, many with women at the forefront, we hold our government accountable when Canada's foreign policies undermine their ability to thrive.

The National Global Justice Committee is guided by CUPE National's *International Solidarity Policy Statement* (2014) which allows us to adapt our work to our changing world and ensures we act in solidarity with critical global struggles.

The four pillars of this work are:

1. Expose and campaign against human rights violations;
2. Support struggles to defend and recognize labour and trade union rights;
3. Challenge global corporate aggression;
4. Ensure Canadian government accountability.

Under these four basic themes, our international solidarity work has developed and expanded over the past two years in the following ways:

### **Integrating international issues and international solidarity actions into all aspects of our union work**

Education that brings members together to discuss how global capitalism affects our lives and the lives of workers around the world, in unions, in workplaces, and in communities is now complete. Committee members expect this education course will help to clarify why it is essential for CUPE to engage in international solidarity, and how this solidarity will strengthen our fight for public services here at home.

Through the Global Justice Fund we continue to partner with CUPE locals and divisions to build relationships with social movement organizations and trade unions in other countries. The committee has recommended support for projects in Central America, Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Cuba, Guatemala, Burma-Myanmar, the Philippines, Iran, and with migrant workers in Canada. We are also considering future support from the Global Justice Fund to the trade union movement in Haiti and Palestine.

The campaign calling for the release of CUPE 4600 member Cihan Erdal was a priority for the Committee this past year. Brother Cihan is a queer youth activist who immigrated to Canada in 2017 to do his PhD at Carleton University. He had returned to Turkey to visit family and conduct fieldwork as part of his doctoral research when he was unjustly arrested and detained based on false accusations that he was involved in protest actions in Turkey in 2014. Cihan is a political prisoner and we worked hard to get him released from jail and safely home to Canada. CUPE pressed the Canadian Government to support Cihan as he prepared for his trial in May 2021.

### **Engaging in worker-to-worker solidarity exchanges, relations, and grassroots organizing**

The COVID-19 pandemic has prevented us from traveling and engaging in worker-to-worker exchanges over the past two years. This has not prevented us from meeting with our sisters, brothers and friends in several countries where social movements and trade union leaders face harassment, intimidation, and human rights violations for their political activities.

The National Global Justice Committee hosted virtual meetings with leaders from Colombia, Palestine, and the Philippines in 2020 and 2021. The political situation was volatile in these countries and territories before the pandemic hit. Their struggles intensified with lockdown restrictions, and the health and economic hardship associated with the pandemic.

It became nearly impossible to organize and unionize workers in the public sector as the economic and social conditions deteriorated. In Colombia and the Philippines, social movements, trade unions, media outlets, farmers and Indigenous organizations continue to be the target of repressive policies and actions. COVID-19 restrictions led to an escalation of surveillance, harassment, intimidation, threats, and even death to many who criticize these governments. In Palestine, the Israeli military occupation has always affected Palestinian workers' basic rights and led to horrendous exploitation. The pandemic has intensified an already unbearable situation for the Palestinians.

Virtual meetings do not replace in-person exchanges, but they did provide the opportunity for leaders to share important updates and experiences so CUPE, as a member of the international community, can support their efforts to expose inequality, rights violations, to hold the perpetrators accountable, and to realize justice.

### **Speaking out on important international issues**

We take seriously the need to respond when critical events occur globally and have spoken out against human and trade union rights violations, the injustice of impunity, against the impact of corruption, foreign corporate domination, military aggression, and war. In the process, we have, at times, challenged Canada's actions and policies in the world.

We responded to the call for solidarity with the Global South in their efforts to pressure the Canadian Government to support the waiver at the World Trade Organization (WTO) that would temporarily suspend pharmaceutical corporations' monopoly on vaccine production. The proposal, if passed, would temporarily waive certain restrictions and would help break down barriers to scaling up the manufacture and supply of lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines medical tools across the world.

CUPE supported the call, to the provincial and federal governments, from migrants in Canada for full access to the COVID-19 vaccine regardless of immigration status. We agree that vaccines must be free, not require a health card, be accessible, not be mandatory, and that no information about migrants must be collected or shared with immigration enforcement.

CUPE raised alarm about plans by the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) to invest in a private water company seeking to bid in the privatization auction of the

public water utility in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2021. The proposed acquisition and privatization of one of Brazil's largest public water utilities is both socially harmful and economically risky, and we called on the CPPIB to withdraw from this process immediately. We committed to continue to work closely with the union representing the water workers to offer solidarity and support as the privatization process continues.

In 2020-2021 we have spoken out in defense of activists and communities facing repression in Iran, Palestine, India, Burma-Myanmar, Nicaragua, Colombia, Haiti, Turkey, Belarus, and the Philippines. Governments in several of these countries have a history of systematically cracking down on trade union activity and dissent. In several statements, we raised concern regarding Canada's unhelpful or harmful foreign policy positions.

We have continued to work collaboratively and closely with several organizations who request funding to ensure their core work continues, and continue to engage in important work with several international formations and coalitions including:

- Common Frontiers, a coalition of labour and other civil society organizations focussing on solidarity and international trade and investment in the America's.
- International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG) work to protect the right to dissent and freedom of expression in Canada and around the world, particularly in the context of emerging anti-terror legislation.
- Americas Policy Group (APG), a coalition of trade unions and NGOs working together to challenge Canadian foreign policy and work in solidarity with social movements in South and Central America.

This work reflects the strategic directions and priorities identified by the Global Justice Committee over the past two years.

Respectfully submitted by,

### **The Members of the National Global Justice Committee:**

Natalie Webber ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Cheryl Burbidge  
Co-chair ..... Nova Scotia  
Jennifer LeBlanc ..... Prince-Edward-Island  
Serge Plourde ..... New-Brunswick  
Diane Coté ..... Quebec  
Farid C. Partovi ..... Ontario  
Lisa Chetwynd ..... Manitoba



Denise MacDonald ..... Saskatchewan  
Clayton Gordon ..... Alberta  
Andrew Ledger  
    Co-chair ..... British Columbia  
Louella Vincent..... HEU, British Columbia  
Marilou Jade Perreault..... Airlines Division

Charlene Armstrong .....CUSO International  
Connie Sorio ..... KAIROS  
Steve Stewart ..... CoDevelopment Canada  
Judy Henley ..... NEB Liaison  
Kelti Cameron..... Staff advisor

## NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The National Health and Safety Committee is pleased to present the following report to the Thirtieth Biennial CUPE National Convention. Since last convention, the committee continues to monitor and defend the occupational health and safety rights of CUPE members.

These past two years have seen tremendous swings in health and safety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, our focus is to provide members with tools, information, and education to fight back against concerted attacks on our working conditions and rights by many of our employers, and the lack of enforcement seen by the government.

The committee met virtually three times since the last convention. During this period, the committee has undertaken a wide range of activities, including working on the three priorities we identified at consisting of:

- Promoting health and safety is a top priority at all levels of the union;
- Supporting April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Day of Mourning activities;
- Assisting with the promotion, selection and presentation of the National Health and Safety Award;
- Urging locals to monitor all workplace fatalities and encouraging reporting to CUPE National;
- Providing feedback with regards to the development of the new CUPE workplace mental health kit.

As with our previous reports to convention, it is with great sadness that the committee reports on work-related deaths of CUPE members. Since the last convention, we have received notice that nine CUPE members were killed as the result of their work at the time this report was prepared. We mourn the loss of:

Debbie Onwu, ..... CUPE Local 4731, AB  
Victoria Salvan, ..... CUPE Local 2881, QC  
Warlito Valdez, ..... CUPE Local 1936, BC  
Ronaldo David, ..... CUPE Local 145, ON  
Jean-Géthro Joseph, ..... CUPE Local 2199, ON  
Roger Desautels, ..... CUPE Local 416, ON  
Agary Akaekeuchionwa, ..... CUPE Local 503, ON  
Mariyan Beile, ..... CUPE Local 2199, ON  
Kurtis Cleaveley, ..... CUPE Local 1000, ON  
Aurèle Poirier, ..... CUPE Local 4721, ON  
Tyler Isaac, ..... CUPE Local 1000, ON  
Jean Claude Dianzenza, ..... CUPE Local 204, MB  
Ingrid Salt, ..... CUPE Local 1328, ON  
Shihab Shams, ..... CUPE Local 2191, ON  
Antonio Gaerlans, ..... CUPE Local 145, ON  
Tom Thomas, ..... CUPE Local 5430, SK  
Debbie Korhonen, ..... CUPE Local 3440, ON

Mark Dennis, ..... CUPE Local 1334, ON  
Lisa Higginbotham, ..... CUPE Local 3730, SK

Each fatality reminds us that prevention of workplace illnesses and injuries together with strong government enforcement and swift and severe punishments for employers are the keys to stopping the death toll in our workplaces.

### **National Committee Activities – The past two years**

The following is a broad description of the activities that the National Health and Safety Committee participated in this term.

#### *COVID-19 pandemic*

As would be expected meetings of health and safety committee, the COVID-19 pandemic dominated the conversations. The committee discussed the impact of the pandemic on multiple aspects of work in relation to health and safety. This included work practices and the impact the pandemic has had on the precautionary principle.

#### *Mental health*

The committee spent considerable time focusing on how COVID-19 has accelerated the effects of many of the psychological and psychosocial hazards and has advised CUPE on resources and workplace practices.

#### *Violence prevention*

The committee has worked to advise CUPE on the many aspects of violence in the workplace, including reporting incidents of violence to the employer and workplace committee. They have advised the Research, Job Evaluation and Health and Safety Branch on additional resources for the violence prevention kit. The committee would also like to remind members of CUPE's "Not Part of the Job" response to violence.

#### *National Health and Safety Award*

Since the creation of the National Health and Safety Award in 1992, the National Health and Safety Committee has selected and recommended each award winner. The winner is selected by a sub-committee of the whole. We offer our sincerest congratulations to this year's worthy recipient.

*Highlighting the Day of Mourning – April 28<sup>th</sup>*

This year marked 37 years since CUPE’s National Health and Safety Committee first proposed the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured as a result of the workplace. The committee helps to promote CUPE’s National Day of Mourning materials – bookmarks, a workers’ statement, posters, and activity checklists – which are distributed to all locals through general mailings.

