



IN THIS ISSUE:
**UNIFOR SYRIAN REFUGEES
 PLACED >> PAGE 2**
**MANITOBA BILL HELPS WOMEN
 ESCAPE VIOLENCE >> PAGE 2**
**CELEBRATING DIVERSITY
 >> PAGE 4**

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Strong economic stimulus needed

With interest rates at historic lows and the need among Canadians great, now is the ideal time for the federal government to take an active role in stimulating the Canadian economy, Unifor National President Jerry Dias told the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance.

"The retreat of our government from the economic stage has hurt ordinary Canadians," Dias said in the February 19 presentation.

Corporate taxes have been slashed in the name of stimulating the economy, and yet job creation and GDP growth have stagnated, or even fallen, Dias told the committee.

And despite promises that tax cuts would lead to increased investment by business, Dias pointed out that corporate Canada is

>> Continued on page3

Unifor National President Jerry Dias spoke at the federal House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance's budget hearings recently, calling for infrastructure spending and strategic support for key industries.

Support for aerospace needed

Unifor will continue to meet with both company officials and the federal government to discuss long-term growth at Bombardier and the importance of the aerospace industry in Canada as a source of good jobs, Unifor National President Jerry Dias says.

"This is obviously

>> Continued on page2

Chrysler jobs boost shows Canadian competitiveness

Fiat Chrysler's announcement that a new minivan at its Windsor facility will mean twice as many jobs as first expected is not only good news, it's a reflection of Canada's competitiveness in the auto sector, Unifor National President Jerry Dias says.

"Canadian autoworkers can compete with any in the world," Dias said.

"We've got highly skilled and productive workers - a fact that is regularly recognized with top industry awards."

Fiat Chrysler announced at the recent Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto that production of the 2017 Chrysler Pacifica in Windsor will result in about 1,200 jobs - twice what was originally expected.

>>Continued on page3

Unifor Syrian refugees matched

Unifor has received word that five Syrian refugee families have been matched with Unifor volunteers, with an expected arrival this spring.

In the fall of 2015, Unifor responded to an international call to support Syrian refugees, and members representing a diversity of sectors in the Toronto area volunteered to assist with sponsorship of five families.

Unifor is backing the sponsorship with financial aid, but for the next 12 months, Unifor volunteers will open up their own homes, their hearts and their lives to offer guidance for settlement.

Stay tuned for more updates on this vital international solidarity work of our union as the families arrive in Canada and build their lives.



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Bill will help women escape violence

Unifor activists testified recently before a Manitoba legislative committee to support Bill 8 – Amendments to the Employment Standards Code including leave for victims of domestic violence – just days before International Women's Day.

"When there is violence at home, you shouldn't have to worry about holding onto your job as you escape and rebuild," said NDP Labour Minister Erna Braun.

The bill introduces a workplace leave for workers experiencing domestic violence in Manitoba. Workers who are victims of domestic violence will get up to ten days' leave a year.

Employment and financial autonomy are key indicators



Unifor activists met recently with Manitoba Minister of Labour and Immigration Erna Braun (centre): Carmen Ledarney from Local 2169 bargaining committee and Prairie Council Women's Committee, Leanne Sookram from Local 2002 Women's Advocate, Manitoba Area Director Ken Stuart and National Representative Gina Smoke.

to whether a worker can leave a violent partner.

Since 1993, Unifor's predecessor unions have bargained a ground-breaking program to train workplace representatives to assist women dealing with domestic violence. Unifor runs 40 training programs for new Women's Advocates and offers a three-day update

for experienced Advocates. Today there are more than 300 Advocates in workplaces across the country.

Unifor's work has been recognized by the International Labour Organization.

For details of International Women's Day events across Canada go to: www.unifor.org/women.

>> Continued from "Support for aerospace" on page 1

a stressful day for Bombardier workers," Dias said.

"It is important to remember that the long-term health of the aerospace industry depends on very expensive research into new technologies to develop new aircraft – efforts that can take a very long time before a payoff seen."

Dias said that's why Unifor has already met to discuss the importance of the aerospace industry in Canada with the Prime Minister's Office, as well as several federal ministries, including Finance, Transportation and Innovation and Technology.

"Governments around the world recognize



Unifor activists in Ottawa recently advocated for support for Bombardier.

the importance of the aerospace industry as a source of top-notch research and good jobs for their citizens," Dias said.

"With a new government in Ottawa, we are hopeful that a decade of neglect

towards Canada's manufacturing sector can now be corrected."

Dias said it is encouraging to see the order from Air Canada for 45 C Series jets, with options for another 30.

**>> Continued from
"Strong economic stimulus
needed" on page 1**

sitting on more than \$700 billion in available cash that it refuses to invest. At the same time, Canadian families are burdened with record levels of household debt, so consumer spending cannot be counted on to stimulate the economy.

"For now, it remains up to the federal government, through fiscal policy, to put Canadians back to work and get the growth process going," Dias said in Unifor's submission to the committee.

