

SPRING | 2019

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# ORGANIZE, EDUCATE, RESIST

ONE YEAR IN:

# THE FORD REPORT

HOW IS THE NEW GOVERNMENT DOING?



## EDUCATION

The Ford government has slashed education spending across all areas, including teacher and support staff salaries and funding the infrastructure repair backlog.



## TRANSIT

The province has laid out its plans for a subway upload and trumpeted "new" transit lines, but there is no real plan - meanwhile, millions of dollars have been cut from maintenance and operations.



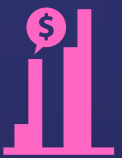
## ENVIRONMENT

The province is catering to developers at the expense of the Greenbelt and endangered species, stopped the planting of 150 million trees, banned the mention of climate change, and killed cap and trade.



## HOUSING

The creation of affordable housing has not been a priority of this government. Only market-rate new development is being supported.



## ECONOMY

Conventional economic measures show that Ontario has continued to grow. However, a recent report by the United Way showed that income disparity is starker than ever.

With promises of reducing "red tape" and administrative costs, the government has cut billions from both healthcare and public health - without any consultation.



## HEALTHCARE

The government has aimed to interfere with the bargaining rights of workers at every turn - from the construction trades to the education unions - and gutted Bill 148.

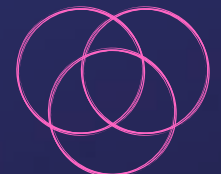


## WORKERS' RIGHTS



## PUBLIC SERVICES

Cuts to child care, library services, tourism, environmental programming, and more show that this government is not here "For The People."



## EQUITY & INCLUSION

From day one, this government has slashed and burned equity-building programs like the Indigenous curriculum and the Anti-Racism Directorate.



## EFFICIENCIES

This government uses "efficiencies" as the justification for every cut they make. In reality, the program cuts are funded on the backs of massive tax cuts to the uber-rich.

- Does not play well with others
- Does not meet expectations
- Does not meet own goals





# LESSONS OF YEAR ONE: *Organize, Educate, Resist!*



Leafletting schools in 17 ridings

At the May Labour Council meeting, delegates passed a statement on the impact of the Ford government's austerity agenda and the path ahead.

June 7<sup>th</sup> is the first anniversary of the Conservative victory in Ontario. It has been a troubling year, and there are three more to follow. It is twenty-four years since the Harris Conservatives were elected on June 8<sup>th</sup> 1995. Unlike Mike Harris, Doug Ford and his advisors have learned to slash-and-burn less explicitly. Ford's rhetoric is cloaked in fake right-wing populism; he promises "not a single front line worker will lose their job." Meanwhile, his words mask an objective that is just as revolutionary as the Harris regime: permanently changing how our province works.

It is important to recognize the parallels between this agenda and previous drives by corporate interests to change the power structure of society. In the early 1980's most countries in the global south were subject to "Structural Adjustment Programs" that dramatically lowered workers' wages, sold off public assets and enforced austerity on the

population. The UK's Maggie Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan executed policies to change how the economy operated in their countries –gutting social programs, busting unions, and deregulating services. For Brian Mulroney, the US-Canada Free Trade Deal would accomplish similar goals.

These changes led to greater levels of impoverishment while gaining obscene wealth for multinational corporations. When popular backlash led to the defeat of these conservative rulers, newly elected leaders were either unable or unwilling to reverse the damage to local economies or public services.

Doug Ford combines outrageous actions (changing Toronto elections, slashing legal aid, cancelling green programs) with cunning distractions (buck a beer, tailgate parties). But the most important process taking place is guided by the hardcore ideologues

...continued on page 4



#CutsHurtKids: 30,000 Attend Rally for Education

# LESSONS *continued...*



Society of United Professionals denounce the cuts to Legal Aid



Banner drop for Day of Action on Cuts to Education by postal workers



Young International Women's Day marcher advocating for child care

working in the back rooms—the restructuring which will last a lifetime. Classroom sizes will be larger and there will be fewer teachers and support staff, but the real impact will come from the task force that “reviews school board operations.”

