



PSAC ONTARIO

We Will Not Forget



It's been a busy year working with other unions and community groups to oppose the devastating cuts happening at the provincial level with Premier Ford at the helm. It seems like every other day there is a new announcement of cuts and anti-worker legislation.

Some of these include: Ending the cap-and-trade system, clawing back the \$15 minimum wage and with it many basic protections for workers, the elimination of free tuition and the basic income pilot project, back to work legislation and now the attack on collective bargaining rights for over 1 million provincial public sector workers.

With polls showing Premier Ford's approval rating plummeting just a year into his term, the Premier announced a 5-month break of the legislature until October 28th, the longest break in 25 years. No doubt this is so his federal Conservative counterparts can distance themselves from the same type of public service cuts and privatization that have made the Premier so unpopular.

PSAC members are all too familiar with what a Conservative government means at the federal level. After 10 years under Harper, tens of thousands of layoffs, department freezes, attacks on our bargaining rights, and the introduction of the Phoenix pay system; we are still dealing with the aftermath of that government.

And in a few months when we find ourselves heading to the ballot box for the federal election on October 21st, each of us will have to decide on which Party we want to represent us. I for one know that I'm not willing to forget what the Conservative government did to so many PSAC members and Andrew Scheer will not be getting my vote.

Sharon DeSousa,
PSAC Ontario Regional Executive Vice-President



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ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Research Assistants at Queen’s University Win First Contract



In February 2017, Queen’s research assistants who work in laboratories and libraries won the right to unionize after PSAC’s coordinated organizing drive. In March of 2019, they were successful in reaching a first contract, which substantially improves their working conditions.

The biggest issue for these workers, and one that is common across the sector, is the growing precariousness of academic employment. To help secure a first contract and mobilize new members, the existing Local created a new mobilizing campaign to address precarious employment, with the creation of a new superhero named Precarious. This new masked hero was created to aid Research Assistants in their epic battle for fair wages, health and dental benefits, paid health and safety training and intellectual property rights.

The Superhero Precarious made a first appearance in the comic book “The Exploits & MisAdventures of Precarious.”

The colourful comic book, distributed on campus, helped to encourage members and allies to support the bargaining team in a new interactive way. The campaign also focused on social media with an extensive Twitter campaign (@PSAC901), asking members to send messages of solidarity.

Craig Berggold, DCL Academic Workers Representative



Lobbying Isn't so Scary



Lobbying is a key aspect to ensuring the voices and needs of constituents are being heard. We may think that something as high profile as the Phoenix issue or the current round of bargaining is at the forefront of the minds of our Members of Parliament, but I can assure you that's not always the case.

Many of our MPs are in areas where they have few constituents who work for the federal government and what I have realized is that even I was guilty of assuming they had

this knowledge. They don't. And who needs to fix this? We do! We need to go to our MPs and share the real stories of what is happening.

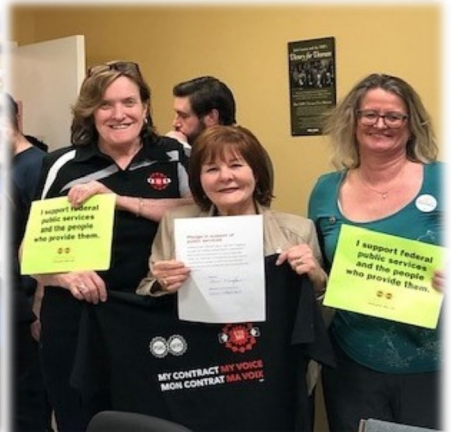
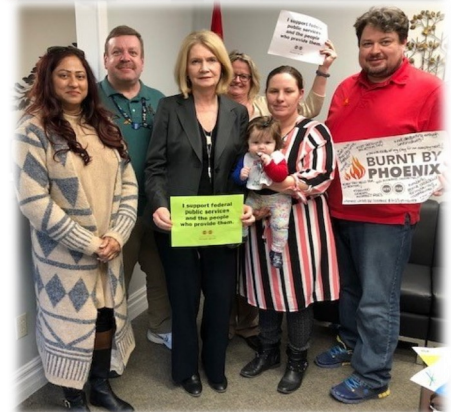
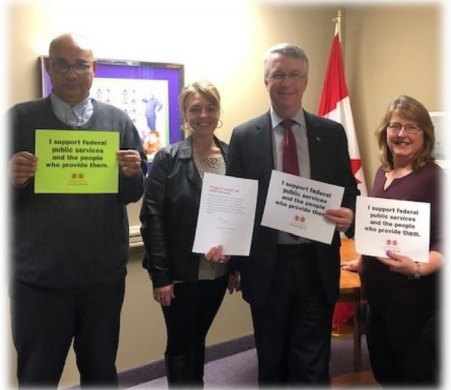
Recently, I lobbied Liberal MP Maryam Monsef who is the Minister for Women and Gender Equity. Although she was not in the office at the time, we certainly had a strong impact. Sean McNeil, Chris Snooks and I met with her chief of staff and gave interviews with the regional media (Peterborough Examiner and Global News).

