



Pay gap hurts women

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# uniFORUM



Unifor's first Women's Conference attracted activists from across Canada.

## Women's conference readies for election

Unifor's first women's conference attracted 305 participants and took on a range of issues from the need for better child care to an end to precarious work.

"We can have better workplaces, better

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## Unions key to fighting violence against women

Violence against women is a union issue, and one that everyone - including and especially our governments - needs to do more to address, Unifor National President Jerry Dias told a panel on the

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issue at a recent meeting of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITC) in Bulgaria.

"When unions take this on, we can make a difference. Violence against women is a global problem and requires a global trade union response," Dias said. "But we can all do more."

In Canada, half of all women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.

For First Nations women, the situation is even worse.

## Bombardier workers take message to TTC

Striking Bombardier workers from Thunder Bay held three days of activities in Toronto to put pressure on the TTC not to accept vehicles assembled by replacement workers and to raise awareness about Bombardier's attempt to

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## #unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@Unifor88Kim

Just beaming at #UniforWCF with my inspiring, beautiful, kickass (spicy) sisters.

@Unifor112

Unifor Local 112 supports Unifor 1075's workers as they continue their strike against Bombardier.

## In brief

### Local 302, Gowland

Unifor Local 302 members at Marshall Gowland Manor, a municipal home for the aged in Sarnia, Ontario, voted 97 per cent to ratify a deal that included wages increases in the 3-year deal of 1.5 per cent, 1.75 per cent and 1.75 per cent.

There is also a 25¢ per hour RPN adjustment each year of the agreement.

The members also benefit from improvements in vision coverage; including eye exams; as well as increases in massage therapy coverage; shift and weekend premiums, and an increase in the Paid Education Leave contribution. **U**

### Local 8300, Interval

Unifor Local 8300 members at Interval House, a women's shelter in Kingston, Ontario, have ratified a new contract.

The deal provides minimum 1.5% per cent wage increases in a one-year term, as well as further pay equity lump sums.

Some members will receive up to \$1.75 per hour and casual relief workers will get their first raise in seven years. **U**

## Photo spotlight

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CREDITS DWAYNE GUNNESS

Unifor was present at Toronto's recent Caribbean Carnival.



CREDITS LANA PAYNE

Unifor National President Jerry Dias and Secretary-Treasurer Peter Kennedy took a pledge at an ITC Conference in Bulgaria against gender-based violence.

### Men must fight gender violence

In the wake of news that a Thunder Bay mother was assaulted by her partner and her daughter killed, Unifor National President Jerry Dias is calling on all men to take seriously their role in ending gender-based violence.

"This is not a women's issue. This is a societal issue, and one that men bear a particular responsibility to address," Dias said.

Men make up half the population, so real change can only come when men join women to tell our leaders that stopping violence against women is a top priority, Dias said.

"More than that, men can make a difference in how we

help to raise our children, and the conversations we have with our friends and family," Dias said.

News of the assault and murder shook Unifor's women's conference, where more than \$7,000 was raised in donations, with more money coming in from locals across the country.

Unifor calls on all levels of government to support a national action plan to end gender-based violence. **U**

### Pay gap keeps women down

The elusive work-life balance is still out of reach for many women who are still paid less than men, take their work home and carry the burden of far more than half of all housework and childcare, Centre for Policy Alternatives Senior Researcher Kate McInturff told the Unifor Women's Conference.

Women still make 70 cents on the dollar, compared to male counterparts. "We know we can achieve gender equality, it's not a dream, it's a goal,"

said McInturff.

"I'm interested in raising the bar of what policy makers can do for us. It's our government, our values and it should look like us," she said.

For instance, women disproportionately take parental leave after a child is born – six months compared with 2.5 weeks for men – because the single greatest indicator for who will leave the workforce is earning potential.

But in Quebec, where fathers get more support,



Centre for Policy Alternatives Senior Researcher Kate McInturff

76 per cent take the leave, compared with 26 per cent in the rest of Canada, she said. **U**

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS: SARAH BLACKSTOCK, SHANNON DEVINE, KATIE ARNUP, STUART LAIDLAW, IAN BOYKO, SHELLEY BURGOYNE, MARIE-ANDREE L'HEUREUX AND ANNE MARIE VINCENT

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While First Nations women make up just 4.3 per cent of the overall female population, they represent 16 per cent of all female homicides and are almost three times more likely to be killed by a stranger.

Dias said unions have a key role in fighting gender-based violence and sexism – pointing to Unifor's Women's Advocate Program, which provides for trained specialists in 325 Unifor workplaces across the country.

As well, Unifor helped sponsor a University of Western Ontario survey into the impact of domestic violence in the workplace. 

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slash pensions and retiree benefits despite record profits.

"We think it's important for Toronto transit riders and the general public in Ontario to know just where their public dollars are going," said Dominic Pasqualino, president of Unifor Local 1075.

More than 900 workers at Bombardier's Thunder Bay facility, members of Unifor local 1075, have been on strike since July 14 to protect pensions and retiree benefits as well as good jobs created by public investment in transit.

"Bombardier is doing really well financially, with \$32 billion in orders on the books and a leg up from the 'buy Ontario' policy



Unifor Local 1075 visited Toronto to tell TTC riders why they are on strike at Bombardier in Thunder Bay.

that our union fought for. For them to turn around and try to gut pensions and retiree benefits for the next generation of workers is just plain insulting," said Pasqualino.

Meanwhile, the rail division's new president, Lutz Bertling, was sitting on a pension worth more than \$640,000 at the end of 2013 after just six months with the company.