Why create a “health superagency” when the Ministry of Health is already a health superagency? Because it sets up the dynamic—screened from public view—of restructuring by contracting out, privatizing and

cutting staff, while deflecting blame away from the politicians. Forcing colleges and universities to meet market-oriented “performance targets” will fundamentally change how students are prepared for their role in civil society. Stealing the subway opens the door to privatization and selling off air rights to wealthy developers. Allowing corporate CEO’s to restructure the labour market while weakening workers’ rights will only expand precarious and poverty-wage work.

As well, we are seeing very intentional attacks on Toronto. Slashing the size of City Council, and then

taking a billion out of public health and another billion out of transit operations, reduces the city’s ability to lead progressive politics. And it gives right-wing politicians tremendous leverage.

## **ORGANIZE, EDUCATE, RESIST!**

was the slogan of our movement in response to the Harris Conservatives. We must embrace and popularize a similar approach for the coming next three years.

## **ORGANIZE:**

We have been building and organizing in response to the Ford offensive. Last month we responded to attacks on education, engaging union and community activists to take the message to parents in suburban schools. This month, we are standing up to protect health care. We will continue to defend Toronto’s subway system and oppose privatization of transit. As the implications of the 2019 Ontario budget become clear, we will work to counter the attacks on legal aid, public health, and other important public services.



CUPE Local 416 paramedics attend the Rally for Public Healthcare



## EDUCATE:

At the Stewards Assembly, political economist Linda McQuaig summed up three key messages that help us understand Ontario's new reality:

- The Conservative slogan should be “for the **rich** people”.
- The rules of the game have changed dramatically. This has been achieved by corporations that work very hard to elect those who will change the rules in their favour.
- It doesn't have to be this way – a better world is possible. Just by collecting taxes at the same rate today as in 2000, we'd have an extra **\$56 billion a year** that could be used to address urgent needs like child care, pharmacare, public transit, tuition fees and effective action on climate.

## RESIST:

It is critical that we keep challenging this government and their corporate cronies every day. Yet we recognize we are in a marathon, not a sprint. We need the energy and momentum to maintain an alternative vision and defeat the Conservatives in three years.

The fight to protect public education is a key part of the resistance, and through it we are learning how to organize more deeply and hold our elected officials accountable. Exposing the Ford Conservatives today warns people of the danger posed by their federal cousins this fall.

Three years is a long time, and there will be a lot of battles. Lessons from previous Conservative regimes show that they get more ruthless the longer they are in power. Some people may become dispirited or demoralized. But we know that joining in struggle with others is a powerful antidote. Out of knowledge, comes power. Out of struggle, comes leadership.

What becomes clearer every day is that solidarity among working people and our community allies is absolutely necessary. We need to see ourselves as a resistance movement. We call on the next generation of leaders to step firmly forward, and the current generation of leaders to share the lessons of past struggles. Working with allies, rooted in diverse communities and workplaces, this resistance will see us through the tough time ahead. 🇨🇦



Rally for Public Healthcare on April 30



Fight for \$15 attends the Rally for Climate Action on March 15



Library Workers stand up for public transit on May 10



ATU 113 with Councillor Joe Cressy say “Keep Transit Public”!



# BUILDING POWER AT THE 2019 STEWARDS ASSEMBLY



Our Stewards Assembly on the evening of Monday, March 25th saw over 850 leaders and activists converge at the Metro Convention Centre. The massive turnout spoke volumes about the appetite to get organized and build solidarity.

Our goal was to share stories of adversity and fight back, highlight policies of the Conservative government and how they impact all workers, and deepen organizing networks at the local level. People sat shoulder-to-shoulder with others in their community to talk about the diverse issues impacting them as citizens and as members of the labour movement.

The audience was given a primer on the Ford government's pro-big business agenda by journalist and author Linda McQuaig. We then heard how everyday working people are learning about solidarity, standing up for their rights in diverse sectors, including hospitality, education, skilled trades, childcare and public services.

Attendees took the opportunity to share experiences and ideas with

their neighbours during the table talk activities. Next, we walked through the 5 Step Guide for Local Union Leaders (see pull-out on next page).