**Conclusion**

Despite the challenges of the last two years, the tenacity and drive of our members pushing for health and safety rights encourage us that CUPE will continue to be a leader in defending the health and safety of workers from coast to coast. We are confident that our union will continue to play a leading role in occupational health and safety in CUPE workplaces and the broader labour movement.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Health and Safety Committee:**

- Theresa Antle  
Co-chair .....Newfoundland and Labrador
- Denise Lewis..... Nova Scotia
- Cindy Ramsay ..... Prince Edward Island
- Connie Haines ..... New Brunswick
- Rose Mary Buote..... Ontario
- Tom Nicholls..... Ontario, Local 1000
- Richard Gasior ..... Manitoba
- Perry Turton ..... Saskatchewan
- Jared Matsunaga-Turnbull  
Co-chair ..... Alberta
- John Gibson..... British Columbia
- Karin Vic ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Ernest Green ..... NEB Liaison
- Troy Winters..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL HEALTH CARE ISSUES COMMITTEE

There are 190,000 CUPE members working in the health care system including in hospitals, long-term care, community health, home care, and Canadian Blood Services. CUPE health care members fight daily to protect their rights as workers and the rights of people in Canada to high-quality, publicly-funded, and publicly-delivered health care. The rise to power of right-wing governments in most provinces across the country and the failure of the Trudeau government to negotiate a new Health Accord tied to stable funding and national health care standards are two key factors in these struggles. These struggles have further intensified with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on already-strained and significantly underfunded health care services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on how Canada's long-term care system is in crisis. Deaths in long-term care homes make up 69 per cent of the overall COVID-19 deaths in Canada, a significantly higher proportion than the international average of 41 per cent. Long-term care workers are experiencing fatigue, burnout, staffing shortages, and more. CUPE launched a campaign on long-term care in May 2020 calling on the Trudeau government to fix the long-term care system.

CUPE's Health Care Issues Committee has been following the Cambie court case closely. Dr. Brian Day, founder and President of the private, for-profit Cambie Surgery centre in British Columbia, lost his *Charter* challenge last fall. He has been arguing that extra-billing provisions in the *Medicare Protection Act* violate Sections 7 and 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and claims that patients will be better off if they can "choose" to pay for medical services privately. This case poses a fundamental threat to Canada's publicly funded and delivered health care system. It could open the door to a system that allows people who can afford to pay to jump to the front of the line for medical care, causing waitlists to grow for the majority of the population.

The B.C. Supreme Court released an unprecedented 880-page verdict dismissing Dr. Day's *Charter* claims on September 10, 2020. However, Dr. Day filed an appeal. During the trial, Dr. Day won a separate injunction against British Columbia. The injunction restrained the government from enforcing sections of the province's health care law that prohibit extra-billing and the sale of private health insurance for publicly-insured services. In December 2020, the B.C. Court of Appeal granted an interim order extending the injunction until the appeal was decided. The appeal was heard in June 2021.

The committee believes that health care should be provided based on need, not the ability to pay. CUPE continues, along with other organisations to support the work and legal costs of the BC Health Coalition against Dr. Day and in defense of our public, single-payer health care system. Dr. Day's continued offensive against Medicare shows our efforts to protect and defend public health care must continue and are now more important than ever.

We are aware that COVID-19 has taken a physical and mental health toll on CUPE members who have been working hard on the frontlines of health care caring for people in Canada. Despite this, CUPE members continued to be at the forefront in urging the federal government to fix the broken long-term care system and enforce national standards that ensure proper staffing levels and high-quality care. CUPE continues to demand a national, public, universal, single-payer, and comprehensive pharmacare plan; fight back against the privatization of our public blood system, and address workplace violence against health care workers. We have pushed back against the austerity agendas of right-wing governments; the arbitrary movement of workers between unions; contracting out; and the construction of new P3 hospitals and long-term care homes.

The committee continues to serve the National Executive Board and CUPE members by providing recommendations, synthesizing information, building capacity among CUPE members, and supporting campaigns to improve working conditions and quality care in the health care sector.

### *Health Care Issues Committee Priority Issues*

#### *Long-Term Care*

Long-term care is in crisis across Canada which leaves residents and workers paying a high price. Because the conditions of care are the conditions of work, working conditions in long-term care homes must be improved to ensure vulnerable people in Canada receive the highest quality of care. To address the problems the sector faces, the committee is lobbying for:

- The inclusion of long-term care in our public health care system;
- National standards of care, including a minimum of 4.1 directly worked hours of care per resident day;
- Increased staffing levels;
- Increased and dedicated funding that is tied to standards;

- Standardized wages within provinces and between subsectors;
- The elimination of private, for-profit care and the contracting out of facility services;
- More publicly funded, owned, and operated facilities.

The committee has been engaged in promoting and raising the profile of CUPE's long-term care campaign launched in May 2020 based on the above demands. There have been approximately 12,000 letters sent to the federal government based on the campaign.

In May 2020, CUPE testified to the parliamentary Health Care Committee on the importance of bringing long-term care under the *Canada Health Act*.

#### *Health care funding*

When Medicare was first introduced, the federal and provincial governments each covered 50 per cent of the cost. Since then, the federal contribution to health care spending has declined to 22 per cent. Rising health care costs are placing our public health care system under stress, leading to increased wait times, increased privatization, and an inability to expand funded services. Budget 2021, the first federal budget in two years, noted that the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) for 2021-22 will be \$43.1 billion, or just over 22 per cent of total health care spending. To address the problems our health systems face as a result of inadequate funding, the committee is lobbying for:

- An increase to the Canada Health Transfer (CHT);
- National health care standards that are tied to funding;
- The investment of public funds in public health care services only;
- Increased health care spending financial transparency and accountability.

#### *Fighting back against privatization*

Our governments must uphold and enforce the *Canada Health Act* to protect and expand universal public health care, and guard it against private, for-profit interests. Privatization increases wait times, results in "cream skimming," and results in iniquitous access to needed services for those who can afford to pay. To fight back against the privatization of public health care services, the committee is focussed on:

- Ending the contracting out of health care services, such as laundry, dietary, and housekeeping;
- Ending the building of private, for-profit long-term care homes;

- Ending the building of public-private partnership health care facilities, including long-term care homes and hospitals;
- Ending the stigmatization of public services as less efficient and of lower quality.

#### *Health Care Issues Committee activities*

##### *The push for national pharmacare*

We are working closely with allies, such as the Canadian Health Coalition, to lobby for a national, public, universal pharmacare plan that would provide barrier-free access to safe and effective prescription drugs without user fees or copays. Canada is the only developed country in the world that has a universal health care system that does not include prescription drugs. People in Canada also pay the third-highest drug prices in the world.

Despite the Liberal Party's promise for pharmacare in the 2019 election, there was no new funding for pharmacare in the federal government's Budget 2021 and it only noted the funding for \$500 million for rare diseases announced in the 2019 Budget.

In February 2021, all but two Liberal MPs along with Conservative MPs voted to defeat the NDP's Bill C-213, the *Canada Pharmacare Act*. The defeated bill would have established a framework for negotiating a national, universal, single-payer prescription drug plan with the provinces.

CUPE participated in the Canada Health Coalition's Virtual Lobby on May 10-11, 2021. Members of the committee along with other union and CHC allies pressed the government hard on its commitments for universal, single-payer, public pharmacare during the virtual lobby.

##### *Collective bargaining and local issues*

Committee members have also been following bargaining trends across the country through our committee's virtual meetings. COVID-19 along with the political climate in many provinces make it difficult to bargain for significant improvements in monetary compensation. Although many employers have demanded concessions from members, Locals have pushed back and made important gains, such MOAs on vacations, pay continuance, bereavement leave and more in New Brunswick, wage parity for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in Nova Scotia, and reclassification impacting the design of the collective agreement.

CUPE's Health care leaders are fighting back on legislative assaults on public health care and workers' rights. In Alberta, Bill 30 allows for the privatization of health care

services and Bill 32 is a bill attempting to eliminate unions. In Ontario, Bill 175 will dismantle the Local Health Integration Networks and impact home care and Bill 195 extends the province's emergency orders and continues to override collective agreements. While Ontario's Bill 124 exempts 2/3 of long-term care homes from the one per cent wage cap the government imposed on public sector workers, workers in non-profit long-term care homes are subject to the wage gap. In New Brunswick, Bill 17 restricts the ability to achieve a fair collective agreement, the right to strike, and the ability to achieve fair binding arbitration.

In Ontario, the *Time to Care Act*, legislating a minimum of four hours of care in long-term care homes, was unanimously passed at second reading on October 29, 2020. The Ontario Council of Hospital Union has organized several workplace actions throughout the pandemic, including an N95 day of action.

Health care leaders have been fighting back the closure of health care facilities in Ontario, New Brunswick (as a result of plans to restructure the health care system), and other regions.

In Quebec, key issues were overtime and wage parity with the government's new paid PSW training program that promises \$26/hour while current workers earn \$22.5/hour.

Single site orders implemented by many provinces have impacted workers' wages and hours and committee members are working hard to address this.

Other issues that are impacting members country-wide have been exacerbated by the pandemic. They include fatigue, burnout, staff shortages, overwork and heavy workloads, dealing with COVID-19 outbreaks, PPE shortages, an inability to recruit and retain workers (especially in the long-term care sector) privatization and contracting out, workplace violence, and health care system restructuring.

### *Protecting and expanding our public blood system*

The committee has also been following how the private, for-profit plasma clinics are currently operating in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. Payment-for-plasma directly contravenes the recommendations of the Krever Commission, erodes our base of voluntary blood donors, and does nothing to improve the safety and security of Canada's plasma supply. British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec all prohibit paying people for their plasma.

On April 8, 2021, the Canadian Blood Services announced that, with funding from the provinces and territories, it will expand public, non-profit plasma collection clinics across Canada. This is a significant win for the committee's work.

Finally, the committee would like to thank the National Executive Board for its support for health care issues over the past two years, and the members and staff who work hard to defend working conditions in health care and protect our public health care system.

Respectfully submitted by,

### **The members of the National Health Care Issues Committee:**

- Theresa Gillam ..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Dianne Frittenburg  
Co-chair ..... Nova Scotia
- Rhonda Mills ..... Prince Edward Island
- Norma Robinson ..... New Brunswick
- Sharon Teare ..... New Brunswick
- Frédéric Brisson ..... Québec
- Pam Parks  
Co-chair ..... Ontario
- Anna Mutua ..... Ontario
- Debbie Boissonneault ..... Manitoba
- Sandra Seitz ..... Saskatchewan
- Brenda Reid ..... Alberta
- Michael McKinley ..... British Columbia
- Monica Thiessen ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Bill H. McMullan ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Sherry Hillier ..... NEB Liaison
- Emma Lui ..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL LIBRARY WORKERS' COMMITTEE

The National Library Workers' Committee is pleased to present the following report to the Thirtieth Biennial CUPE National Convention. The committee's mandate is to provide advice on how CUPE can support library workers in public, school, and academic libraries across Canada.

