



It's Time for Change



It looks as though the Ontario Progressive Conservative government might call an early election. Premier Ford's government has already begun campaigning by [releasing ads](#) that have cost taxpayers over \$8 million.

This province simply cannot afford another four years under this government. Our hospitals are in crisis, while more and more of our public healthcare system is privatized. Our education system is strained, with continued chronic underfunding of our universities and colleges. Public services across the board are stretched thin, with Ontario ranking the lowest in per capita funding across the country.

The Ford government has shown time and time again that they do not believe in supporting workers, or addressing the hardships working people are facing. We are in a housing crisis, yet new home construction has slowed to 2018 levels. Rents are out of control and the government refuses to [reintroduce rent controls](#) that prevent price gouging, particularly by large corporate landlords.

Instead, the government has been involved in scandal after scandal that shows their only allegiance is to their rich developer friends and big business. Just some of these scandals include:

- [Enbridge gas scandal](#)
- [Greenbelt development scandal](#)
- [Ontario Science Centre closure](#)
- [Moving Service Ontario outlets to Staples](#)

For a more comprehensive list of the many ways this government has shown they cannot be trusted, visit the [OFL Ford Tracker](#).

Craig Reynolds,
PSAC Ontario Regional Executive Vice-President



Find us online!
www.ontario.psic.com



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We welcome newsletter articles from current or retired members. Articles should be no longer than 250 words and be accompanied by pictures, if possible. Please email your submission to Lino Vieira at vierial@psac-afpc.com.



Our Daily Lives are Political



I had the privilege of attending the “Politics for Everyone” course in London on April 20th and the “Trans Rights and Inclusion at a Critical Moment” course on May 17th, to introduce myself to members as their Ontario Council Southwestern representative.

It was incredibly rewarding to engage with participants, gather their feedback on the courses, and have a discussion on ways we can enhance the PSAC Ontario Education program.

It was inspiring to see participants take part in the courses and express their commitment to bring back their newfound knowledge to their respective Locals. This will help foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment that will help all our members thrive.

Thu Trinh, Region 4 (Southwestern) Representative



Politics for Everyone



Trans Rights and Inclusion at a Critical Moment



Power Through Mobilization



On April 9th, members of the Customs and Immigration Union (CIU) gathered at Pearson Airport to rally for a fair contract. Nearly 9000 workers had been working with an expired contract for 2 years and members were fed up with Treasury Board and the Canada Border Services Agency for not negotiating fairly. Members marched outside and through Pearson Airport to send a strong message to our employer that we were ready to take action!

Leslie Searl, Region 5 (GTA) Representative





Dementia Education Session



On February 20, 2024, I had the honour of coordinating a “Dementia Education Session” workshop with the PSAC Hamilton Members with Disabilities Committee. The session was well attended by members, some of whom have a loved one with dementia and act as their caregivers.

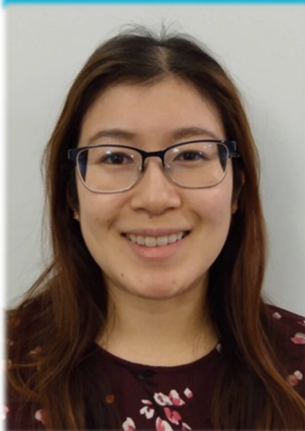
Both my parents have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and I am their main caregiver. This is an extremely difficult situation and demonstrates that our society does not have adequate supports for our aging population.

Despite the challenges, I am grateful that I am in a position to be able to care for my parents. It has also pushed me to learn about the many variations dementia can take and what are some avenues of support for caregivers.

Terri McGillivray, Members with Disabilities Representative

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[Homepage - PSAC Ontario](#)



Council Member Bio

Hello, my name is Stephanie Wu and I recently joined the Ontario Regional Council as the Young Workers Representative. I am extremely eager to get the ball rolling, connecting with others, and advocating for young workers within our union.

I graduated in 2016 with a degree in behavioural psychology, working a few part time jobs serving both children and adults with disabilities. I joined the public service in 2017 with Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), and remain in UVAE Local 0013, continuing my passion in advocating for veterans with disabilities.

I first became involved with PSAC in October 2022, when I saw an invitation to an open house for the Kingston Racially Visible Members Committee. My involvement with PSAC has snowballed since then, where I've joined even more committees and taken on more roles, including as a Picket Captain during the Treasury Board strike. Even though speaking to strangers was completely out of my comfort zone, I knew someone had to step up to educate the public on why the strike mattered. Despite my initial hesitations, it was a great experience for both personal and activist growth.