Unifor recommends the establishment of a Canadian Development Bank to provide funding for key sectors of the Canadian economy, including energy, transportation and

advanced manufacturing.

"With interest rates even on very long-run government bonds at record lows, this is an excellent moment to establish the bank," Unifor's submission says.

Dias also called for a cautious approach to trade agreements, including the Trans Pacific Partnership, to ensure increased opportunities for Canadians, and for the federal government to coordinate efforts with provincial governments to attract manufacturing.

A key part of stimulating the economy, Dias said, will be infrastructure development - both physical infrastructure and social infrastructure such as health care, education and an expanded Canada



Unifor National President Jerry Dias was joined by other progressive voices at the pre-budget hearings, including Winnipeggers Vanessa Gamblin of Siloam Mission shelter and Mary Pidlaski of Villa Rosa prenatal centre.

Pension Plan - including investing in a transition to the green economy.

To ensure maximum benefit, Unifor is proposing requirements for made-in-Canada materials and inputs, local hiring initiatives (especially among vulnerable communities), removal of any requirements for private sector involvement and

improvements to accessible transportation for Canadians with disabilities.

As a country rich in natural resources, Unifor is also calling for a multi-dimensional natural resource strategy in key industries such as oil and gas, mining and forestry that is socially inclusive, ecologically responsible and economically beneficial.

**>> Continued from "Chrysler
jobs boost shows..." on page 1**

The announcement comes on the heels of comments from auto industry advisor Ray Tanguay that both the federal and Ontario governments must do more to tell auto companies about the advantages of making cars in Canada - including an educated and skilled workforce, health care, corporate taxes, the low dollar and an established supply chain.

"There's a lot that goes into making an auto industry competitive, and Canada has much to offer auto manufacturers when they are looking for a place to build their cars," Dias said.

"We need to be more upfront in making sure our

advantages are understood."

Dias said that after 10 years of the Harper government doing little to support the industry, Canada's largest export, it is vital that both the Ontario and federal governments work to ensure the continued prosperity of the auto sector in Canada.

Every job in an auto assembly plant results in nine more jobs with suppliers and other spinoffs, he said.

"There are huge advantages to the entire economy when auto jobs are created in Canada," Dias said.

With contract talks with the Detroit Three set for this year, Unifor has said that bringing new products to Canadian assembly plants will be a priority at the bargaining table.

Unifor lauds federal local news review

Unifor, Canada's largest media union, lauded the federal government announcement that it will launch an investigation into the decline of media and its effect on Canadian society.

"The ability of Canadian media to independently and thoroughly cover local, national and international news from a Canadian perspective is crucial to the well-being of our democracy," Unifor National President Jerry Dias said.

"Public policy has to catch up to reality. These hearings are needed and long overdue."

Liberal Heritage Committee Chair Hedy Fry said the committee will hold

a series of meetings about the shifting patterns in how Canadians get information, particularly online, and how that affects local communities.

Unifor intends to play an active role in hearings, to ensure members' insights into the challenges facing the media sector are a key part of its work.

Unifor represents 15,000 media workers, including 5,000 journalists.

Canadian media companies are being hammered by a fragmented advertising market, as American digital giants such as Google and Facebook grab advertising dollars.



Chinese New Year a chance to celebrate diversity

A buffet dinner at Unifor's New Westminster office in British Columbia recently showed just one of the many ways - big and small - that Canada's largest union in the private sector embraces and celebrates diversity.

"Diversity and community are the backbone of our union. I encourage Unifor locals to continue to seek out ways to open their doors and make themselves visible in our communities," said Unifor Western Director Joie Warnock.

On February 12, at the Western Region Office in New Westminster, Unifor's Vancouver and Area Aboriginal and Workers of Colour Committee hosted

an open house to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

Participants were treated to door prizes, a \$5 buffet dinner, and a performance of the traditional Chinese lion dance.

Warnock and BC Area Director Gavin McGarrigle welcomed members and their families and addressed the gathering about the need for the union to continue to reach out and engage local communities.

Across the country, that is happening, with more events to mark the Chinese New Year and Black History Month, whether locals organize their own events or participate in community initiatives in their area.

IN THIS ISSUE Unifor makes a pre-budget submission in Ottawa, calling for infrastructure spending and support for key industries, including Bombardier. New jobs at Chrysler show Canada is a good place to invest. Syrian refugees get placed. Manitoba bill helps women escape violence. Hearings to be held into local news.



Unifor's New Westminster office hosted a brunch to mark Chinese New Year.

Diversity is a key part of Unifor's efforts to build a more equitable society. Through local, regional and national Aboriginal and Workers of Colour Committees, diversity issues are kept at the forefront of Unifor's efforts.

As well, in its recent

federal budget submission, Unifor National President Jerry Dias said federal funding should include requirements for hiring on infrastructure funding to target vulnerable groups, including hiring from local Aboriginal communities.