Breaking down silos and building cross-sector solidarity was a core theme of the assembly. In the weeks since, the provincial government has made dozens more policy announcements, including the passing of the 2019 budget with its billions of dollars' worth of cuts to services.

With marches, leafletting, sit-ins, and more happening every week on a variety of issues, it's crucial that above all else we stay focused and united in our goals. Our neighbour's fight is also our fight.

We heard from everyone attending that you are ready and willing to get active, and we will honour that fighting spirit with more events in the coming months.



# Labour's response to the Conservative agenda

# 5 step guide for local union leaders

Protect public services • Protect jobs • Protect our unions

## Alarm bells are ringing right across Ontario

**The first months of Ontario's Conservative government were relatively quiet.** Many people felt reassured by Doug Ford's election promises that no front line jobs would be eliminated and that funding cuts would be achieved through efficiencies, not cuts to services.

**Slowly the true nature of this government has emerged.** Ford cut \$1 per hour from the pay raise of minimum wage earners. He responded to GM's plans to cut thousands of jobs with nothing but words. He is trying to turn back the clock on equity. He has made shocking moves to centralize power.

### **The attack on public education is a bombshell!**

Ford plans to cut thousands of teachers across Ontario—these are obviously front line positions. And, he plans to significantly increase class sizes—a major cut, NOT an efficiency. This attack signals what Ford is planning for health care and all public services.

### **GOOD NEWS:**

When he's under major pressure Ford has backed down—more than once.

Doug Ford has backed down on development in the Greenbelt, Francophone services and even aspects of sex-ed. Public outrage stopped Ron Taverner from being appointed OPP Commissioner. Parents of autistic children forced a change in attitude.

**Lesson from the Harris era: It is possible to wage successful campaigns against a majority government!**

In the 1990s, the Harris Conservatives set out to slash public education and health care, cut benefits to people living in poverty, privatize Ontario Hydro and the LCBO and drive the labour movement off the playing field. With the notable exception of their attack on people in poverty the Conservatives fell short of their objectives. We owe this success to decisive on-the-ground campaigns on many issues throughout the Harris era, and to the Days of Action which shut down 11 Ontario cities.

**The Conservatives are extremely vulnerable on the most important issue of our time—the environmental crisis.**

Ford and his MPPs should be vigorously challenged on this issue wherever they show their faces. The global uprising of youth in defense of the planet will make itself felt in a big way here in Ontario.

## LET'S MOUNT A POWERFUL MOVEMENT TO DEFEAT CONSERVATIVE ATTACKS





Even if you are ***sick*** of politics,  
pay attention to what's  
happening at  
Queen's Park!



Doug Ford claimed he's a "friend of the little guy". Then he cut \$1 per hour from minimum wage earners. And "buck a beer" was just a gimmick.



The Conservatives promised not to eliminate "front line" jobs or cut public services. Now they're slashing thousands of teaching positions and increasing class size!

Their idea of "efficiencies" in education tells us what's coming in health care.

## Step 1

### Reflect on the threat and consider our strategic options.

- Come to terms with the extreme danger this government poses—it is already doing major harm.
- Engage everyone in the discussion: leaders, stewards, activists, staff, retirees and members.
- Face the fact that a "right-to-work" attack is *possible* and prepare for it by vigorously fighting *known* attacks now.
- Adopt a resistance strategy that builds hope and power with doable actions that fit our current capacity.

## Step 2

### Make a personal commitment.

- Some of us are union veterans, others are new to conflict on this scale.
- Together we must protect the gains of previous generations and the unions they have left in our hands.
- Face the challenge:
  - Am I ready to do the tough work of talking with members in the workplace about what's coming over the hill at us?
  - Am I ready to join campaign actions, including actions which are not directly connected to my immediate interests? This is what it takes to build a strong movement which can protect us all.





## Step 3

### Work to engage your union at all levels.

- Our unions' political activists alone cannot defeat this government's agenda.
- What can you do to fully engage the power and resources of your union? Are regional and local leaders, stewards, staff and members involved, or just the activists?
- Reduce time spent on day-to-day union tasks—so that this campaign is a top priority of everyone who cares about the union's future.
- Engage the Local Executive Board or similar body in planning an internal campaign.
- Be ready to patiently overcome denial.