<https://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/news-story/9244349-pay-system-failure-particularly-hard-on-women-says-public-servant/>

A meeting where the Minister was not even in attendance certainly gained a fair amount of news attention, including making the front page of the newspaper. We can be sure it ended up being seen by not only the Minister, but her constituents also. Although we live the Phoenix nightmare every day, a lot of the public is still unaware of the extent of the problem. I still have people ask me: "This isn't over yet?" or "What do you mean you're not being paid, it's the government!"

I'm asking our members to share their stories with their MP. They need to hear from us, the people who are directly impacted. We cannot rely on just massive campaigns; we need take part in grassroots activism.

Missy Taylor,
Regional Women's
Committee Representative



ONTARIO COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Power of Many



The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) hosted the "Power of Many" Conference on March 25th in Toronto, where they presented a plan on how to defeat Doug Ford and the Ontario Conservatives by the next provincial election.

Melisa Bayon, OFL Political Action and Outreach Director, laid out an overview about the campaign that includes putting together rapid response networks that target vulnerable Conservative held ridings across the province. The initial 12 hubs are in Toronto/York Region, Durham, Peel, Hamilton/Brantford area, London, Kitchener-Waterloo, Niagara, Ottawa, Peterborough, North Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

Within these hubs, the OFL's goal is to have organizers and 400 regularly active volunteers reach at least 500,000 contacts by the end of 2020. The communications plan will include flyers that focus on decent work, safe and healthy workplaces, education, justice for all and health care. A Ford cuts tracker has also been set up that records all of the cuts Doug Ford has made as Premier.

As the plan unfolds and the necessary infrastructure is put into place, our ability to reach the public will grow. Now is the time for labour to mobilize, unite and get to work!

Ryan Ward, GTA Representative and Chair of the Political Action Committee

Council Member Profile



Greetings! My name is Craig Reynolds and I am your Alternate Regional Executive Vice-President (REVP) for PSAC Ontario. I assumed the role of Alternate REVP in October 2018, when the past Alternate stepped down. However, this is not my first experience on Council, which began in 2014 when I was elected as the Alternate Racially Visible Representative.

That role prepared me to become the Chair of the PSAC Racially Visible Members Committee in Toronto. I've also had the opportunity to serve in my Local (UNE 00087) in various positions and have been a committed union activist for years.

With a fair amount of Local experience, I ran for the position of Alternate Regional Executive Vice-President for my Component - *The Union of National Employees*, Ontario Region. I am currently serving my second term in this position.

I love being in our union and helping out our membership. I'm learning a lot in this new role and I want to do my best to represent members in Ontario. I'm always willing to help, so please send me an email: Craig.Reynolds@une-sen.org.

Craig Reynolds, Alternate Regional Executive Vice-President Ontario

Retiree's Corner



Why Voting's so Important!