CUPE's 22,600 library workers provide services in communities across the country. Most library workers (85%) are women; racialized workers account for about 12 per cent of CUPE library members. CUPE represents the majority of unionized library workers in Canada with most members concentrated in British Columbia and Ontario.

Precarious employment in the sector is a major issue for union bargaining teams. More than half of CUPE library workers are either precariously employed or at risk of experiencing precarious employment. Precarity leads to an insecure and uncertain future for workers and their families. CUPE is committed to reversing this trend through collective bargaining and lobbying efforts with funders.

The committee identified three priorities for the period 2019-2021: the COVID-19 pandemic, health and safety, and countering government austerity.

### *Strategic Priority – The COVID-19 Pandemic*

Library workers are concerned that employers may view the pandemic as an opportunity to permanently lay off staff and reduce, restructure, and privatize services. The pandemic has contributed to, and in some cases has exacerbated, ongoing challenges in the sector; many of these challenges are issues for bargaining:

- chronic underfunding;
- chronic understaffing;
- employers forcing laid-off workers to reapply for positions once full services have resumed;
- employers refusing to fill vacancies and unilaterally changing work schedules;
- a lack of employer-provided personal protective equipment;
- a lack of employer-provided training on the proper use and disposal of cleansers and disinfectants; and
- employers refusing to wear face masks and becoming aggressive towards library workers.

Despite these challenges, the pandemic has shone a spotlight on the important work that library workers provide to help keep Canadians connected to each other and to their communities in a time of extreme social isolation. Libraries moved most of all services and

programming online to keep patrons and staff safe from exposure to the virus. Library workers reached out to marginalized and vulnerable populations, set up food banks, and delivered books and other library materials to child-care centres and other care facilities.

There are many more examples of library workers stepping up to support their communities during the pandemic. Library workers loaned Wi-Fi devices, laptops, and tablets at no cost to people living in shelters, transitional and community housing, and to those struggling to find employment or navigate the criminal justice system. Library workers are facilitating curbside pick-up of books, magazines, DVDs, and other materials. They're also phoning thousands of seniors to check on their health and wellness, and to assist with scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations.

### *Strategic Priority – Health and Safety*

Library workers interact daily with homeless people and people struggling with mental health issues and addictions. Many public libraries have become the new front lines for the opioid crisis. These realities can put workers' health and safety at risk.

We also interact with marginalized and vulnerable populations daily and are often called upon to perform duties more commonly associated with social work – but with little or no training in skills such as conflict resolution. Sometimes situations escalate, and workers are subjected to physical or verbal violence and harassment.

Incidents of workplace violence don't just happen; rather, workplace violence is a hazard with specific causes that is made more challenging due to repeated government attacks on library funding.

### *Strategic Priority – Government Austerity*

Libraries are a public good that is open to everyone. They promote democratic principles of equity, accessibility, and inclusion. Libraries are safe spaces for vulnerable and marginalized populations including the homeless and impoverished, people struggling with mental health and addictions, people with disabilities, racialized and Indigenous populations, and the LGBTQ2+ community.

Libraries help drive the economy. They help break the cycle of poverty by providing free access to the internet, job search, and skills development. Libraries also promote literacy development, an essential skill in job market.

Libraries are extremely popular with the Canadian public. The fact that many libraries issued thousands of new library cards in the midst of a global pandemic is evidence that library materials and services are in high demand. Libraries are a high priority for communities across the country as evidenced by successful campaigns by organized labour and concerned citizens to stop government cuts to library funding.

And yet, despite the popularity of libraries and the obvious benefits they provide, provincial and municipal governments have repeatedly attempted to defund libraries. For decades, governments have slashed budgets and implemented wage freezes in the public sector leading to job loss, increased workloads, services cuts, and increased risk of privatization. Funding cuts contribute to increase the risk of workplace violence when employer become frustrated with a perceived lack of service. The introduction of new technologies, including staffless libraries and self-service check-out, has led to job loss.

A damaged social safety net due to decades of underfunding means that an increasing number of people in Canada can't access the services they need. Funding cuts to social services have resulted in numerous people turning to their local libraries for help to find social supports. At the same time, the demand for information about immigration and job search assistance has increased.

The committee undertook the following activities over the past two years:

- Monitored how various levels of government and employers have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and how those choices have impacted library workers and bargaining agendas.
- Tracked developments in the emergence of staffless libraries, particularly in Toronto, Hamilton, and Essex County, Ontario.
- Helped develop materials and messaging for a social media campaign to celebrate Canadian Library Month and Canadian Library Workers' Day. *Library Workers Bring Your Library To Life!* is our campaign slogan.
- Collaborated with staff to develop materials and messaging for a national campaign to raise awareness of the important services that library workers provide in fulfillment of 2019 Convention Resolution No. 151. The campaign highlights key issues confronting the sector including the COVID-19 pandemic and other health and safety issues including workplace violence,

underfunding, precarious employment, and staffless libraries.

- Helped develop a bargaining resource to challenge the increase of precarious employment in the sector in fulfillment of 2019 Convention Resolution No. 152.
- Collaborated with staff to develop a bargaining fact sheet on precarious employment in the library sector.
- Assisted in the development of a bargaining fact sheet on workplace violence in the library sector.
- Helped develop a bargaining fact sheet on volunteerism in the library sector.
- Renewed its commitment to demonstrate solidarity with the LGBTQ2+ communities by adopting an equity lens in all aspects of the committee's work.

#### National Sector Council Conference: Library

Our first virtual meeting of the Library Workers' Sector was held in the fall of 2020. The meeting was co-chaired by Sarah Bjorknas, CUPE 23 Vice-President and Stéphane Simard, CUPE 306 Vice-President. Seventy-plus members participated in the sector meeting.

Members voted in real-time to affirm the sector's three priorities:

- COVID-19 pandemic
- Health and safety
- Government austerity

The sector's three priorities were reflected during a *Cross Canada Check-In* where members discussed current challenges and trends. Members pointed to the fallout from the pandemic including worry and stress, the rash of layoffs and accompanying increased workloads and pace of work, health and safety issues including the opioid crisis, and increasing precarious employment.

Members also participated in an hour-long, facilitated, small group discussion on the impacts of COVID-19 where they discussed current challenges and local strategies to support members during the pandemic and beyond.

The meeting ended with a discussion of success stories achieved in the sector during the past two years. Participants heard about the Toronto Public Library Workers' Union's (CUPE 4948) successful campaign opposing staffless libraries and the local's new, breakthrough language that provides two weeks of paid leave for trans-affirming care and another two weeks of paid leave for domestic violence or sexual assault leave.



Respectfully Submitted by,

**The Members of the National Library Workers' Committee:**

Stacey Lucas ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Suzanne Nelson ..... Nova Scotia  
Cindy MacDonald ..... Prince Edward Island  
Stéphane Simard ..... Quebec

Brandon Haynes

Co-chair ..... Ontario  
Debbi-Lynn Bateson ..... Saskatchewan  
Terrill Budd ..... Alberta  
Rose Jurkic  
Co-chair ..... British Columbia  
Rory Gill ..... NEB Liaison  
Joseph Leonard-Boland ..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL LITERACY AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS COMMITTEE

For CUPE, literacy includes essential skills for engaging at work, in the union, and communities. Our union is stronger when members have the skills to engage one another and to teach and learn the skills of activism, mobilizing, union leadership, financial management, community organizing, as well as basic reading and writing. This is all literacy. CUPE's National Literacy and Essential Skills Committee recognizes that literacy is a basic human right. It can help people overcome cycles of poverty and inequality and is a key determinant of health.

### **Literacy as a Human Right**

United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognizes literacy as a fundamental human right and the foundation for lifelong learning. Not only is literacy a human right in and of itself, but it's also a necessary tool that enables the pursuit of other human rights. Adopting a rights-based approach to a broad definition of literacy, recognizing the link between literacy, society, and the workplace brings into focus the urgency for the federal government to provide core funding and leadership in this sector.

### **Literacy during COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought huge changes to our lives, requiring many members to transition to digital ways of working very rapidly. Doing so highlighted gaps in digital literacy in our workplaces, and gaps in access to reliable high-speed internet at home. The pandemic also made it more challenging for some to reach out to our members who transitioned to working from home, or who didn't have reliable internet service. Closures of public libraries amplified these inequities, which rendered some workers and their needs invisible. Digital literacy training and access to digital services will remain critical after the pandemic.

### **Migration**

An increasing cross-section of our members have migrated for better jobs and quality of life, whether from province to province, rural to urban or internationally. Language and culture vary from one community and region to the next, but many of us share common experiences of migration for a better life.

Literacy supports smooth transitions and integration into new workplaces and communities. It supports understanding and building linkages across cultural divides, helps to overcome stereotypes and misconceptions, and promotes inclusion.

### **Clear Language**

Using clear language communication, including clear writing and speaking, helps ensure that all members

can be engaged and included, and can understand their own collective agreements.

Several members of CUPE's National Literacy and Essential Skills Committee have been trained in clear language writing and communication. These skills will help our locals be more inclusive of all members when we communicate. We will pass on the principles we learned to others, and we will promote CUPE's Clear Language Workshop in our regions.

### **The federal government as a player in literacy and essential skills**

CUPE is committed to advocate for a pan-Canadian conversation to create a national vision and long-term strategy for literacy, to work with federal government and community literacy partners in doing this work, and to ensure that CUPE has a strong voice.

Federal funds for literacy and essential skills announced in Budget 2021, were focused on employer training needs in the workplace. Workers' needs and voices need to be included in decisions about federal spending on workers training. Community literacy partners need reliable ongoing core funding, not unpredictable announcements and short-term program grants.

Federal leadership is necessary as our economy is changing - inequality, precarious work, climate change, automation and artificial intelligence are all having a big impact. The skills we need to get and keep good jobs are also changing. All these changes mean that workers need support. Quebec offers a positive example of the role governments can play in fostering a worker-centered life-long learning culture since it is the only province with an adult education and training policy and a legislative framework that mandates investment in training.

