

# ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



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PSAC ONTARIO

## The 10 Year Rule is Over!



PSAC Ontario members can be proud of their work in helping to remove the Harper Conservative government from power. Our “get out the vote” campaign was a tremendous success, with the election seeing an increase of almost 3 million voters from the last 2011 election.

Members took part in phone banks, door to door canvases, rallies and workplace actions to help sway voters to vote for change. Our region saw tremendous engagement from rank and file members looking to get involved in this election and make a difference.

Our work and PSAC’s “Vote to Stop the Cuts” advertising campaign helped usher in a new government that has promised to respect workers rights. PSAC will work to ensure that this new Liberal government keeps its campaign promises, including: Enhancing the Canada Pension Plan, restoring Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement to age 65, repealing anti-labour laws (Bills C-377 and C-525) and pursuing an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

For our members who are currently bargaining, this change in government also signals an opportunity to move forward with achieving fair collective agreements. However, any achievement must be fought for, and PSAC members will need to continue to mobilize and take action to pressure this government to respect its public service workers.

Sharon DeSousa, PSAC Ontario Regional Executive Vice-President

## Council Survey

On behalf of all Ontario Council I would like to thank the members that took part in this past year’s Ontario Council Survey. Your feedback is instrumental in guiding our work in better representing our members.



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## ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

### 2015 Young Workers Summit – “Build, Network, Empower, Strengthen”



On September 18, 2015, 30 young workers gathered in London for the 2015 Young Worker Summit. The summit was a successful event that allowed for a safe and open space for PSAC’s younger members to contribute to the labour movement.

We focused on Human Rights, Mental Health and Young Worker engagement in communities and within our union. As a result we have started compiling ideas for convention resolutions pertaining to young workers as well as starting and reviving Young Worker Committees across the region.



Lauren Baert, Ontario Council Young Workers Representative

### Human Rights Are Borderless

How many of us are aware that the Canadian mining, oil and gas industry has a dismal record when it comes to respecting the human rights of persons, not only in our country, but in countries outside of Canada?



Many families have been forced from their homes so that oil, gold and other minerals can be extracted from their lands. This resource extraction leads to environmental destruction and violates the basic human rights of communities over their access to safe water, food and health.

Canadian mining and resource companies have been implicated in many human rights abuses across the globe. It is not fair that Canadian extraction companies do not have to follow the same standards as they would if their operations were in Canada. The Canadian government needs to take action to ensure that injustices communities face across our borders by Canadian companies have access to a recourse mechanism in Canada where they may obtain justice.

We can contact our new Prime Minister and ask that he ensure that access to Canadian courts are made available to communities who have been harmed by Canadian companies in their native countries.

*(No postage required)*  
 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau  
 Office of the Prime Minister  
 80 Wellington Street  
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

David Carr, Ontario Council  
 GLBT Members Representative





## Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women is a Human Rights Issue!

PSAC Ontario Council members participated in a noon rally on Parliament Hill on Tuesday, November 3, 2015. The rally demonstration was to offer support to the Ottawa and Gatineau’s indigenous community by supporting the women in Val-d’Or, Que., who allege abuse at the hands of provincial police officers. Many supporters carried red dresses, which represented the numerous murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls across Canada.

An RCMP report released last year reported 1,181 cases of missing or murdered indigenous women and girls dating from 1980 to 2012, including 1,017 homicides and 164 missing persons. The RCMP updated those numbers in June 2015 to include 32 new homicides within their jurisdiction from 2013 to 2014, and 11 new cases of missing Indigenous women, a pattern consistent with the past decade.

A strong message was sent from the supporting families of the murdered and missing Indigenous women, who chanted: “No more are we going to turn our backs! No more are we going to be silent about the violence! NO MORE!”