## Step 4

### Take the campaign into the workplace. Engage members.

- It was the internal member-to-member campaign which defeated “right-to-work” in 2014.
- Start by discussing the campaign with members who are already alert to the issues.
- Overcome barriers that may have excluded some members from participation in the past. Look for diverse new leaders and activists.
- Get campaign materials from your union, Labour Council and/or the OFL.
- Give campaign issues a high profile on websites, in union communications and at all membership meetings, training sessions and conferences.
- Encourage members to participate in campaign actions with you.

## Step 5

### Strengthen ties with community coalitions.

- Our workplace campaign is one-on-one with members. Our public campaign is focused on our ongoing organizing with community allies to advance our equity agenda, fight poverty and racism, demand good jobs, protect public services and protect the environment.
- Lay the groundwork to ensure defeat of the Conservative government.
- Join the Rapid Response Networks which will be an important part of the campaign.
- **Together we can create a better world for the next generation.**

# ACTION NOW!

While working through the steps in this Guide, make **ACTION** part of your process. We cannot protect our public services, our jobs and our unions without action on the ground. Visit [labourcouncil.ca](http://labourcouncil.ca), your union's website and [powerofmany.ca](http://powerofmany.ca) for details of campaign actions in your area!

## We cannot afford to wait for the next election—our resistance movement has important tasks NOW

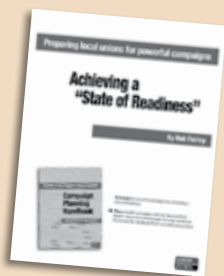
A **resistance strategy** fits our current situation because we do not yet have the power or the opportunity to defeat the Ford government. It builds hope by affirming that the modest actions which we are capable of mounting are important. It encourages people to participate and builds power incrementally. It constantly seeks openings for bolder tactics and larger actions.

A resistance strategy can achieve important goals *before* the next election. Together we can:

- Establish through action that the policies of the Conservative government are strongly opposed by much of the population.
- Discredit the government by relentlessly exposing the damage it is causing and by challenging its false messages.
- Turn public opinion into people power directed at local MPPs.
- Defeat the government's efforts to create a new normal in which cuts are entrenched, equity is driven back and unions are seriously weakened.
- Wage campaigns which convince the government that it must back off on its plans or face certain defeat.
- Strengthen our unions and social movements so that over time we can build a better future.

### Campaign Planning

Lessons of successful campaigns are summarized in booklets available at [labourcouncil.ca](http://labourcouncil.ca): *Achieving a State of Readiness* and *Campaign Planning Handbook*.



## Immediate challenges within our unions:

- Overcome denial about the seriousness of the attack. Overcome the belief that our “silos” are safe places to hide.
- Remind members that the Conservatives have a history of union-busting. We cannot rule out another so-called right-to-work attack.
- Devote adequate attention and resources to the campaign.
- Engage members one-on-one in a well-organized workplace campaign.
- Affirm the importance of joining fightback actions—no matter how small. With community allies, build toward larger more powerful actions.

**We know how to do this!** In 2014, the intensive member-to-member campaign defeated the Conservatives’ effort to impose “right-to-work” legislation. We forced Hudak to ditch that campaign plank weeks before election day!



### THE POLITICS OF HATE

**There is another urgent reason to fight the Ford Conservatives.**

Conservative movements and parties are providing a breeding ground for racist extremists around the world. We ignore this threat at our peril. Extremist groups are out to build a working class base—including union members. When progressive organizations fail to give voice to workers’ grievances, right-wing populists use racism to turn their anger against other workers instead of the wealthy 1%. They want to destroy progressive organizations of all kinds—including labour unions.