### **Literacy is a tool for change**

Literacy includes more than just reading and writing skills. It also includes the skills we need to understand and participate in the world around us: our communities, politics, our jobs and our union. We know that workers with literacy issues are less likely to be involved in their union. Union skills are literacy skills: from reading union materials, understanding how to get involved and make a difference, how politics works, to managing union finances, keeping good records, and how to write for and speak with members.

We work to reduce stigma and raise awareness about literacy issues in our regions. We work to encourage CUPE members and their families to access training

opportunities. We do this because literacy is an essential part of workers standing up for their rights, getting involved in their unions, and overcoming systemic inequalities.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Literacy and Essential Skills Committee:**

Dianne Martin .....Newfoundland and Labrador  
Jim Laverie..... Nova Scotia

Parise St-Onge  
Co-chair ..... New Brunswick  
Karyn Noble  
Co-chair ..... Prince Edward Island  
Carole Martin ..... Quebec  
Gobishankar Sooriyakumar ..... Ontario  
Patricia Gausman ..... Saskatchewan  
Scott Cush..... Alberta  
Alistair Maduray ..... British Columbia  
Shelley Bridge..... HEU, British Columbia  
Patrick Gloutney..... NEB Liaison  
Angella MacEwen..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES COMMITTEE

The National Persons with Disabilities Committee (NPWDC) works to promote and defend the rights of persons with disabilities, to improve their working conditions and accessibility within the workplace, our union and our communities. The committee seeks to raise the profile of CUPE members with disabilities through education and awareness initiatives and partners with other labour, national and community-based advocacy organizations to push for broader social, economic and political change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a bright light on the disparities in our society. It has made it abundantly clear that we must redouble our advocacy efforts for disability justice. People living with physical or mental disabilities face persistent systemic discrimination in the workplace, our union and our communities. They are far more likely than people without disabilities to live in poverty, work in precarious jobs, be underrepresented in positions of power and experience barriers to education, training and employment opportunities.

The pandemic has also made it clear that the excuses of employers have been just that—excuses. Persons with disabilities watched as the world became aware of much that they already knew, such as the fact that virtual/remote work is not only possible for some, but also possible for many. For years, accommodations for persons with disabilities, which involve virtual work, have been denied without no valid reason.

The committee is committed to our continuing work to advance the rights of all persons with disabilities. We are working toward a world where all persons with disabilities can fully participate in society and employment with true equity.

### *Disability and Work Conference 2020*

The Disability and Work in Canada 2020 Virtual Conference was held over four days, November 25 and 26, and December 1 and 2. The Disability and Work in Canada hosts an annual conference whose aim is to provide persons with disabilities, unions, employers and government with strategies and tools to increase the labour market participation of persons with disabilities.

The conference theme was “Strategy in Action – Pathways and Impacts” and it featured sessions titled “The Big Picture – Challenges and Opportunities”, “Progress in the Workplace”, “Strengthening Supports for Workers” and “Moving Forward Together” among others.

A highlight of the conference was a joint keynote address by Hassan Yussuff of the Canadian Labour Congress and Perrin Beatty of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce on the Canadian COVID-19 response.

### *Education*

The committee is committed to promoting the CUPE Education nine-hour duty to accommodate course. We believe that all CUPE members and staff should enroll in the course if they have not already done so. Promoting the nine-hour duty to accommodate course is one of the committee’s priority areas of work. They have been advocating in their regions to ensure that the course continues to be offered regularly and that member facilitators who deliver the course identify as people with a disability. They have also reached out to the CUPE Union Education Branch to ensure that these concerns continue to be in the forefront when education schedules are developed.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a great deal of hardship to CUPE members, especially those who were already marginalized in some way, it has also offered many free educational opportunities. Committee members participated in webinars on topics of interest including the *Accessible Canada Act*, the impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities, disability management in the workplace, and episodic disabilities to name just a few. The prevalence of these opportunities also serves to illustrate how much more inclusive our world can be by offering different methods of attendance.

### *Promotional materials*

Previous committees accomplished considerable work on the event audit tool, which is used to ensure CUPE events are accessible. Given the current pandemic situation, this committee felt the need to review the tool with a view to updating it to incorporate accessibility considerations for virtual work and meetings. Work is well underway towards this goal.

In addition, the committee has begun a review all of disability related fact sheets. Many of our CUPE fact sheets are in need of an update and committee members have begun a review of them for accuracy to keep them current. All required updates to the fact sheets are underway. Be on the lookout for these updated tools to assist you when dealing with disability related issues.

*International Day of Persons with Disabilities, December 3*

The 2020 theme of International Day of Persons with Disabilities was Invisible Disabilities. It was recognized by the committee with virtual swag, including Facebook photo frames, posters and Twitter hashtags.

*Accessible Canada Act*

The Act has now been in force for well over one year. The Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization CEO and Board of Directors were appointed in August 2019 and have begun the work to develop standards in several areas, including employment. The committee is dissatisfied with the fact that the Act will not be fully implemented until 2040 and with the fact that there is very little labour representation on the employment standards development technical committee. In fact, of the 20-member committee only two positions are for labour representatives.

The committee is monitoring the work of the standards development closely and is ready to critique and/or champion the standards as they are released. One area of improvement that has already been noted is that the standards will be completely voluntary. People with disabilities already know that allowing employers, and others, to participate voluntarily in any program to increase accessibility and employment opportunities for people with disabilities does not work. Standards must be mandatory in order for true inclusion to occur.

*Labour partnerships*

The committee had an opportunity to comment on the Canadian Labour Congress’ new disability rights resources. The Canadian Labour Congress released its new disability rights handbook, “*Doing Things Differently: A Disability Rights at Work Toolkit*” on December 3, 2020. It is an excellent resource for advocates and contains material on understanding Disabilities, the history of union fights for Disability rights, the rights of workers with Disabilities and building a Disability inclusive union. There are also checklists and guides for planning meetings, vocabulary, duty to accommodate and organizing.

The Canadian Labour Congress working group also received a presentation from Accessibility Standards Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada on the work of developing the standards. CUPE expressed its disappointment that so few labour voices have been included in the process.

*Diversity Vice-President seats*

The committee is working with other CUPE national human rights committees to ensure that people with disabilities are represented at the national level and on the National Executive Board.

*Human Rights Conference: Persons with disabilities caucus*

The committee would like to thank CUPE for organizing such a wonderful Human Rights Conference and for providing space during it for people with disabilities to caucus. It was an excellent opportunity for CUPE members with disabilities to discuss the conference material and the work of the committee.

The committee appreciates the support and assistance provided by CUPE leaders and staff.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Persons with Disabilities Committee:**

- Melissa Pender .....Newfoundland and Labrador
- Sandra Trenchard ..... Nova Scotia
- Leonard Crawford ..... Prince Edward Island
- Abby Bourque-Coyle ..... New Brunswick
- Sylvain Le May
- Co-chair ..... Québec
- Stacey Connor ..... Ontario
- Dawn Sabeski ..... Manitoba
- Laurie Hughes
- Co-chair ..... Saskatchewan
- Lottie Freijer-Poulsen ..... Alberta
- Pat Shade ..... British Columbia
- Stacey Castle ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Nan McFadgen ..... NEB Liaison
- Dawn Learning ..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL PINK TRIANGLE COMMITTEE

CUPE's National Pink Triangle Committee promotes and defends the rights and freedoms of Questioning, Two-Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQ2+) members in our union, workplaces, and communities in Canada and around the world.

Committee members work for change in partnership with other CUPE human rights committees, our sibling trade unions and other labour organizations, advocacy groups, and activists at regional, national, and international levels.

The committee appreciates all the necessary adaptations given the current global situation; we wish to acknowledge the efforts of the national union to pivot effectively to online meeting platforms to ensure human rights work continues throughout CUPE.

This report will provide an overview of developments in LGBTQ2+ activism, the committee's goals, and activities since last convention.

*"It's Got To Be About Safety": Public Services that Work for LGBTQ2+ Older Adults and LGBTQ2+ Workers in Canada*

CUPE has released a [new joint report](#) on creating safer public services for LGBTQ2+ workers and seniors. Sensing a gap, the committee put forward resolutions at the 2017 and 2019 conventions to raise awareness on LGBTQ2+ seniors' issues and to promote LGBTQ2+ competency in public services.

CUPE collaborated with Egale Canada and Carleton University on a joint research project to determine how to ensure safe and accessible public services for LGBTQ2+ workers and senior service users.

Building on interviews and focus groups with LGBTQ2+ public service workers and seniors across Canada, the study finds that working conditions for LGBTQ2+ workers are related to service conditions for LGBTQ2+ clients, and vice versa. The report identifies several promising practices to help workers and clients, including employment equity, cultural competency standards tied to funding and increasing LGBTQ2+ representation on governance boards.

It also calls on policy makers to address the specific concerns of marginalized groups within the LGBTQ2+ community, noting that the perspectives of racialized, Black, trans, Indigenous, persons with disabilities, and low-income LGBTQ2+ people are too often overlooked.

The report informs the committee's work is focussed on for the future: creating safer workplaces and safer public services.

Within that context, there are measures needed for LGBTQ2+ seniors – measures that are doable and will make services safer for everyone.

The report yields the following findings:

1. *LGBTQ2+ older adults and workers experience a 'barometer of safety' in accessing, using, and working in public services.*

LGBTQ2+ older adults and workers experience a spectrum of danger/safety in public services. LGBTQ2+ communities know some services are particularly dangerous, where older adults and workers have experienced physical and psychological assault. At the other extreme, some public services are well-known to offer high levels of access and safety, where LGBTQ2+ older adults and workers can be "out", gather in the community, and have working and living conditions that affirm their gender and sexuality. Most services and spaces fall somewhere in between.

2. *There is tremendous diversity among LGBTQ2+ older adults and workers. For public services to be accessible and safe, these differences need more attention. Racism, transphobia, and other systems of oppression need to be dismantled.*

LGBTQ2+ older adults are immigrants, Indigenous, Black, racialized, White, low income, high income, urban, rural, and more. Those who are trans, lesbian, gay, queer, two-spirit, intersex, bisexual and questioning face different realities and experiences. The diversity within and among LGBTQ2+ communities is striking, but most research evidence has been gathered from white, "out", educated, activist LGBTQ older adults and workers, with only some research reflecting other perspectives.