Missy Taylor, Ontario Council Women’s Representative and Sheila Karasiewicz, Ontario Council Aboriginal Members Representative



### Have Your Say!



PSAC members of Ontario...we want to hear from YOU!! PSAC Ontario represents over 30,000 members located from Windsor to Cornwall, from Fort Erie to James Bay and everywhere in between! Our members come from diverse areas, with different experiences and stories to share. Send us an article for the “**This Spot’s Reserved for You**” section. Articles should be approximately 250 words, created in Word and sent to Lino Vieira, at [vieiral@psac.com](mailto:vieiral@psac.com).

## ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

### First Nations “Rock the Vote” in the 2015 Federal Election

The 2015 Federal Elections was record breaking, we saw 54 indigenous candidates running for office, which resulted in 10 indigenous MP’s being elected. Even with the barriers faced by many First Nations communities, including running out of ballots, voter turnout was up by 270% in some communities - *“We rocked the vote!”*

It was noted in an APTN news article that First Nation members were walking across Moose River, which was at its lowest point in recent memory, to Moose Factory First Nation to the polling station to vote. It was also noted in a CTV news article that Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson, of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak stated that she believed “our previous prime minister, awoke a sleeping giant in our people, and that giant is now awake.” I personally believe she is right and our people will not be sitting “Idle No More” and they will be making sure that their voices are heard in the future.

Sheila Karasiewicz, Ontario Council Aboriginal Members Representative



### Labour Law Reform in Ontario

In September 2015, I had an opportunity to take part in the Labour Board advisory panel meeting in Toronto to discuss precarious work in the Academic Sector. I spoke on my own experiences to highlight the difficulties workers face in Ontario. For example as a Sessional Lecturer at a University, despite being highly qualified to teach students and regardless of how long you work (3, 5, or 10 years), we have to apply for our jobs every 15-17 weeks. I have been notified that I have a contract, a week before I have had to create a course. And all my work belongs to the University. As a Sessional instructor, even though I teach the same course as full time professors, I only make on average \$28,000.00 per year.

As a precarious worker my employer can keep me on a term basis for a decade. Give me no hours one week and over 80 the next. Make me teach 70 students or 400 students. They can hire me or let me go without any notice. As a precarious worker I am disposable, exploited and marginalized.



We need labour laws that protect workers against these injustices. And legislation that mandates employers to provide their employees with stability and to be treated with respect.

Marie Polgar-Matthews,  
PSAC Ontario Council Academic Sector  
Representative



## The 2015 Directly Chartered Locals Conference

The 2015 DCL Conference was a conference of great personal growth for everyone who had the opportunity to participate. As a team we decided that this conference would have three goals: Empowerment, Strength and Education.

Our PSAC National Executive Vice-President Chris Aylward came out to address participants, along with our Regional REVP Sharon DeSousa. The conference had amazing speakers on the importance of community building to gain support from outside of our Locals. Participants were also provided with tools and strategies on how to engage with their community when advocating for better working conditions and social justice.

Members loved the conference and we are truly appreciative of all the wisdom and insight that was provided.



Peggy Jones, PSAC Ontario Council DCL Representative

Marie Polgar-Matthews, PSAC Ontario Council Academic Sector Representative



### MEMBERS' CORNER

#### Why Pride?

On June 28, 1969, a group of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning and Two-Spirited people stood up for many of the rights I now enjoy today. These activists rioted after a police raid at the Stonewall Inn (a local gay bar) in New York City. This event is widely considered the match that struck the fire of the LGBT rights movement.

1981 (coincidentally the year I was born) had Toronto's first Gay Freedom Rally. Similar to Stonewall, 3,000 activists protested against the mass arrest of 286 men in four bathhouses on February 5, 1981 by Toronto Police.

June commemorates the Stonewall Riots, and Pride Toronto will host its 35th Pride celebrations from June 24 to July 3, 2016. As a gay man, I participate in Pride each year to remember these events and activists who came before me. It reminds me to continue to fight for equality: Before I die, I will live in a world where human rights are extended to transgender people and no one commits suicide because of their sexual/gender identity.



Steve Khan, UNE Local 303, Toronto Pride Committee Chair