## Contact the campaign

For details of campaign actions in your area and to download campaign materials, visit [labourcouncil.ca](http://labourcouncil.ca), your union’s website and [powerofmany.ca](http://powerofmany.ca)



# THE REFUGEES NEXT DOOR



[labourcommunityservices.ca](http://labourcommunityservices.ca)





# THE REFUGEES NEXT DOOR

## *We are all Canadians*

*Since the First Nations gave Toronto the name “a gathering place”, this city and region have been the destination of choice for generations of immigrants and refugees who come with their skills and dreams of making a better life for themselves and their families.*

*Today, however, we are hearing more stories about threats to our society in the form of immigrants and refugees. As our airwaves fill with these stories aimed at painting them in a negative light, Labour Community Services believes it is important to take a look at refugees coming to Toronto today, and what their arrival means for our unions and communities.*

### Changing the Narrative

Have you noticed that, over the last few years, there has been a noticeable shift in the way stories about refugees are reported? We often hear tales of refugees arriving at the shores and borders of Europe and North America, along with a suggestion of a negative impact on the places they're seeking refuge. In the U.S., fearmongering has led to the president calling a state of emergency to fund the building of a wall he believes will stop asylum seekers and refugees from entering the country.

Closer to home, we are starting to see the same rhetoric applied to refugees arriving to Canada. As this narrative continues to ramp up locally, it is critical that we push back on stereotypes, false reporting and blatant racism.

It is not a coincidence that the same people who want to divide us are also those who oppose workers' rights, union security and strong employment standards. Solidarity is a core union value, and our workplaces and communities are better when we reach out to others to include them in our shared prosperity.







## Who are the Refugees Moving to the GTA?

Refugees and refugee claimants are mothers, fathers, sons and daughters who simply want somewhere safe to live, learn and work. Canada has always had refugees – the definition of a refugee is “a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.”

Long before the adoption of the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, people came to our country seeking refuge – the Scots forced from their homes by the Highland Clearances; the United Empire Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution; the Irish fleeing the potato famine; eastern European Jews fleeing the pogroms or the rise of Nazism. Canada has accepted refugees from every major continent in the world.

For most of us, if our lives became unsafe, we too would take the same risks to protect our family. Many of the Canadians we know as our friends and neighbours are alive today because there was a time when their parents or grandparents came here as refugees or immigrants.

## Refugees and Security

Refugee claimants all go through a rigorous front-end security screening. Through this process, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) checks all refugee claimants on arrival in Canada. Since the screening was put in place in 2001, the number of claimants found to represent any kind of security concern has been statistically insignificant.

It is far more difficult to enter Canada as a refugee than as a visitor, because we have a rigorous system in place to ensure fairness and safety – a system envied around the world. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act excludes refugee claimants if they are found to be inadmissible on the basis of security, serious criminality, organized criminality or human rights violations.

In the face of major challenges, including the shock of a new country and oftentimes a new language, refugees and refugee claimants make immense contributions to our communities by sharing their skills, knowledge and cultures. Their stories and those of Canadians welcoming them to their homes inspire us and we can be proud that most refugees manage not only to survive but to flourish – making successful, meaningful lives for themselves and their families.

## Contributions to our Society

Refugees and their families make significant positive contributions to Canadian society, economically and socially, as leaders, artists, community workers and elders. When employed, their incomes were on a par with economic immigrants, very much contradicting this notion that refugees are coming and acting as a drain for taxpayers and a drain on the Canadian economy.

Canada needs immigration to prosper. Our country has a rapidly aging and dwindling working-age population – in another decade, close to one in four Canadians will be 65 or older. In the same timeframe, the working-age population will decrease by more than 10 per cent. In 2014, the Conference Board of Canada predicted that Canada would need to increase annual immigration significantly to maintain our skilled workforce.

In addition to addressing shortfalls in today's labour market, refugees bring a longer term payoff. Recent Statistics Canada numbers have demonstrated that many of the children of refugees who came to Canada between 1980 and 2000 are excelling. They have similar graduation and university entrance rates as their Canadian-born peers.

In 2019, four people who arrived in Canada as refugees hold public office as Members of Parliament, including the Minister of Democratic Institutions and MP for Peterborough-Kawartha, Maryan Monsef, who is originally from Afghanistan.

## Unions and Refugees

Unions have a long history of standing up to unfairness and promoting equality. By working with community allies and groups interested in helping refugees settle into their new homes, we can counter any discrimination and hostility when it happens.

