

Regina & District Labour Council

Legislative & Political Action Committee Report

2021 Annual General Meeting

Due to the cancellation of the 2020 AGM because of COVID 19, this report will cover the span of two years.

2020 Provincial Election

The RDLC was in attendance of the 2019 NDP Convention in Prince Albert leading up to the election. The issues were raised on how the party is acting in a dismissive manner when labour brings forward discussions of anti-scab legislation and other policies that would show support for unions. The Labour Caucus was quite vocal about how the party wasn't listening, which included a suggestion that we need to look at forming a Labour Party. The NDP Labour critic was quite adamant that if labour wants to talk about anti-scab legislation, we should be willing to give up card check certification. The convention saw every resolution hit the floor and get voted upon and debated, with one exception being one on the environment, unfortunately it was killed on the floor. The delegate who brought it forward (a former NDP Candidate) ran for the Green Party in the 2020 election. While the previous 2016 election saw the RDLC organize canvasses and events for the NDP, the RDLC decided to move in a more focused direction in 2020, and felt we would be better served supporting progressive municipal candidates. The results of the provincial election saw the seats stay the same province wide.

2019 Federal Election

The RDLC had previously helped Federal candidates in the 2015 Federal election by organizing labour canvasses for the three ridings in Regina. There were serious allegations of harassment from NDP candidate, with many complaints regarding that person. The RDLC took the position that we denounce harassment of any kind. RDLC did not participate in the 2019 Federal election and did not support any candidates. The Federal NDP went from 44 to 24 seats. The RDLC also sent delegates to the Federal NDP Convention in the spring of 2020. Much of the discussion revolved around a position that the RDLC took back in 2016 to support Palestine and BDS. On a regular and continued basis these resolutions were not supported for many years, this year we saw a strong grassroots movement forced a serious discussion and to actually vote on this, resulting in around 80% support. Unfortunately, We experience too much time was spent on speakers, which takes away from resolution and results in less opportunity for rank and file members to fully participate in the democratic aspect of the convention.

2020 Municipal Election

The RDLC worked with the CLC for a few years leading up to the election. Thanks to the CLC staff and committee members who did a great job of organizing and setting up workshops to help train the many municipal candidates. The previous election of 2016 saw the RDLC give donations of \$1000 to endorsed candidates for Councillor, Public and Separate School Board Trustees. Only one Andrew Stevens was elected. We organized canvasses just like in the previous Provincial and Federal elections, and also utilized social media to support them. It was clear that we needed to make some adjustments on how we worked on the 2020 election, as some candidates we supported had a very low chance of success in their respective areas.

We stayed with our policy of max one endorsed candidate running for each seat, but we took a more targeted approach and more scrutiny of the candidates to determine if they had a good chance of winning that seat. We did a more aggressive candidate search for wards that we deemed "winnable", and we supported candidates who were running against elected officials who take positions that we in the labour movement consider not as friendly to our cause.

We had candidates fill out a questionnaire which contained many topics which overlap, such as police in labour disputes, P3's, the environment, and social issues. We had some wards where more than one candidate was seeking the endorsement, and felt that some of the ones who were not chosen were still people we would support.

Donations were also scaled back to \$500 for endorsed candidates for Councillor, and \$250 for School Board Trustee. The RDLC also entered a pilot project with the CLC where they matched (and exceeded) our \$10,000 investment to build a database to better connect with people that we were able to use to connect with potential supporters in their respective ward/subdivision.

The CLC and RDLC along with our affiliates did a social media campaign and also did canvasses and flyer drops along with other ways to promote these candidates. We saw 5 of 6 endorsed candidates for Councillor successfully elected. One of the six did come very close. We also saw 2 of 3 endorsed candidates for Public School Board Trustee win their seats in their respective subdivision, and a strong showing from the third candidate.

Even though we had overwhelming success, we also have some things that need to be addressed; most notably the lack of ethnic diversity in endorsed candidates. The only visible minority was taken off the campaign trail and berated by some parts of the labour movement because of personal belief that really had nothing to do with them. We also saw two visible minority candidates who used to have strong labour ties, but have outright refused an RDLC endorsement due to racism they experienced within the movement. While winning "labour friendly" candidates who won were recognized by

name, a former recent sitting table officer of the RDLC, who was also a key organizer of one of the BLM rallies in Regina was not mentioned. These are relationships that we are going to have to fix on our end, and will have to put a more conscientious effort into working to elect a much more diverse group. RDLC would like to reiterate that there is a lot of work to do on this front, if we are to succeed at getting and electing more diverse candidates in municipal, provincial and federal platforms.

Overall much of the groundwork from the 2016 election was used, and vastly improved upon, and we look forward to re-electing the officials who represent our values as trade unionists in a diverse society of acceptance, while adding some more in 2024. It's safe to say this is the most progressive City Hall we have ever seen, but we still have work to do to ensure that the diversity of this council and school boards more accurately reflects the people of Regina.

Of course the biggest thanks goes to the candidates who put their names forward: Cheryl Stadnychuk, Andrew Stevens, Dan LeBlanc, Shobna Radons, Shanon Zachidniak, Landon Mohl, Cecilia Prokop, Sarah Cummings-Truszkowski, and Tara Molson.

The RDLC Labour and Political Action Committee continues to work with the elected officials and do what we can to help bring positive change that is long overdue.

We would also like to acknowledge a long serving member of this committee and trade unionist Maureen Eckstein; who has selflessly dedicated her time as a member of the RDLC for decades, and involved in her union and most recently with Saskatchewan Federation of Union Retirees. She was tireless in volunteering for the NDP, attending City Council meetings, helping candidates, participating in various committees, and helped with the Relay for Life. It was very rare that she would miss a meeting, and was always willing to contribute and participate.

Michael Kurtz also has been a long serving member of the RDLC and very involved in the LPAC Committee. He is no longer affiliated but we are thankful for his contributions, especially in this last Municipal election. We are very thankful for his contributions to the LPAC Committee and RDLC as a whole.

Darin Milo

RDLC LPAC Chair