



PSAC ONTARIO

Ontario Provincial Election



The date has been set for the 2018 Ontario election, which will take place on June 7, 2018. There is a lot at stake in this election for our members, and for every family in Ontario.

The Liberals have privatized Hydro One, sending electricity rates skyrocketing, introduced back to work legislation for college faculty, and had several political scandals that undermine their credibility. On the other hand, with the pressure and advocacy of unions and community groups, we have seen a raise in the minimum wage and improved labour laws that protect workers.

The Progressive Conservatives (PC) have pledged to slow down the rise in the minimum wage and promised they wouldn't undo the progressive changes to workers' rights. Yet, their past record has shown that their interests and objectives are focused on corporations more than people.

The NDP have introduced a number of bills to make protections for workers even better. However, the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives (PC) have consistently voted them down. The question for the NDP will be whether they can motivate their base, while connecting to voters that have traditionally voted Liberal or PC.

This election is anyone's to win, and the next few months will be interesting. Regardless of the Party that is chosen, our members will stand strong and use our voices to make sure that the elected government works for our interests. We will continue to show our power in the streets and in our workplaces and make our communities better.

Sharon DeSousa - Regional Executive Vice-President – Ontario



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ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

What is Accessibility?



It simply means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. A disability can happen to anyone at any time. There are various types of disabilities: visual, physical, speech, developmental and learning disabilities, as well as invisible disabilities such as hearing and mental health issues.

There are two PSAC Ontario region Members with Disabilities Access Committees (MDAC) presently. Their mandate, as constitutionally recognized committees of PSAC, is to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities to live and work with dignity, respect and equality.

The objectives of the committees are to discuss issues important to our members and to identify barriers to equal participation. Work on solutions that can be developed, take action and to mobilize our membership to achieve these goals. Learn more about them on our webpage: <http://ontario.psic.com/our-organization/human-rights-committees>

Souad Soubra Boone (Sue) - Members with Disabilities Representative

What has Your Union Done for you?

Yesterday I enjoyed an afternoon with my daughter and grandson. I have the Union to thank for having a work-free weekend. Last year I was off sick due to an injury. I have the Union to thank for my sick leave. I recently went on a tour of the United Kingdom with my husband. I have the Union to thank for my vacation leave. I recently received an increase in my wages. I have the Union to thank for negotiating a new Collective Agreement. I picked up my prescriptions on the way to the dentist. I have the Union to thank for my medical benefits.

Never think that your employer has "given" you these benefits. Our Union and all our volunteer activists have negotiated these gains for us. Without our Union and all of us defending our rights, these gains would be lost.

Judi Goodfellow - Region 4
(Southwestern)



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The Importance of Lobbying



The idea of lobbying has always made me a little nervous. What is it really? How do you do it? Well I can say, I will never be nervous of this again. I had the opportunity to visit my Member of Parliament in Ottawa in December with my Regional Executive Vice-President, Sharon DeSousa. I can say that although at first I felt a little intimidated it was well worth it. I will certainly be doing this again.

The topic of discussion was the Phoenix disaster. I am one of the many members who has suffered with Phoenix paying me incorrectly. I am underpaid, overpaid and missing pay. I had made the incorrect assumption that my MP would know all about this; he did not. Although he knew some basics he really did not understand. What I learned was that MPs who have higher concentrations of federal employees in their ridings have a stronger idea of the problems, but realistically many MPs do not.

I wanted my MP to know the real magnitude of the problem, the hardships this causes, the mental anguish that I have carried since 2016, when I was first struck by pay issues. He needed to know so he could be my voice in Parliament.

Lobbying is not what I expected but participating in this lobby was empowering. I encourage everyone to take the time to visit, write or call their MP's office. If you are nervous I would recommend reaching out to your PSAC Regional Office to find out more information on how to proceed. We need to lobby our MPs to ensure Phoenix is fixed and that our membership is fairly compensated for this ordeal.

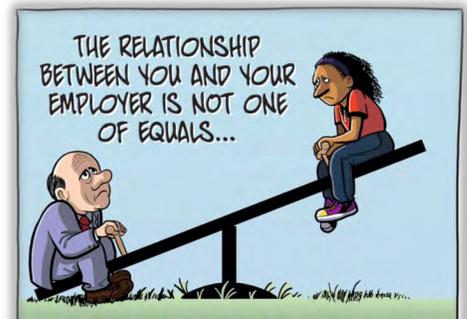
Missy Taylor - Regional Women's Committees Representative

A Time in Union History - It wasn't that long ago that.....