Examples of these allies – individuals and organizations who share the goal of welcoming and helping newcomers build a new life in Canada – include settlement agencies, the local chamber of commerce, elected officials, faith and cultural groups, schools and youth organizations, service agencies, businesses and health and social organizations.

## Toronto the Good

Communities in the GTA have long reflected the world. Our strength lies in our diversity, and our communities now boast people from every corner of the world. For decades, we have welcomed generations of people that have been forced to flee their homes due to violence, famine and other atrocities. Climate change is making matters worse. Despite the attempts from some quarters to fan the flames of division and intolerance, the overwhelming majority of people in greater Toronto support the resettlement of refugees. That generosity of spirit is what allows us to discover our common humanity – and is the compassion that will ensure our common prosperity.

**Phone: 416-445-5819**

**[labourcommunityservices.ca](http://labourcommunityservices.ca)**

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# CANADA VOTES 2019

With the Federal election just a few months away, parties and media are ramping up their messaging around hot-button issues like climate change, immigration, and jobs.

The federal election, scheduled for Monday, October 21, is already heating up. Polls show the governing Liberal party has been steadily losing support while the Conservatives have been gaining steam. Provincial election results across the country do not bode well for progressive interests, with conservative parties now governing six out of the ten provinces. Voters need to be wary of conservative agenda-setting that is anti-worker, anti-immigrant, and anti-government services. With the federal Conservatives pandering to lobbyists from big business and far-right interest groups, there is a real concern about how to get important progressive issues into the national conversation.

We are already seeing the results of continuous fear-mongering around immigration: the results of an April EKOS poll looking at public opinion of immigrants of colour illustrated the shocking reality that “For the first time opposition to visible minority immigration [is] higher than to immigration in general.”

With fewer than twelve years to reverse our course on global warming, and with the gap between rich and poor growing deeper than ever, there are far more critical issues to discuss. Labour has an important role to play in setting the conversation, and we will continue to push for social, economic, racial, and climate justice.

# IT'S TIME FOR CANADA TO COMMIT TO PHARMACARE FOR ALL

The New Democratic Party has made pharmacare one of its central campaign planks for this fall's election, marking a new milestone in the Canadian Labour Congress's decades-long fight to include the cost of prescription drugs under universal healthcare provisions.

The Canadian Labour Congress has led the fight to stand up for the millions of Canadians who do not currently have extended medical coverage. According to a survey commissioned by the Advisory Council on Pharmacare, nearly a quarter of Ontarians have skipped taking prescribed medication because they could not afford it. Approximately one in three Ontarians don't have health benefits through their work; and while the Ontario Drug Benefit covers seniors, there are added expenses that can make medication too expensive for those living on a fixed income.

Canada is the only industrialized country with a public healthcare system that does not include the cost

of pharmaceuticals. While the current Liberal government has taken some steps toward the creation of universal pharmacare, their “wait and see” strategy leaves the health of millions of Canadians on the line.

When Canadians have access to the medication they need to be healthy, the cost of the drugs goes down and so does the cost of emergency medicine. We need universal pharmacare today, not ten years from now. We need a universal program that covers all prescribed drugs, not just the most common ones. And, we need our politicians to take a proactive approach to our health and our healthcare spending.



*Bromley Armstrong  
Awards & Gala*

**Friday, June 7**  
**Toronto Don Valley Hotel**  
 175 Wynford Dr., Toronto  
 Doors open at 6  
 Dinner and refreshments at 7

Tickets available through  
 Labour Community Services  
 416-445-5819 x 21

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 Greater Toronto



*Happy  
Pride 2019!*

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*Celebrating Love Since 1871*

## Welcome Skylar

Labour Council welcomes Skylar Maharaj as our new Communications and Data Coordinator. Skylar has worked in progressive politics for the past several years, including as assistant to Joe Mihevc during his final term as a Toronto city councillor. There, she was engaged with a wide range of community and social justice issues and supported Councillor Mihevc in his roles as Chair of the Board of Health and liaison to Toronto Caribbean Carnival. Prior to City Hall, Skylar worked as an adult ESL instructor and completed an M.A. in Immigration and Settlement Studies. She dedicates her free time to election campaigns, mentoring young workers, and making food for her feminist book club. Skylar is replacing Kiruthiha Kulendiren who has gone to work with COPE Ontario. All our best for Kiruthiha in her new role, and welcome Skylar to our Labour Council family!