3. *Where LGBTQ2+ workers are safer, LGBTQ2+ older adults are safer*

Accessible, safe services for LGBTQ2+ older adults require environments where LGBTQ2+ workers are well represented and safe themselves. Older adults look for indications that an environment is safer; seeing and interacting with community members who are "out" at work is a critical sign. Further, LGBTQ2+ workers are consistent leaders for safer spaces. However, research shows that many public service workplaces are not safe or affirming for LGBTQ2+ workers. Gender and sexual

diversity initiatives geared to service users have positive ripple effects for LGBTQ2+ workers. While the relationship between service user experiences and working conditions is complex, the structural conditions affecting LGBTQ2+ safety and access affect everyone.

*4. Responsibility for making public services safer and accessible has been disproportionately placed on workers, with insufficient accountability placed on managers, owners, boards of directors, governments, and accreditation agencies.*

Governments, employers and accreditation and certification bodies rarely set enforceable standards on equity and human rights. Public services download responsibility for access and safety to workers through often insufficient training of questionable quality, or by relying on training from under-funded LGBTQ2+ volunteer, charitable and non-profit community groups and organizations. Some initiatives launch with promise but disappear when key personnel leave. Monitoring is patchy and initiatives often rely on staff working unpaid overtime. Higher quality in-person group training is being replaced by short online modules completed by workers individually. Training is often focused on personal “bias”, ignoring the structural dimensions affecting safety and access. These types of training have been found to be relatively ineffective, but allow organizations to “pink-wash”, or to advertise as a “positive space” without making the necessary investments to produce truly accessible, safe services. In fact, pink-washing may increase risks by encouraging LGBTQ2+ older adults to be “out” when it is not safe. Training must be high-quality, properly funded and accompanied by goals, monitoring, and accountability at all organizational levels.

*5. There are promising practices and leading organizations in Canada that offer ways forward toward access and safety for LGBTQ2+ older adults and workers. We need to bring these practices together.*

An environmental scan revealed some leading organizations and many promising practices. However, few organizations or practices address both the conditions for workers and conditions for service users. It is important to consider the links between conditions. Some public services have committed the resources needed to make important and necessary changes to advance access and safety. Changes are visible in a range of areas, from governance and accountability to service delivery, physical environments, websites, working conditions, programming, outreach, training, performance reviews, program evaluations, and more. Many organizations are striving to learn, integrate and maintain an anti-oppressive

approach. There are many models for building safer spaces in the public sector.

Read the report: [“It’s Got To Be About Safety”: Public Services that Work for LGBTQ2+ Older Adults and LGBTQ2+ Workers in Canada.](#)

*Pride events*

CUPE is supporting Pride events online with colour swag with update inclusive colours and the slogan “Front Line Pride”. We are also working with Dignity Network Canada and Fierté Canada Pride to support innovative events and panels that speak to human rights issues in conjunction with Pride organizations throughout the country.

*Free Cihan Erdal!*

CUPE 4600 member Cihan Erdal is a Queer Turkish Canadian student pursuing his PhD in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University in Ottawa. Cihan has been arbitrarily and unlawfully imprisoned in Turkey since September 25, 2020, on baseless allegations. It is not a crime to be anti-militarist, or to oppose war anywhere in the world. Cihan is a prisoner of conscience and a political hostage in Turkey.

The committee met with Cihan’s spouse, Omer Ongun to better support the campaign to free Cihan. CUPE’s web campaign continues to draw support to pressure the federal government to take action to free Cihan.

Cihan calls himself an activist academic, researching not for the youth but with the youth. With his own words here is how Cihan sees this; “In the new century’s global world, young people, the poor, middle class, workers, and other excluded populations have suffered most under neoliberal regimes. What is most notable, is that young people with diverse social and cultural contexts—low-income, poor, unemployed, unemployable, student, or worker youth—have been tremendously exposed to the assaults of neoliberal reason.”

Cihan was detained seven months ago in Istanbul where he was conducting his research. He was kept in a basement cell of a detention center with no air circulation and daylight for eight days before he was imprisoned and transferred to Ankara. Cihan was kept in solitary confinement in Ankara for one month. He could only leave his cell for one hour every day. Access to books, school materials, and legal assistance was strictly restricted.

According to International Trade Union Confederation reports, Turkey is among the 10 worst countries in terms of labour rights. Union events and demonstrations are often

banned, and the detention of trade unionists is a common occurrence. This was the case before COVID-19, now it is even more.

Increasing authoritarianism and violation of human and worker rights are not only towards trade unionists. LGBTQ2+ Pride marches are banned. Turkey has one of the world's highest numbers of femicides. There is a near-total absence of space for independent political representation and societal debate regarding collective minority rights – and much else. The main party standing up for minority interests – the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) – has been eviscerated. Its leaders and many members are in jail on charges of terrorism without due process or convincing evidence.

More than 30 international organizations and 2,500 academics released solitary statements for Cihan. More recently, the European Parliament explicitly highlighted Erdal's case when formally condemning Turkey's ongoing repression of opposition party members, as well as other politicians, activists, lawyers, and political prisoners and the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, made inquiries to Turkey.

*What we can do*

CUPE and the National Pink Triangle Committee encourage locals to review their collective agreements and to prepare and motivate bargaining proposals to include these human rights protections in their next round of collective bargaining. It is not just words in a document, it is the energized equality work that is possible when CUPE members ratify their equality-focused bargaining demands, and new protections in their collective agreements. These tools give our stewards the language they need to protect CUPE members from discrimination and harassment into the future.

Trans persons continue to face severe barriers in accessing health care services and often risk their personal safety in using gender-specific washrooms and changing facilities. CUPE locals should be encouraged to initiate discussions

with employers about creating safer spaces by providing gender-neutral or gender-inclusive washrooms and changing facilities.

The Canadian Labour Congress has created a resource for trans inclusion that is accessible for workers and unions: <https://canadianlabour.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WorkersInTransition-Guide-EN.pdf>

In many regions across the country, the high costs of transition-related surgeries, hormone treatments, and other procedures necessary for gender transition are not covered under public health budgets. There is still much work to be done to convince federal, provincial, and territorial governments that Trans Canadians must be able to access the medical procedures necessary to align their physical being with their lived identity.

The committee gratefully acknowledges the support and assistance provided by CUPE leaders and staff.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Pink Triangle Committee:**

- Dan Murphy ..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Dwayne Tattrie ..... Nova Scotia
- Brenda Doucette ..... Prince Edward Island
- Todd Hill
- Co-chair ..... New Brunswick
- Mike Barney ..... Québec
- Nancy Hanschmann
- Co-chair ..... Ontario
- Susan Gapka ..... Ontario
- Gina McKay ..... Manitoba
- Louise Watson ..... Saskatchewan
- Joyce Griffiths ..... British Columbia
- Tyrel Proulx ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Tyson Conrod ..... Airline Division
- Nan McFadgen ..... NEB Liaison
- Tara Paterson ..... Senior Officer
- Bill Pegler ..... Staff Advisor



## NATIONAL POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The National Political Action Committee was first established in 2003 and makes recommendations through the National Officers to the National Executive Board on CUPE political action. Committee members work collaboratively with national staff and officers to increase political action capacity within CUPE.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the work of the committee requiring a readjustment. While the committee has not marched physically side by side, they have found ways to remain political in other ways.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the committee has continued to work on increasing CUPE member and staff activism within the NDP. In the Spring and Summer of 2021, the committee advised CUPE on their plan for the more than likely upcoming federal election in the Fall of 2021 and are charting plans for CUPE's engagement strategy.

In Spring 2021, committee members were part of a contingent of more than 60 activists from coast to coast that participated in virtual lobby days organized by the Canada Health Coalition. These lobby days focused on campaigning for a universal pharmacare program.

Members of the committee received a presentation from CUPE's economist Angella MacEwen on the impacts of COVID-19 and how to chart the path towards a fair recovery for all.

Since 2019, members have worked on a variety of local campaigns. Members of the committee are putting their names forward as a candidate for their local provincial elections.

Committee members are politically engaged in their regional issues and structures as well as taking leadership positions in fights such as supporting the CUPE National fixlongtermcare.ca campaign. Committee members are also active in their labour councils, fighting for affordable housing, against public-private partnerships, and privatization.

The National Political Action Committee members have reviewed the resolutions that were passed during the last national convention that were related to political action. Members continue to discuss and strategize around integrating the positions passed at the last convention into CUPE's political work and they echo that work in the regions.

Respectfully submitted by,

### **The Members of the National Political Action Committee:**

Jason Green.....Newfoundland and Labrador  
Tammy Jakeman.....Nova Scotia  
Tena Creamer..... Prince Edward Island  
Tammy Nadeau ..... New Brunswick  
Stephen Doucet..... Quebec  
Kyle Hoskin ..... Ontario  
Fred Shilson..... Ontario  
Daniel Richards  
Co-chair ..... Manitoba  
Marcia Ray  
Co-chair .....Saskatchewan  
Lee-Ann Kalen ..... Alberta  
Michelle Waite ..... British Columbia  
Rhonda Bruce..... HEU, British Columbia  
Kruti Sutaria..... Airlines Division  
Gord Delbridge ..... NEB Liaison  
Charlie Brenchley ..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION TASK FORCE

More than 70,000 CUPE members work in the post-secondary education sector. We are instructors, researchers, academic workers, and support staff working in grounds and building maintenance, trades, libraries, food services, caretaking, information technology, clerical support, and administration.

The CUPE National Post-Secondary Education Task Force was created in 2011 to provide advice to the National Executive Board on issues such as advocating for publicly accessible post-secondary education, protecting workers in the post-secondary sector, and fighting privatization and corporatization of higher education. The Task Force is pleased to present this report to National Convention.

Over the past 18 months, the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the sector. Many locals have had to deal with layoffs, furloughs, and temporary leaves, and reassignments as post-secondary institutions shut down business-as-usual. Academic workers and support staff were forced to adapt with no notice to teaching online and working from home, while support staff who remained on campus or returned to campus had new safety protocols to navigate.

The pandemic had a significant impact on post-secondary budgets. While some institutions maintained steady enrollment in online courses, others experienced a decline, especially in the enrollment of international students. Between the loss of tuition revenue and the additional costs of COVID safety protocols, many universities and colleges faced deficits. Some had sufficient reserves to cover the shortfall while others proceeded to cost-cutting and lay-offs.

The post-secondary sector received very minimal support from provincial governments. The federal government, meanwhile, made the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and Employment Insurance Work-Sharing benefits available to post-secondary workers but refused to extend the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to public post-secondary institutions which would have allowed universities and colleges to keep workers on the payroll rather than laying them off.