The striking workers build the Toronto Rocket subway cars, bi-level coaches for GO Transit, and the new TTC streetcars scheduled to be released August 31.

"We take great pride in our work," said Ron Frost, unit chair in Thunder Bay.

The workers leafleted outside TTC stations, TTC and GO Transit offices and Bombardier's Downsview plant. 

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communities, and even a better labour movement," said Julie White, Women's Department Director in her opening address. "It's not a dream, it's a goal."

The conference took place at Unifor's Education Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario from August 10 to 13. The objective of the conference, themed *I'm a feminist, so now what? The rising of women means the rising of us all*, was to prepare women for the next federal election, currently scheduled for 2015.

Through a series of workshops, women explored a number of key issues and how to organize and mobilize for municipal,

provincial and federal elections over the next year.

The conference included an opening speech by Unifor Women's Director Julie White, a keynote address by Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Senior Researcher Kate McInturff and an address from Assistant to the President Jenny Ahn.

The conference also included a panel on Feminist Issues, Feminist Power and another on Feminist Mobilizing Toward 2015. Communications Director Sarah Blackstock delivered a presentation on getting ready for the 2015 federal election.

White urged delegates to plan with their locals for that election. "We can and must start to prepare now." 

## Pensions key to current Unifor strikes

Pensions are a central issue in several disputes confronting Unifor members on the picket line across Canada as companies continue to look to improve their bottom lines at the expense of workers.

"Unifor members are right to stand up for their pensions. Pension plan funding has improved in the past year, but companies still demand pension cuts to improve corporate profits with no consideration for their workers," Unifor Director of Pensions and Benefits Jo-Ann

Hannah said.

"Workers, including new hires, have a right to a secure pension."

In Thunder Bay, 900 members of Unifor Local 1075 at Bombardier Bay have been on strike since July 14 in a dispute over two-tier pensions.

"Bombardier is telling us that a secure retirement is good enough for the top executives but not for the workers," Local 1075 President Dominic Pasqualino wrote in a column in the Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal.

In Brampton, Ont., 38 members of Unifor Local 252 are striking over demands from Emerald Power from Waste that they agree to a cap on pension plan contributions.

In BC, Local 114 members are on strike at Cascade Aerospace to resist demands for a two-tier pension. 

# CRTC ruling upholds Rogers' responsibilities to multilingual programming

A Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) ruling recently rebuffed Rogers Broadcasting Limited's request for sweeping regulatory relief for its OMNI ethnic television chain in spite of recent financial losses at those five stations.

In the same decision, the CRTC will require Rogers to enhance its commitments

to original local programming broadcast from its national chain of City stations.

"Multiculturalism is part of what makes Canada great, and we fought to keep ethnic and third language services alive in Rogers' licence," said Unifor Media Sector Director Howard Law. "Rogers Communications is a very profitable corporation and can easily afford to

maintain the current level of programming at OMNI, diminished as it is."

Rogers applied for a renewal of its City and OMNI licences in the fall of 2013 with a proposal to reduce commitments to ethnic and Canadian programming, particularly during the prime time evening period. Unifor testified before the Commission in April 2014,

arguing that Rogers' claims about revenue problems at the OMNI stations were over-reaching and under-documented.

"This ruling is a victory for growing newcomer communities who rely on this programming," said Law. "We are very pleased the Commission stood firm. But we feel strongly that Rogers can do even better." 

## Unifor member honored by Poland

On July 28 at the Polish Consulate in Vancouver, Polish Consul General Krzysztof Czapla presented Local 686B President Jan Mendrek with the "Krzyzem Wolnosci I Solidarnosci" (Cross of Freedom and Solidarity) from the Republic of Poland.

Mendrek was honoured for his work for Poland's

Solidarity Movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

His involvement began in 1978 when it was still an underground resistance movement advocating workers' rights and social change. They had to work in secret because it was illegal to question the government.

A strike in September 1980 pushed the movement into a popular resistance. Martial Law was declared in December 1981. Mendrek and thousands of others were arrested.

In July 1982 Mendrek was released and went back to activism. The



Unifor Local 686B President Jan Mendrek, left, with Polish Consul General Krzysztof Czapla.

secret police monitored his activities and arrested him again in September 1983. They forced him to choose between a five-year prison sentence or exile. He emigrated to Canada.

Mendrek's activism led him to unionize the

Bullmoose Mine in Tumbler Ridge for the CEP. At Westcoast Energy, he became president of Local 686B, a position he's held for 24 years.

He and wife Christina raised two boys in Dawson Creek. 

## Unifor Social Justice Fund gives \$75k to Gaza

Unifor's Social Justice Fund board of directors has approved a \$75,000 donation to humanitarian relief efforts in Gaza. The money provided by the non-profit will be sent via two organizations: \$25,000 to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), and \$50,000 to Doctors without Borders (MSF).

In response to horrific attacks on civilians and

chaos in the region, many trade unions have responded to calls for immediate support focusing on urgently needed food and medical care.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) launched an appeal urging all member unions to contribute in the wake of increasing violence between Hamas and Israel which has so far claimed the lives

of more than 500 people, many of whom are civilians, and injured thousands more.

"Unifor demands an immediate implementation of the UN Security Council's call for a ceasefire and the ending of all military operations by Israel and Hamas," Unifor said in a statement on Gaza last month.

"Unifor stands with the global trade union

community in calling for respect of international human rights law, immediate humanitarian assistance to Gaza, lifting of the blockade of Gaza, and renewed peace negotiations."

MSF is responding by filling gaps in the Palestinian health system and providing urgent care to the wounded.

For more information, visit [www.ituc-csi.org](http://www.ituc-csi.org) 