**IWOC**  
**Indigenous & Workers of Colour**  
**Conference**  
**2019**

CONFRONTING OPPRESSION AND BUILDING UNITY

**SATURDAY, JUNE 1**  
 9 AM - 4 PM  
 IBEW 353 Hall, 1377 Lawrence Ave. E.  
 Registration: \$85

To register, visit:  
[www.labourcouncil.ca/IWOC2019](http://www.labourcouncil.ca/IWOC2019)

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## FAILING ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

Tenants in community housing have waited too long to fix crumbling buildings. There could be good green jobs retrofitting and reducing CO2 emissions, but Ford Conservatives have done nothing.

Failing to upgrade housing means we'll pay much more later.

**WE'LL PAY  
MUCH MORE LATER.**

## NO TO THE POLITICS OF HATE

The world was rocked by the news of devastating mass killings at two mosques in New Zealand. The attack, carried out by a man consumed by racism and hate, was perhaps not as shocking as it should have been.



How many more vigils will we hold for those who have lost their lives to hatred? This spring the world has witnessed attacks on people at worship in mosques, churches, and synagogues. For those who are seen as minority members of our communities, these events are deeply disturbing. A clear response is necessary to demonstrate solidarity and to stand up against hate in all its forms.

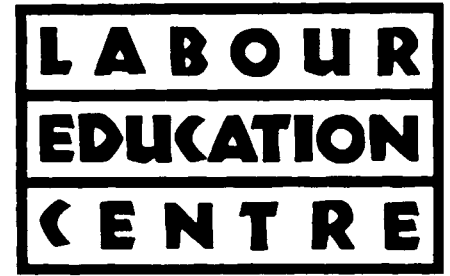
We can contribute to building a counter-narrative to hate. Each year, the Labour Council and Urban Alliance on Race Relations mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21 with a public event at Toronto City Hall. This year featured a panel

discussion on the topic “Resisting Racism, Seeking Justice.”

MPP Rima Berns-McGown (Beaches—East York) has introduced Bill 83, An Act to proclaim a Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia, at the provincial legislature. The act will have Ontario formally recognize January 29, the day of the 2016 mosque shooting in Quebec City. The bill received unanimous support in its second reading and is currently under committee review.

Let your MPP know that you support Ontario taking leadership to fight Islamophobia by visiting [unitedagainstislamophobia.com](http://unitedagainstislamophobia.com).

# WHAT'S NEW AT THE LABOUR EDUCATION CENTRE



## Employment Services Transformation

As part of the roll out of the Ford Government's "Ontario Open for Business" approach, The Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has entered into consultations to transform the way in which Employment Services are delivered in Ontario. As one of the service providers, the Labour Education Centre (LEC) provides Employment Services to Newcomers in the Flemingdon Park, Thorncliffe and Victoria Village Neighborhoods.

MTCU has announced its plans to pilot the changes in three different areas across the province beginning this September. Their model is based on past changes in British Columbia, which saw an increased role for privately owned service providers. The large US based ResCare, part of the global KKR empire, has already started attending information sessions in Toronto.

## New Horizons: Getting Seniors Online

The Labour Education Centre is starting a new project to help Seniors Living in Flemingdon Park, Thorncliffe Park and Crescent Town as well as neighboring communities to get online. The focus of the project is to support Seniors with learning how to use tablets. Participants in the program will have the opportunity to volunteer by using their digital technology skills to carry out one on one tutoring. Seniors will be able to use tablets to connect with friends and family and find information online. The program will start in June - if you are interested in getting involved with the project please contact Annefrances Morris by phone at 416-537-6532 ext. 2204 or by email [Amorris@laboureducation.com](mailto:Amorris@laboureducation.com)

A poster for the "Quick Start in Construction" program. It features a smiling Black woman wearing a blue hard hat and an orange safety vest. To her right is a white sign with red and black text and graphics. The sign includes the "RED SEAL CANADA" logo, the text "Start your pathway to a Red Seal trade", a "GET CERTIFIED" logo, the text "Get safety certificates evenings & weekends", and a graphic of a person climbing stairs with the text "Build your support system for career success". At the bottom of the poster, it says "No trades experience needed. No eligibility requirements. Info session every Saturday Location: 25 Klondike Dr. Toronto (Steeles and Weston Road) RSVP at [communitybenefits.ca/quickstart](http://communitybenefits.ca/quickstart) 647-361-0942".