The federal government also provided support to students in the form of the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) and a pause on student loan repayment. However, the amount that students could receive through the CESB was significantly less than what other Canadians could receive through the CERB even though the cost of living for students is the same as for everyone else. The government also significantly mishandled its proposed

Canada Student Service Grant program, which resulted in \$900 million that had been promised to students not being spent.

We have already seen some universities and colleges respond to the pressures of the pandemic by trying to privatize services or drive down wages and working conditions. As the pandemic ends, there is a real risk of this trend continuing. If federal and provincial governments are obsessed with austerity as the solution to the debt accumulated to the pandemic, the already considerable underfunding of the post-secondary sector will likely worsen. This will in turn lead to more precarious work, more contracting out, and ever-increasing rates of tuition and debt for students. Unfortunately, some provinces are already imposing devastating funding cuts on colleges and universities.

We also risk seeing a continued increase in tuition rates and reliance on international student tuition rates in order to make up for the shortfall in public funding, along with further appeals to corporate contracts and wealthy donors to meet budgetary requirements.

Now, more than ever, we need to fight for our vision of a publicly-funded, high-quality post-secondary education system with adequate funding and decent wages and working conditions.

Over the past two years, the Task Force has addressed three main priorities:

- Building support for an accessible, affordable, adequately-funded, high-quality post-secondary sector with decent working conditions.
- Equity in the post-secondary sector for workers and students.
- Sexual harassment and sexual violence in the post-secondary sector.

### *Making post-secondary education a national priority*

Post-secondary education makes an important contribution to the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of individuals, communities, and our country. Yet for decades, our federal government has failed to make post-secondary education a priority. Instead, they have allowed tuition rates to rise, student debt to skyrocket, and vulnerable learners to fall through the cracks of a poorly designed financial aid system. As a result of this constant underfunding, corporate influence in the post-secondary sector is growing and workers are being made increasingly

precarious. CUPE has long called for governments to reverse this trend and make high-quality, accessible post-secondary education available to all Canadians, limit the influence of corporations over post-secondary education, and provide greater fairness and security for workers.

In the past, we have conducted our own CUPE campaigns to raise the profile of this issue, including most recently the *Our Time to Act* campaign.

But now, recognizing the urgency of the moment, CUPE has joined forces with our allies in the sector for a national, multi-partner, multi-year campaign to promote our vision of high-quality, accessible, publicly-funded post-secondary education. Together, CUPE, the Canadian Alliance of University Teachers, the Canadian Federation of Students, the National Union of Public and General Employees, and the Public Service Alliance of Canada represent more than one million students and workers.

During phase one of the campaign, the Education for All Coalition is raising public awareness of the need to invest in post-secondary education and engaging public support through online events, social media shareables, digital ads, and research reports. As we move into phase two, supporters will be empowered to engage in advocacy locally and nationally through conversations with Members of Parliament, local leaders, and friends and family.

You can learn more about the *Education for All* campaign or sign up to be a supporter at [educationforall.ca](http://educationforall.ca).

### *Equity in the post-secondary sector*

In light of the underlying inequities exposed by the pandemic, as well as the high-profile conversations on anti-Black, anti-Asian, and anti-Indigenous racism that have taken place over the past year, the Task Force adopted equity in the post-secondary sector as one of our priorities for this term.

We spent time thinking about what equity means for both students and workers in the post-secondary sector. For workers, the issue of racism is directly connected to the topics of privatization, contracting out, and precarious work since it is most often racialized and Indigenous workers or newcomers to Canada who are more likely to be in precarious or contracted out positions. The Task Force was challenged to connect our anti-racism work to the fight for decent work through Decent Work campaigns on our campuses. Being anti-racist requires us to ask ourselves whose work is valued and how we can improve the wages and working conditions of those at the bottom.

We also recognize that the systemic underfunding of the system by provincial and federal governments has led to universities and colleges becoming reliant on international students who pay extremely high rates of tuition. The lack of regulation regarding international tuition rates and recruitment of international students has created a situation where international students are being exploited, recruited with false promises of jobs or permanent residence status, and are often working as cheap, migrant labour in unfair conditions. This situation underscores the need for adequate and sustainable public funding.

Finally, the Task Force considered the urgent need for Indigenization of the post-secondary sector to promote reconciliation, to ensure equitable access for Indigenous students and workers, and to incorporate Indigenous history, knowledge, and scholarship into post-secondary curriculum and practices. The Task Force discussed what Indigenization actually looks like in practice, how our local unions can support Indigenization efforts, and what tools and resources CUPE members need to better promote and support Indigenization of post-secondary education. For those interested in exploring this topic further, there is a fact sheet on Indigenization on the CUPE's Website.

### *Sexual violence and harassment*

As a result of recent incidents of sexual violence and harassment at universities and colleges across the country, and as mandated by law in several provinces, many universities and colleges are developing and implementing institutional policies to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual violence and harassment.

CUPE members have identified a need for more resources and tools to engage with institutional policies and to support post-secondary members who have experienced or been impacted by sexual violence and harassment.

In response, the Task Force has reviewed and provided input on a series of tools for the sector, including:

- A checklist, with an accompanying explanatory guide, on institutional policies from a union perspective.
- A fact sheet on the processes available to a member who has experienced sexual violence and harassment in the post-secondary setting and what the local union's responsibility is with regard to each option.
- A fact sheet on accommodations for members who have been affected by sexual violence and harassment.
- A fact sheet on how to provide a trauma-informed response to sexual violence and harassment on campus.
- A fact sheet on how local unions and union members can contribute to prevention efforts.

- A quick guide for members who want to know what their options are if they have been the subject of an incident of violence and harassment or what their responsibilities are if they have received a disclosure about an incident.

These tools are available for download or order on the CUPE Website.

The Task Force would like to thank the National Executive Board for its support for post-secondary issues over the past two years, and the members and staff who worked hard in challenging conditions to support high-quality post-secondary education, to defend our public post-secondary education system, and to improve working conditions for our members.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Post-Secondary Education Task Force:**

Steven Smith  
 Co-chair ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
 Carmel Forde ..... Nova Scotia  
 Ashley Clark ..... Prince Edward Island  
 David Simao ..... Ontario  
 Bob Jones ..... Saskatchewan  
 Vanee Narayanan  
 Co-chair ..... Alberta  
 Tiffany McLaughlin ..... British Columbia  
 Karen Ranalletta ..... British Columbia  
 Leonard Gallant ..... NEB Liaison  
 Chandra Pasma ..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

CUPE represents approximately 27,400 members in the transportation sector, including workers in airlines, airports, ferries, port authorities, rail, roads and highways, as well as public and private transit systems. Many of CUPE's transportation workers work on the frontline and have provided critical and essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic. CUPE transportation members have fought daily to protect their health and safety rights and the rights of Canadians to high-quality, publicly-funded, and publicly-delivered transit. These struggles have intensified particularly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and transportation workers' inability to work from home.

### *COVID-19 and CUPE transportation members*

CUPE's Airline Division makes up the largest portion of our transportation workers with over 15,000 flight attendants working in 10 airlines. At the beginning of the pandemic, CUPE's Airline Division fought for personal protective equipment (PPE) onboard aircrafts. Flight attendants work in confined spaces and were interacting with hundreds of passengers per day with no PPE or reduced services. It took many weeks for Transport Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to recognize the need for medical-grade PPE and reduced service levels for flight attendants. Today, flight attendants face anti-mask passengers, increased violence, and much intolerance on board.

The pandemic has left thousands of flight attendants on layoff or furloughed with uncertain futures despite thousands working around the clock at the height of the pandemic to repatriate Canadians. CUPE has worked closely with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) during the pandemic to lobby the government for supports that prioritize workers first. The airline sector contributes \$51.4 billion to Canada's GDP and supports approximately 633,000 jobs – many of those jobs are unionized. Despite numerous attempts to meet and discuss member's issues, the government ignored any attempt to collaborate and has instead met with airlines privately behind closed doors. Negotiations behind closed doors without union participation are surely not in workers' or the public's best interest.

CUPE members working for transit agencies have continued to work every day of the pandemic moving essential workers to and from work. Like many others, transit workers across the country also fought for medical-grade PPE, plexiglass barriers, and reduced capacity on buses, rail, and trains.

An unprecedented drop in fares has hugely affected operating budgets for transit agencies across the country. CUPE and other unions successfully lobbied all levels of government for additional funding, securing both temporary and permanent funding. CUPE continues to advocate for additional funding to ensure that public transit is safeguarded – in order for an inclusive recovery, publicly owned and operated transportation is essential.

### *Transportation Committee activities*

Over the past two years, the committee undertook the following activities:

- Resolution 223 – Motorists passing school buses illegally
  - In New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, CUPE locals have been lobbying the provincial government for dual stop signs at both the front and back of the bus along with cameras.
  - In Nova Scotia, CUPE uses its “Bus Safety Awareness Week” to publicize/remind the public on this as well as other issues.
- In Quebec, CUPE is fighting two pieces of provincial legislation aimed at reducing municipal labour costs which have significantly eroded collective bargaining rights for Quebec transit drivers. Bill 110 sets a hard deadline that collective agreements must be negotiated by with a mandated five-year duration, and Bill 15 requires municipal workers to retroactively contribute toward one-half the cost of their pensions, regardless of their collective agreements, and share the cost of accumulated deficits. It also caps pension contributions at 18 per cent of payroll and allows municipal governments to freeze cost-of-living increases.
- In British Columbia, CUPE was successful in campaigning for transportation funding. The Premier has committed to completing extensions to the Skytrain.
- Collaborated with the National Health and Safety Committee on health and safety issues such as impairment, ergonomics, and fatigue.

### *Collective bargaining and local issues*

- Members from New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Alberta identified that drivers experience issues with capturing license plates due to drivers only having a back plate. British Columbia reported issues with courts being reluctant to use camera footage.

- Quebec reported that the province continues to agree to public-private partnerships when building transportation infrastructure. This is hugely concerning and problematic as provinces grapple with funding due to COVID-19. Many of the transit operators' collective agreements expire this year so the locals are in bargaining. They are facing concessions due to a lack of funding. Bargaining has been deemed essential in the province.
- Airline members face an incredibly difficult future with predicted lengthy recovery periods ranging from three to five years. Most of the collective agreements allow for lengthy recall periods, but it is unclear whether the government intends to extend Employment Insurance (EI) or the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) further. Many who are laid off have had to find other work or go back to school. CUPE continues to call for federal relief that focuses on workers, not corporations.