I don't always have the answer, but I am motivated to learn, eager to advocate, and energized to mobilize.

Stephanie Wu, Young Workers Representative



Search the Landfill - Demand Justice - Solidarity with the Families in Manitoba



Solidarity is the foundation and strength of our union. PSAC Ontario stands in solidarity with the families of Morgan Harris, Mercedes Myran, and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe. These three Indigenous women were murdered and had their bodies discarded in two Winnipeg landfills.

The city, province and federal government were refusing to search for the remains of these women, as it was deemed "too costly". Allowing Indigenous people to be left as trash in landfills is unacceptable. Indigenous rights are human rights. As activists, we must stand up, and fight for what is right. To demand justice for the families of these women.

Three proud Indigenous members of PSAC Ontario Council made a motion to use a solidarity statement in place of a territorial acknowledgement at the beginning of our Council meetings. The motion passed unanimously, and it will remain in place until the landfills are searched.

The statement of solidarity with these families is another important step forward on the path of "Truth towards Reconcili-action". As members across PSAC, we continue to do the necessary work of learning the true and often horrific accounts of Canada's history and ongoing relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

We fully recognize the importance and significance of territorial acknowledgements and how they bring awareness of the people who lived pre-colonization and identifying the keepers of the land now called Canada. In adopting a "Solidary Statement", the Ontario Council will go beyond acknowledgment to expand and broaden our need for meaningful reconciliation.

As activists of the PSAC, listen to the voices of our Indigenous members and be an ally to all the Indigenous people of Turtle Island.

So-, so-, so-, Solidarité! Nia:wen ko:wa!

Miigwetch!

Adam Murphy, Region 3 (Eastern) Representative



Morgan Beatrice Harris (39) and Mercedes Myran (26), whose remains are believed to be in a landfill north of Winnipeg. The remains of an unidentified woman who has been given the name Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe (Buffalo Woman) are also believed to be in the same landfill. In 2022, the remains of Rebecca Contois (24) were found in the Brady Landfill in Winnipeg.



Union Activism Starts at the Local Level



The Canada Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU) Local 647's AGM in Chatham on March 7th was something truly remarkable. With over 300 members in the Local, the turnout of almost a quarter of the membership was incredibly impressive.

The agenda was packed with essential items: reports, financial reviews, elections, and guest speakers, all indicative of the Local's commitment to active participation. It was a testament to grassroots organizing, and an example for other Locals across the region.

As the Ontario Council Southwestern Representative, I had the honour of introducing myself and sharing insights into the work the Ontario Council does. Attendees were briefed on recent meetings and the structure of our organization, with a focus on our commitment to continuous improvement. As part of my portfolio on the Council Education Committee, I sought input for enhancing our programs and policies, emphasizing collaboration and feedback from the membership.

The warm invitation extended by the Local allowed for meaningful discussions, highlighting the power of connection among grassroots activists. It was an enriching experience, showcasing the strength of community and collective action within the labour movement.

Thu Trinh, Region 4 (Southwestern) Representative



PSAC ONTARIO EDUCATION

- **Toronto RO:** Grievance Handling (In Person – October 4-5, 2024)
- **2024 PSAC Ontario Local Stewards Training** (In Person— October 4-5, 2024)
- **Hamilton/Niagara Area:** Grievance Handling (In Person – November 1-2, 2024)
- **Kingston RO:** Duty to Accommodate (In-Person – October 5, 2024)
- **Toronto RO:** Duty to Accommodate (Virtual – October 18, 2024)
- **Sudbury RO:** Grievance Handling (In Person – October 18-19, 2024)
- **Thunder Bay RO:** Talking Union Basics (Virtual – OCT 19-20, 2024)
- **London RO:** Grievance Handling (In Person – October 20-21, 2024)
- **London RO:** WSIB Level 1- Rights and Obligations (In Person – October 25-26, 2024)
- **Toronto RO:** Politics for Everyone (In Person – October 25-26, 2024)
- **Hamilton/Niagara Area:** Politics for Everyone (In Person – November 22-23, 2024)
- **Sudbury RO:** Duty to Accommodate (In Person – November 12-13, 2024)
- **Thunder Bay RO:** Grievance Handling (In Person – Nov 15-16, 2024)
- **London RO:** Talking Union Basics (In Person – November 16-17, 2024)
- **Kingston RO:** Talking Union Basics TUB (In-Person – November 23-24, 2024)

[Union Education at PSAC Ontario - PSAC Ontario](#)
for more information and to register



Scent Free Workplace

I have asthma. My mom used to tell me the story of how I almost died when I had my first asthma attack at six months old. When people wear a lot of perfume in an enclosed space it can cause me to have a severe reaction; from an intense migraine to needing my rescue inhaler.