Paid maternity leave benefits have only been around since 1971 in Canada. Before that, a new mother had to quit her job or return to work soon after the baby's birth. The federal government, through the unemployment insurance program, introduced 15 weeks of paid maternity leave in 1971 at 66% of a mother's previous salary.

However, Unions began negotiating longer paid maternity leave with higher levels of benefits for their members soon after. Unions also began negotiating guarantees that women could return to the jobs they held before their maternity leave, helped secure paternity leave, and leave for parents who have adopted children.

Judi Goodfellow - Region 4



ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

CIU/PSAC Rally for a Fair Contract



Our Border Services Officers, who belong to the Customs and Immigration Union (CIU), are still seeking to secure a new Collective Agreement. We have been waiting almost 4 years now!

On November 23, 2017, to coincide with the scheduled date of the release of the third Public Interest Commission mediation session, a rally was held outside of Finance Minister Bill Morneau's constituency office in Toronto. Rallies for a fair contract were also held by CIU members in Cornwall, in Niagara Falls, in Hamilton and in Windsor.

The more we demonstrate that we are willing to take action, the more we pressure our employer to treat us with respect.



Leslie A. Searl - Region 5 (Greater Toronto Area) Representative

Remembrance Day



On Remembrance Day (November 11th), I had the opportunity as the PSAC Aboriginal Members Representative, to lay a Cedar Wreath on behalf of the PSAC Thunder Bay Area Council, UNE Local 00296 and the National Aboriginal Peoples Circle.

The Aboriginal Veteran's Day Commemoration was held on the Sacred Mountain of Fort William First Nation, which is located on Mount McKay (Anemki Wajew). The Mount McKay service was started in 1995 by WWII Veteran Pte Frank Banning of the Lake Superior Scottish Regiment, as a way to honour and shine light on Aboriginal Veterans who until then were not recognized at memorials.

Sheila Karasiewicz, Aboriginal Members Representative



Members' Corner



December 6 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada

On December 6, 2017, members of the CEIU Ontario Regional Women's Committee and the PSAC Toronto Regional Women's Committee attended the candle-light vigil ceremony to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada.

This marked the 28th Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre that took the lives of 14 young women, who were murdered for simply being women. This year also focused on the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

The event took place outdoors, on a chilly December evening, at the Philosopher's Walk at Bloor Street and Avenue Road in Toronto. The event was organized by a women's group called Women Won't Forget and consisted of an Indigenous healing ceremony, speakers, musical and spoken word performances.

The names of the women who were murdered by men in Ontario in 2017 were all read aloud and honoured and some of the committee members took part in this presentation. The ceremony ended with roses being placed on a rock in front of the symbolic headstones, bearing the names of the murdered women: *"It is the job of those of us who go on living to speak for them and to change the world we live in"* (Womenwontforget.org).

Sara B. Johnson,
CEIU Local 581 President



This Spot's for You!!

Share your thoughts, tell a story, describe an issue that's important to you. We've set aside space in every issue for a member's submission. Articles should be approximately 200 words and pictures are welcome!!

Send your submissions to Lino Vieira, PSAC Ontario Region Political Communications Officer, at vieiral@psac-afpc.com. Submissions are welcome anytime!

ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Ontario Council Members' Profiles



Happy New Year! I am excited for the start of this year and all the creative energy that comes with it. Last year was the start of my new path as a Council member, and I am slowly getting my bearings. My main goal is to be present, visible, and available to members for any issue on hand. I especially would like to connect with youth and equity-seeking members in our region.

This year myself and Dana Kelly will be tackling the Northeastern region as a team. We will be touching base with members in the area on a monthly basis to ensure we are staying up to date and providing assistance. Please look out for our emails and feel free to contact us anytime.

Shalane Rooney - Region 2 (Northeastern) Representative



I have always tried to stand up for what is right. I have held many Union positions throughout the years, but I am proudest of being called an activist. I have been focusing now on mentoring future Union leaders, so that our movement will continue to be strong. My position on Ontario Council is as a Southwestern Ontario representative and I reside in the Chatham-Windsor area. If you're interested in getting more involved with your Union, please contact me.

Judi Goodfellow - Region 4 (Southwestern)

Showing our Appreciation



The PSAC Hamilton Area Council and Human Rights Committees (Regional Women's Committee, MDAC and Young Workers), often hold their meetings at the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce. The space is conveniently located and the meeting rooms are provided free of charge. To show their appreciation, the Area Council and Committees dropped off a dozen doughnuts for the staff, with Santa in attendance to give them candy canes.

Bob Black - Region 6 (Hamilton/Niagara) Representative

Council Member Contact Information can be Found Online:
www.ontario.psic.com/council-members



TWO YEARS TOO LONG PHOENIX DAY OF ACTION