*Protecting and expanding our public transportation system*

The committee has heard about potential privatization projects different levels of government intend to push. These projects such as the use of micro-transit and the push to privatize our airports are being sold under the guise of saving cost due to COVID-19 spending. We know that the privatization of public assets only benefits for-profit corporations. A fair recovery means adequate funding of

public transit. Public transit results in environmental benefits, green jobs, and travel for low-income workers, essential workers, seniors, and people with disabilities. CUPE is working with labour allies and other organizations like the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and RideFair to continue to advocate for dedicated funding and ensure that public transit is a priority from all levels of government. Without proper funding, service levels may be cut, and the threat of privatization becomes greater.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Transportation Committee:**

- Phillip Collins..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Jennifer Cox ..... Nova Scotia
- Joey Kelly  
Co-chair ..... New Brunswick
- Anthony Latour ..... Quebec
- Franco Quintiliani..... Ontario
- Tammy Gulle .....Manitoba
- Troy Killam ..... Alberta
- Tony Rebelo .....British Columbia
- Julie Roberts  
Co-chair ..... Airline Division
- Wesley Lesosky ..... Airline Division
- Brien Watson .....NEB Liaison
- Alexandra Chang Pinosa .....Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

The activism and resilience of CUPE women helped get us through a difficult two years. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted everyone. Women workers were among the hardest hit, especially those who also face other forms of marginalization including Black, Indigenous and racialized women, newcomers, women with disabilities, young women, women with low pay, and LGBTQ2+ people.

Many CUPE women struggled during the pandemic. The ongoing experiences of oppression, discrimination, and harassment that many of us were already experiencing worsened and in some cases came from within our own union. At times, the challenges some of us encountered felt insurmountable.

But as a small group of CUPE women fortunate to serve on the National Women's Committee, we never gave up. We found new ways to connect and organize when we couldn't gather in person. We supported those of us on the frontlines, those forced to take on additional care work, and those facing violence from police, employers, co-workers and (ex)partners. We fought to make our workplaces, union and communities safer. Throughout it all, our commitment to improving the lives of all women workers remained paramount.

The work of the Committee is perhaps even more urgent now than ever. We hope that every woman at this convention feels safe, supported and empowered to contribute to the work of the union – though we know that far too many may not. Sexism, misogyny, racism, ableism, colonialism, homophobia and transphobia exist everywhere, including within CUPE. As we reflect on all we accomplished this cycle, we also re-commit to fighting for the rights of all CUPE women and to dismantling the systems that keep too many of us down. As always, the work continues and we will persist.

### Context

For the first time in decades, progress towards economic and social justice for women has reversed. As a whole, women bore the brunt of pandemic related job losses. Over 1.5 million women were laid off at the start of the pandemic with young, low-wage, precariously employed and racialized women being the most vulnerable. Those who were left on the frontlines in health care, social services, and education – sectors where women are the majority of workers – faced increased risks of contracting the coronavirus, higher exposure to violence and harassment, and inadequate access to PPE and paid sick days.

Many women experienced setbacks at home as well. Those in abusive relationships spent much of the last 18 months trapped inside with their abuser. With schools closed for long stretches in much of the country, women took on the lion's share of unpaid care work. As a result, many were forced to reduce their hours or quit paid work altogether. Between February and October 2020, over 20,000 women in Canada left the labour force. In the same period, 68,000 men joined it.

Throughout all this, Anti-Asian racism intensified, culminating in the murder of eight massage parlour workers in March 2021. Efforts to exclude trans women from feminist organizing persisted, resulting in more visible and vocal transmisogyny. Black and Indigenous women continued to face violence at the hands of police and service providers. And the racism that many Indigenous people experience in the health care system was exposed in October 2020 when Joyce Echaquan, an Atikamekw mother of seven, died in hospital after filming health care staff degrading her and ignoring her pleas for help.

But workers, activists and organizers pushed back and fought for justice. The movement for Black lives swept the globe in the summer of 2020 and efforts for meaningful reconciliation and decolonization continue to gain steam. The Calls for Justice from the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people serve as a useful guide for all peoples in Canada to work towards reconciliation and end colonial gender-based violence. Finally, demands to #StopAsianHate are amplifying online and in communities, though hate crimes directed towards Asian people have yet to decrease.

On the legislative front, feminists won several major victories: federal proactive pay equity legislation, the beginnings of a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence, paid domestic violence leave in nearly every province and territory, and a \$30 billion commitment to build affordable and accessible child care.

A spotlight has also been shone on sexual violence and harassment within our own union. We have much work to do to make CUPE a truly safe space for women. As the National Women's Committee, we are hopeful that all CUPE members, including CUPE's leadership, will commit to this work.

### *National Women's Committee activities*

Since Convention 2019, the Committee met eight times. Our first in-person meeting, which was scheduled for March 2020, unfortunately, had to be canceled as a result

of the pandemic. We transitioned our meetings online. We realized, however, that the new online format created barriers to participation for some of our committee members. For example, several committee members were unable to participate in the first four meetings due to shift work and employer book-off rules. We are proud to say that CUPE made union leave more accessible which allowed more of our members to fully participate in our meetings. We continue to develop creative ways to make our online organizing engaging and accessible.

At the beginning of our term, we identified three major priorities for our committee. These were: helping to develop, learn from and enact the Anti-Racism Strategy; addressing sexual harassment and violence; and, advocating for Diversity Vice-President positions in CUPE in order to advance equity in our union. Our work is often expansive, however, and we ended up working on many issues in addition to these priorities. Below is a summary of our activities.

#### *Anti-Racism*

- Held a session dedicated to Anti-Racism where we explored settler colonialism and ancestry, the triangle of oppression, whiteness, white privilege, and white supremacy.
- Contributed to the development of CUPE's Anti-Racism Strategy and offered feedback on the Draft Anti-Racism Strategy.
- Participated in online and in-person activism for Black Lives Matter, Land Back and Stop Asian Hate throughout 2020 and 2021.

#### *Sexual Violence and Harassment*

- Advocated for ourselves and other women who face sexual harassment and violence at work and in the union.
- Participated in consultations on the alternate process for CUPE's trial procedure to ensure that the process was trauma-informed, survivor-centered, intersectional and anti-oppressive.
- Educated members in our locals and divisions about the alternate process.
- Participated in local and provincial bargaining, grievances and political action campaigns to address workplace violence and harassment.
- Advised and promoted CLC research on violence and harassment at work.
- Advised on policies and actions related to internal union human rights harassment and violence.

#### *Gender-Based Violence*

- Advised on the development of a peer support program within CUPE for members affected by violence and harassment.
- Advocated for an Inquiry into the Nova Scotia massacre and participated in vigils.
- Organized virtual December 6 events and joined events to commemorate the Montreal Massacre, and supported other actions during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.
- Organized and participated in online vigils and other memorials, rallies and events to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people on February 14<sup>th</sup>, May 6<sup>th</sup> and October 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Advocated for a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence.
- Fought for legislation and collective agreement language on paid leave for survivors of domestic violence and raised awareness on the increased risks of domestic violence during the pandemic.
- Provided support and fundraising for local women's shelters and agencies especially as they had to adapt during COVID.

#### *Human Rights*

- Participated in and promoted CUPE's National Human Rights Conference.
- Raised awareness about the human rights impacts of COVID-19 including the disproportionate rates of infection in Black, Indigenous and racialized communities and additional vulnerabilities faced by women with disabilities, newcomers, and LGBTQ2+ people.
- Advocated for legislation to protect workers' human rights during the pandemic including access to paid sick days and PPE.
- Pushed governments and employers to address the gendered impacts of COVID-19 including the undue burden of unpaid care work on women.
- Encouraged locals and divisions to get involved in union-community coalitions on disability rights, migrant rights, anti-Islamophobia and other campaigns.
- Continued to play a leadership role in diversity and human rights councils and committees at the local, workplace and broader levels.

#### *Strong Public Services*

- Supported CUPE's campaign to #FixLongTermCare.
- Fought for safety and protection for workers in gendered sectors impacted by the pandemic such as



social services, education and for-profit long-term care.

- Campaigned for child care across the country, through petitions, social media, lobbying MPs, virtual rallies, webinars and other actions.
- Promoted CUPE’s research on safer public services for LGBTQ2+ workers and older adults.
- Fought for collective bargaining rights in sectors where the vast majority of workers are women.

*Wage Discrimination*

- Through bargaining and political action, fought for pay equity and wage gains for low-paid and precariously employed women, including hazard pay and other benefits for those working on the frontlines during the pandemic.
- Participated in provincial pay equity coalitions and campaigns for a living wage and higher minimum wage.
- Worked as organizers and supported local and provincial campaigns against wage restraint, concessions and two-tier bargaining.

*Gender Diversity*

- Continued to educate ourselves and other members about transphobia and transmisogyny and provided advice on materials demonstrating our support for trans inclusive feminism.
- Advised on CUPE’s Gender Diversity Bargaining Guide.
- Distributed CUPE’s info sheets: Allies on Gender Diversity and Pronouns.

*International Women’s Day (IWD)*

- Organized virtual IWD events on March 8 under the theme of *No Single-Issue Struggle*.

- Produced a series of bookmarks and other materials for IWD reflecting the theme.

*National Convention*

- Drafted resolutions on issues affecting women, for our locals and divisions to consider submitting to this national convention.
- Coordinated with other national human rights committees on resolutions of shared concern.

The committee would like to thank the National Executive Board for its support over the past two years, and all of the members and staff who keep human rights front and center in the union’s activities

Respectfully submitted by,

**The members of the National Women’s Committee:**

- Esther Mansfield .....Newfoundland and Labrador
- Sharon Hubley  
Co-chair ..... Nova Scotia
- Patricia Perry ..... Nova Scotia
- Karla Carnegie-MacDonald..... Prince Edward Island
- Christine Hawkes..... New Brunswick
- Joëlle Ravary..... Quebec
- Valerie Joseph ..... Ontario
- Mylene Holmes ..... Manitoba
- Sheri-Ann Vezina ..... Saskatchewan
- Gina Puntil ..... Alberta
- Amber Leonard..... British Columbia
- Sheryl Burns ..... British Columbia
- Valerie Sailer  
Co-chair ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Judy Gicho ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Barb Nederpel ..... NEB Liaison
- Tara Paterson ..... Staff Advisor

## **NATIONAL WORKING COMMITTEE ON RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY (THE NATIONAL RAINBOW COMMITTEE)**

The National Working Committee on Racism, Discrimination and Employment Equity also known as the National Rainbow Committee, was established by the National Executive Board in April 1988. The committee promotes and defends the human rights of all Black and racialized people within our local unions and throughout our local, national, and international communities. The committee members are also allies to Indigenous Peoples and other equity-seeking groups that include women, persons with disabilities, and the LGBTQ2+ communities. The National Rainbow Committee keeps the National Executive Board apprised of all issues regarding racism as it plays a significant role in advancing racial discrimination which includes the global rise of hate and its impact on our members, their families, and communities.