I'm not here to tell you who to vote for. I'm just here to tell you why you should vote. Even if none of the Prime Ministerial candidates seem ideal, one of them will be our national leader, whether we like it or not. No one is perfect, so take some time to review the candidates. Commercials and ads are a lot of propaganda so do a bit of internet searching, read the paper, chat with your friends— whatever it takes, try to hear all sides of the issues. And whatever you do, get out and vote!

Whether you vote or not, you are responsible for the outcome of the election. If you are an eligible voter and you choose not to vote, you are equally responsible for the outcome. Just because you are not "up" on politics doesn't mean that you can't spend a bit of time understanding the various platforms.

If you're afraid of change, then allowing the same party to rule doesn't necessarily mean that there won't be any change.

We can't change the fact that change will happen, but our votes can influence the direction in which change occurs. Nothing is certain, but that's what makes getting to vote so empowering. Anything is possible.

Judi Goodfellow, Retired PSAC member



Members' Corner

PSAC members—and retirees—across Ontario are doing amazing things! Rallies, parades, training, lobbying MPs, picnics and many more — we want to hear about it! Share your thoughts, tell a story, speak on an issue that's important to you. We've set aside space in every issue for a member's submission. Articles should be approximately 250 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!

Show Some Pride!



June is Pride Month - a month where we celebrate gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirited and asexual people, plus all other sexual orientations and genders. June was chosen in commemoration of the Stonewall Riots, which happened on June 28, 1969, when police raided the Stonewall Inn in New York City's Greenwich Village. Bar patrons fought back and ignited the start of the gay rights movement in North America. This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Stonewall.

So Why Does Pride Matter? Pride means something different to each and every queer individual. For some, Pride is a celebration of the community, our presence and our contributions to this world. For others it is a commemoration of the struggles we have faced (and continue to face), a tribute to those we have lost (and continue to lose) because of prejudice and hatred. Pride Month activities, such as cultural festivals, street parades, parties and public speeches from leaders, provide each of us an opportunity to publicly come together and give support, recognition and love to the queer community.



We still have a long way to go.



In April 2019, media outlets reported that Brunei had passed a law where same sex relationships are punishable by death. Did you know there are 70 UN Member States that criminalize consensual same-sex sexual acts? Closer to home, where there is greater acceptance, there are still countless of our community members who are unable to be their authentic selves for fear of retribution. They too fear for their safety on a variety of levels. Let us march for those who can't, be visible for those who can't be and raise our voices on behalf of those who are unable to raise theirs.

Because public support is important.

A Pride celebration is a wonderful way to bring allies and other supporters who may otherwise be silent all year long into an open forum to promote inclusion, acceptance and action. The joyous nature of Pride is contagious and can promote goodwill and strong "ally-ships". Pride matters! So this year, in whatever way you can...Show Some Pride!!!!



Ann Marie Kuarsingh, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer and 2-Spirit + Members Representative



Unions Need to be Political



When I was younger, I was one of those people who was “too busy” to learn the Party platforms during elections, so I just voted for who my parents told me to vote for. To be honest, I wasn’t very interested in politics because I didn’t think it affected me, or that my vote really mattered. Fast forward 10 years and I have never been more motivated to be politically engaged!

As PSAC members, we have access to information from our union on important issues that affect us and are given tools and materials to be able to effect change. We are given opportunities to take action, lobby our members of parliament, participate in campaigns and access training and courses.

As union members we also have great benefits that most workers don’t, and I know a lot of us in the federal public service take this for granted. We don’t necessarily see our bargaining being directly connected to the Party in power, or that elections influence our working conditions, but they do! Unions have to be political, because bargaining is political. Legislation, budgets and priorities of governments affect all workers, and union rights can be lost.

I know not everyone wants to stand on picket lines, or march in rallies, or lobby politicians, and not everyone wants to be actively engaged in their union. But engaging in the political process and voting for a Party that supports workers and their unions is vital for strong collective agreements.

We can’t pretend that politics don’t matter and that unions can be apolitical, when we know that the Conservative and Liberal Parties alike continuously try to weaken our union’s collective power.

Shalane Rooney, Region 2 (Northeastern) Representative