## New Construction Trades Training Program

The Labour Education Centre and the Toronto Community Benefits Network are collaborating on a new construction trades training program. Quick Start is a way for experienced workers in other sectors to enter construction, with a chance to start work under one of four Community Benefit agreements negotiated by the TCBN. The TCBN is responsible for recruitment and placement, LEC will be doing the technical training at our new location, 25 Klondike Drive. (Steeles and Weston Rd).

Training will include at least 6 safety certifications: Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS), Personal Protective Equipment, Working at Heights, Workplace Violence and Harassment, Hand and Small Tool Awareness, and Worker Health and Safety Awareness.



# LEADERSHIP STARTS WITH YOU

Meet Pamela Serrattan, a Labour Community Advocate Training graduate. Delivered by Labour Community Services, LCAT trains workers to act as referral agents in their workplaces and to assist their co-workers in times of need.



*"I have learned that being a leader you must continue to learn and grow from every person who crosses your path."*

Pamela Serrattan is a proud member of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Local 528. The mother of three credits the LCAT program for the opportunity to develop vital leadership skills and access to transformative knowledge that every Union leader should grasp.

Having participated in routine workshops in the past, Pamela did not know what to expect from LCAT, but she was amazed by the structure of the program in which other participants shared their lived experiences. Although she was nervous at the beginning, the program provided a supportive space for Pamela to engage with facilitators and participants in interactive workshops. The topics were relatable and provided a fresh insight that rebuilt Pamela's confidence.

Empowered by transformative information, Pamela successfully ran for the leadership of her union local 528 and was duly elected as president to better support her colleagues with new skills and knowledge for referral and support. Pamela credits the Labour Community Advocate Training Program for the opportunity to develop new found confidence of being a leader who loves to knock on neighbor's doors to speak about what is possible.

For more information about registering for the Labour Community Advocates Training Program, please contact Mr. Najib Soufian at: 416.445.5819 ext. 26 or [nsoufian@labourcommunityservices.ca](mailto:nsoufian@labourcommunityservices.ca) Or visit: [labourcommunityservices.ca/training/](http://labourcommunityservices.ca/training/)

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# JUNE 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF ACTION

## LUNCH + LEARN ACTIONS AT WORKPLACES EVERYWHERE

Mark the anniversary of the Ford government's election by shining a light on their real record!

Our movement is planning actions in workplaces large and small. These will take the form of “lunch + learn” meetings in workplaces across greater Toronto. Many unions have successfully used this tactic in contract mobilizing or issue campaigns to engage members.

#OneYearAfter the election of the Conservative government, their record is one of cuts to vital programs, attacks on workers' rights, and constant abuse of power. The “people” they are acting for are the richest 1%.

Look for the information bulletin with a summary of the harmful cuts—in contrast to the payoffs given to the wealthiest special interest groups through nearly every government act. The Premier and Conservative MPPs have a pattern of not answering any questions about the cuts – their failure to meet constituents, the untruthful replies sent to people who reach out to them, the refusal to answer direct questions from journalists or in the Legislature.

In a fifteen minute meeting we will outline

these cuts and ask members what question they would want the Conservatives to answer truthfully:

- Why are you attacking our education system and our schools?
- Why are you taking a billion dollars out of public health, and a billion out of transit?
- Why are you cutting other services? Ripping up union agreements?

Labour and community activists are already involved in campaigns on many specific issues. By involving tens of thousands of union members in debunking the Conservative narrative, we are helping to deepen a public rejection of their agenda and setting the stage for more effective, widespread resistance.

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Go to: [labourcouncil.ca/OneYearAfter](http://labourcouncil.ca/OneYearAfter) to get material and a planning guide for a lunch + learn at your workplace.