The number of people who have sensitivity to scents is roughly 16 per cent of the population. The unfortunate reality is that as people are going back into the office more and more of our members are put at risk of a workplace reaction.

Fragrances are used in everything from soap to fabric softener. The Canadian Lung Association notes that fragrances can contain 100 to 350 ingredients. It's not the scent that causes the reaction, but the chemicals that are used to make the scent. It is important to be aware of the dangers of using scented products for yourself and those around you. It could mean the difference between someone taking part in a meeting or having to spend time in the hospital.

Terri McGillivray, Members with Disabilities Representative

This is a Scent Free Zone

Chemicals in scented products can be harmful to people with fragrance sensitivities, asthma, allergies, and other medical conditions.

- Use unscented personal care products. Do not wear perfume, cologne, aftershave, and other fragrances.
- Use fragrance-free cleaning products, deodorizers, soaps, detergents, and fabric softeners.

CCOHS.ca
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

PSAC Solidarity with CUPE 3903 for Fairness and Education at York University



On February 26th, members of CUPE 3903 at York University commenced a strike, with critical issues such as fair wages and job security, essential for maintaining high-quality, accessible education. The strike, concluding on April 19th with the ratification of a new collective agreement that saw remarkable solidarity from various unions and the OFL.

As an Ontario Regional Council member and a student at York University, I felt compelled to support CUPE 3903 in their fight for justice. I participated in rallies on February 26th and 28th and marched in solidarity on March 6th and 20th. CUPE 3903's unwavering collective action and determination reminded me of my own experiences during our PSAC national strike.

Joining strike lines, chanting, and marching alongside CUPE 3903 members, I saw firsthand the strength of our shared commitment to equity and justice. The successful conclusion of the strike, with the ratification of a new collective agreement, was a victory not only for CUPE 3903 but for all who believe in fair and accessible education. When unions stand together in solidarity, we can achieve meaningful change.

Ted Cabanes, 2SLGBTQIA+ Members Representative



PSAC Ontario Marching in Solidarity with our Members for Pride Season

Pride season starts from May until the end of September, and I am proud to stand in solidarity with our PSAC Ontario 2SLGBTQIA+ members. PSAC Ontario’s commitment to inclusivity and equity will shine bright as our members participate in various Pride events throughout the province.

On June 1st, I was honoured to attend the vibrant 2-Spirit Pow Wow in Toronto, an event that honored the unique cultural contributions of 2-Spirit peoples within Indigenous communities. This gathering was a powerful reminder of the importance of embracing cultural differences where people can express their true selves without fear. Next, we joined the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 353 at their Pride Picnic. This family-friendly event was a fantastic opportunity to connect with other union members, share stories, and enjoy an afternoon of unity and celebration.

The Durham Pride March took place on June 2nd and was another important event in our journey of inclusion. The energy and enthusiasm at the march rivals Pride events of bigger cities and reminds us of why we come together; to advocate for a world where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Pride marches are the power of collective action and are a necessity to stand up for underrepresented communities. Our union should be a safe space for all members, and we are dedicated to creating a future where inclusivity is the norm, not the exception. I hope you celebrated our diversity this Pride season and took part in a local Pride event in your area!

Ted Cabanes, 2SLGBTQIA+ Members Representative



PRIDE!
2024





PSAC DCL 610 Western University Strike



It's crucial to recognize the invaluable contributions of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) who work at Western University. These PSAC members of DCL Local 610, took on their employer in the first strike the Local ever held, and a first for the academic sector in Ontario.

These workers are integral to the university's success and deserve wages that reflect the increasing cost of living. Amidst the biting cold, the outpouring of support from fellow unions and the community was heartwarming. The Local's resilience in the face of adversity was truly inspiring.



To all GTAs and supporters, thank you for staying strong, and bravo PSAC DCL 610! Your determination and solidarity are powerful forces for change. Together, we can ensure that the voices of workers are heard, and their rights are respected. Solidarity!

Thu Trinh, Region 4 (Southwestern) Representative

Labour Day, 2024