The committee acknowledges and salutes the ongoing support and commitment provided by our National Officers and members of the National Executive Board in our fight for freedom from racism and the rising tide of hate. We continue to receive an influx of support and assistance from CUPE staff and members who keep us at the forefront of our fight against racism, including anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, and Islamophobia.

### *The context for our work*

Historically, racialized workers have been organizing within and across our communities to name and disrupt systemic and individual forms of discrimination such as racism, Islamophobia, sexism, xenophobia, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia intentionally and explicitly. Although there have been small gains for Black and other racialized workers in Canada over the years, within the past year, we have witnessed an increase in hate crimes, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, and the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on racialized communities. Systemic racism, harassment and discrimination in our workplaces, union and our communities continue to be major barriers in achieving racial justice and equality.

Canada has a long history of colonialism and slavery in its dealings with First Peoples and people of African descent. We are consistently reminded of this with high rates of poverty, environmental segregation, unemployment, violence, over-policing, and incarceration faced by these communities and nations. Racial profiling and carding continue to plague marginalized communities. Police involvement across Canada and the United States and

elsewhere is proven to be problematic for Black, Indigenous and racialized folks leaving impacts of trauma, fear, frustration in the justice system.

Canada's history of immigration and exploitation has also impacted other racialized communities. Examples include the Chinese "head tax" and the use of indentured Chinese workers to build the Canadian Pacific Railway; the internment of Japanese Canadians and the refusal of the Canadian state to welcome the majority Sikh passengers on the Komagata Maru.

Black and racialized workers will continue to become a growing part of the Canadian workforce. It is projected that by 2025, 20 per cent of the population will be racialized and an even more significant number will inhabit our urban areas. Yet, we have witnessed no change to date in Canada's federal employment equity legislation. The last review of the federal *Employment Equity Act* took place in 2002. CUPE continues to call upon the federal government to review and amend the *Employment Equity Act* to ensure employment justice for racialized workers and other equity-seeking folks.

Racist immigration policy, unresponsive employment legislation, a low-wage labour market strategy, and non-recognition of foreign credentials will continue to be key barriers facing newcomers and racialized workers in securing and maintaining meaningful employment. It is crucial that the labour movement prioritizes the elimination of these barriers.

Through CUPE's 2014 membership survey, we can see what systemic discrimination in our society and economy means for our union. The survey confirmed that racialized workers are less likely to hold good quality public service jobs. Only 15 per cent of our members are racialized compared to 19 per cent for Canada as a whole. Only 54 per cent of CUPE's racialized members have full-time work and they are twice more likely than the average CUPE member to have casual work. It is very likely that these precarious working conditions are a major barrier to participation in our union.

### *Our activities and progress*

Over the last two years, we developed and implemented a work plan based on CUPE's 2019-2021 Strategic Directions document, the Vancouver Declaration, convention resolutions and emerging issues. We also worked closely

with Yolanda McClean, Diversity-Vice President representing racialized workers.

#### *Committees priorities*

- Anti-racism in all its forms – with a specific focus on the next steps for CUPE’s Anti-Racism Strategy
- Islamophobia – raising awareness
- Persons with disabilities – with a specific focus on mental health and the impacts of racism
- Employment equity – time to open doors, an opportunity for advancement
- Education – raising awareness of intersectionality
- Precarity – call for the elimination of precarious work
- Migrant workers – call on the government for permanent residency, health and safety provisions, equal pay, living wage, and labour law protection

#### *Our work to date*

The National Rainbow Committee committed to meeting monthly online starting April 2020. The senseless killings and racist attacks on Black, Indigenous and racialized people over the past year and a half caused significant trauma to many. The committee felt the need to come together to not only do the work of the committee but to check in with one another to provide support in a way that only those with lived experience would understand how to. As time went on the committee moved from sharing racist experiences to providing input and feedback on creating a draft report on *Anti-Racism Strategy for CUPE*.

#### *Anti-Racism Strategy*

The committee spent hours and months discussing key factors to consider in the development of the strategy. Committee members were adamant in wanting to ensure that the online space would be welcoming and safe to all Black, Indigenous and racialized folks participating in this process. The committee also worked closely with the National Indigenous Council for the same purpose. Committee members' input was beyond helpful to staff assigned to the Anti-Racism Strategy.

Promotion of the online consultations was key, as each consultation was well attended. Committee members were courageous and passionate in sharing the online Anti-Racism Strategy invitation widely. During the consultations, participants were actively present and participated in each activity which included small group work. Members shared how they felt about the Draft Anti-Racism Strategy and the process it took to get here, at the end of the consultations. The hopeful and positive messages were uplifting and motivating. Members shared sentiments like – this has been the best CUPE meeting, I

have ever attended, and I am finally feeling hopeful. Fortunately, the committee participated in several meetings of online consultations over the past year. They were engaged with other members from their regions and connections were being made. Black, Indigenous and racialized members across Canada had their voices heard in these closed safe spaces. Members were provided with the tools and resources to share experiences and feedback to inform the draft strategy.

Debra Merrier and Yolanda McClean, Diversity Vice-Presidents to the National Executive Board, also participated in all consultations. There was a sense of appreciation that the DVP’s reporting on issues that impact marginalized groups were able to hear directly from lived experience.

As the work continued, the National Rainbow Committee and the National Indigenous Council came together for a couple of follow-up consultations. This is where committee and council members were able to provide final feedback on the *Draft Anti-Racism Strategy* that they all helped create. This process was useful as both the committee and council were able to dig deep and identified a couple of gaps in the strategy.

The National Rainbow Committee alongside, several other Black, Indigenous and racialized members are looking forward to the next steps which include the presentation of the Anti-Racism Strategy at CUPE’s 2021 National Convention and its implementation.

#### *Black History Month*

- Provided input on the newly designed Black History Month bookmarks for 2020 and 2021 that featured the late Burnley “Rocky” Jones and Jennifer Hodge de Silva
- Created social media frames – Unapologetically Black and I value Black Lives
- Participated in several virtual Black History Month events in various regions

A large part of the committee’s work in the regions involves reaching out to Black and other racialized communities and their organizations. As a public-sector union, CUPE’s support is rooted in communities. We continue to strengthen our links and work with local and global communities, not only through the services we provide as workers but by connecting our work as CUPE activists to important activities in Black and racialized communities.

Our committee members across the country play a key role in commemorating days of action such as Black History Month, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination, Asian Heritage Month, and National Indigenous Day. The following are some of our activities in our communities:

- Organized and participated in Black History Month events
- Continue to build connections between CUPE and community organizations such as PRUDE International in New Brunswick, Black Lives Matter-Toronto, NCCM-Ottawa, Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), etc.

*Conclusion*

Our sincere thanks go out to all those who have done so much work on our behalf, in our locals, regions and nationally. Special thanks also go out to the support staff in the Human Rights Branch for providing enormous support and ongoing commitment to our work.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Committee on Racism, Discrimination and Employment Equity (National Rainbow Committee):**

Mona Yammine.....Prince Edward Island  
Nadia Aristyl  
Co-chair ..... Quebec  
Veriline Howe ..... Ontario  
Sharon Stanley ..... Ontario  
Debra Mason .....Manitoba  
JR Simpson ..... Saskatchewan  
Michele Alexander  
Co-chair .....British Columbia  
Cora Mojica ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Yolanda McClean .....NEB Liaison  
Tammy Kelly..... Staff Advisor

## NATIONAL YOUNG WORKERS' COMMITTEE

CUPE's National Young Workers' Committee is pleased to provide this report to National Convention.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the operation of the National Young Workers' Committee making it difficult to schedule meetings. In the lead-up to CUPE Convention 2021, the committee held two meetings to continue the important work of engaging young workers, empowering them as well as promoting activism and solidarity in the labour movement.

### *Precarious work*

The committee reaffirms the importance of tackling the fight for a living wage, which means significant minimum wage improvements in every province. A better living wage not only helps the most vulnerable, the young and other precarious workers, it also has the positive effect of raising expectations and activism of union members who mobilize for better wages in their respective workplaces.

### *NDP Convention 2021*

A member of the committee attended the virtual NDP Convention held on April 10-11, 2021, and joined the CUPE delegation.

### *CLC Convention 2021*

Members of the committee formed part of the CUPE delegation to the Canadian Labour Congress Convention held virtually from June 15-18, 2021.

### *Federal election readiness*

The Committee is preparing a strategy to support the work that CUPE is conducting in the lead-up to an imminent election campaign. Their strategy will be informed by the work of the National Political Action Committee.

### *Education for All campaign*

The Committee is engaging in the recently launched Education for All campaign. The Education for All campaign is a joint initiative of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and the National Union

of Public General and Public Employees. Together, these memberships of more than one million students and workers are putting forward a vision of a more affordable, accessible, high-quality, publicly-funded post-secondary education system in Canada. The committee is determining how to best support this campaign as it moves into its second phase.

### *Young worker resource update*

The Committee is working on reviving a CUPE publication that was produced to support the important work of involving and engaging young workers. The publication is currently available in print only. The goal is to update the document and make it available in digital format so it can be widely shared with young workers.

### *Conclusion*

With the end of the pandemic near, our committee is newly-invigorated with energy to tackle the important work to ensure that young workers are properly and fairly represented within CUPE, within the labour movement and within the Canadian labour market.

Our union understands the multiple structural and cultural changes needed in our workplaces to foster young workers' leadership. The committee appreciates the continued support from the National Officers and the National Executive Board. It will continue its efforts to inspire young workers to become active in their union, and their communities.

Respectfully submitted by,

### **The Members of the National Young Workers' Committee:**

Ronald Crowther ..... Nova Scotia  
Christian Bisson ..... Quebec  
Mau Bae  
Co-chair ..... Manitoba  
Deena Kapacila ..... Saskatchewan  
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