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VOLUME 4, NO.21

WWW.UNIFOR.ORG

OCTOBER 20, 2016



uniFORUM



Unifor National President Jerry Dias outlines contract details to FCA workers.

Unifor Support Workers Strike WECD SB

Unifor support workers at the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board set up picket lines as they commenced legal strike action on October 17.

“Our members do not undertake strike action lightly,” said Bruce Dickie, President of Unifor Local 2458. “We are appreciative of the impact a strike will have on students and parents. This is the last available resort in our effort to pursue reaching a fair and reasonable contract.”

Unifor Local 2458 represents 370 members in two bargaining units consisting of office, clerical and information technology workers, and custodians and maintenance staff. Both units voted overwhelmingly to support the strike action, which comes following

Unifor delivers petition to health ministers

A Unifor delegation handed nearly 35,000 signed petition cards to Ontario Health Minister Dr. Eric Hoskins, asking him to hand the cards over to Federal Health Minister

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Pattern Agreement secured at FCA

Thousands of Unifor FCA members attended local membership meetings and voted to ratify a four-year contract that secures the pattern reached with General Motors.

“Negotiations with FCA were tough, but I am proud that our union stood united and focused to push for the pattern,” said Unifor National President Jerry

Dias. “This Agreement helps to shift the landscape in the auto industry and it provides a solid economic increase for all of our members and their families.”

All three FCA agreements were ratified with a majority vote. Unifor members voted 70.1 per cent to approve the master settlement. The vote break down was 69.1 per

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In Brief

Unifor to lobby on TPP

A group of Unifor members, local leaders and national staff head to Ottawa on October 30 for a week of meetings with Members of Parliament to urge them not to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

"Unifor believes in trade, but it needs to be fair trade, addressing the needs of Canadians," Unifor National President Jerry Dias said.

The TPP is a "free trade" deal between 12 nations: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States of America and Vietnam.

Unifor has led the Canadian fight to stop ratification of the TPP, and has made several deputations to public hearings on the deal.

For more information, please visit: unifor.org/tpp.



Uniforum is published every two weeks by Unifor, Canada's largest union in the private sector.

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Unifor warns of more school bus troubles

In the wake of an ongoing shortage of school bus drivers in Ontario, Unifor is taking action to raise the issue of school bus contracts and precarious work. The union is working to resolve the issue by pushing for changes to the system to prevent the race to the bottom that forces drivers out of the industry.

At the heart of the problem is the current Request for Proposals (RFPs) system for awarding contracts, which drives down compensation and erodes job security for school bus drivers.

"RFPs, to be blunt, have introduced an unprecedented level of instability to the system," Unifor Local 4268 President Deb Montgomery warned the Toronto District

School Board's (TDSB) finance committee.

"The Board has taken a reliable system for getting students to and from school, offering decent jobs for drivers and consistency for parents and their children, and turned it into an increasingly precarious industry offering few rewards for drivers and little stability for parents."

Montgomery will also be speaking with the Ontario Ombudsman's office, which is looking into the shortage of drivers in Toronto that left more than 2,600 students with no way to get to school on the first day.

As well, Unifor will be making a formal written submission to the Ombudsman's office, including the union's in-depth



Local 4268 President Deb Montgomery invited to address TDSB finance committee.

research into the impact RFPs have had on the school bus industry.

The TDSB has relied on taxis, SUVs from limousine companies, teachers' cars and drivers flown in from Alberta to get students to school this year, because of the driver shortage.

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Jane Philpott at the October 18 federal and provincial health ministers meeting in Toronto.

"We present these cards to you, and ask that you pass them on to Minister Philpott to underline the importance and urgency of health care funding," Katha Fortier, Unifor Assistant to the National President, said to Hoskins as she handed over several Unifor bags filled with postcards.

Hoskins promised to pass the cards along.

"I want to thank you for your commitment to Canada's health care system," Hoskins said. "I think I might have even signed one of these cards."

Unifor health care members circulated the



Unifor delivers almost 35,000 signed petition cards at the provincial health ministers' conference.

cards in support of four key demands: a national public drug program; sufficient federal and provincial funding for high-quality acute care, home care and long-term care; a senior's strategy to care for our aging population; protection and enforcement

of the Canada Health Act to ensure health care remains public for the public good.

"Canadians treasure our health care system and want to continue to count on care that is provided to every person equally, regardless of their wealth or location," said Fortier.

>> Continued from "Unifor Support Workers Strike WECDSB" on page 1

years of failed negotiations with WECDSB.

"Wages have been frozen since 2012, which is when the last freely negotiated collective agreement expired, and the Board is also seeking to retroactively claw back prior gains," said Deb Tveit, Unifor Assistant to the National President. "The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board has called this an 'unfortunate situation' but it's one of its own making as they refused to continue negotiations."

The Board announced that it plans for schools to remain open during the strike. However, Unifor warned that parents should not expect normal activity

during strike action as office and technical support will not be provided, staff will not be available to repair and clean the buildings used by students and teachers and evening use of the facilities by the wider community will be suspended.

The expired contract was forced on the employees under the Ontario government's infamous anti-worker Bill 115, legislation that has since been ruled by an Ontario court to have "substantially interfered" with education workers' right to collective bargaining.

The court found Bill 115 to be unconstitutional as it not only forced contracts on workers, it also froze wages, restricted the ability to



School support workers strike in Windsor, ON following four-year wage freeze.

strike and removed access to benefits for upcoming retirees. Despite the court decision, the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board continues to stand by the conditions of Bill 115.

"It is our goal to resolve

this as quickly as possible so the school year can continue normally," said Unifor National Representative Darlene Prouse. "It's past time for the Board to sit down and work out a fair deal."

>> Continued from "Pattern Agreement ..." on page 1

cent in production, 73.9 per cent in skilled trades, while security, fire and emergency services ratified with 91 per cent, and the clerical, office and engineering unit approved with 81.7 per cent.

"I am proud to join with the membership to support this new Agreement, said Unifor FCA Bargaining Committee Chair, Dino Chiodo, from Local 444 in Windsor. "When our union secured the pattern we ensured that members would receive the same gains and no one was left behind."

The new Agreements achieve the union's key priorities - investment and wage improvements for members. With the Windsor Assembly Plant stable, having concluded

a \$2.6 billion investment in 2015, the priority in these talks was to secure investment for Brampton and Etobicoke. As a result of the hard work of the Master Bargaining Committee, Brampton will see a \$325 million investment for a rebuild of the Plant paint shop and \$6.4 million will go to upgrade and refresh die-cast machinery and equipment at Etobicoke.

Contract talks have resumed with Ford and the strike deadline for negotiations is set for midnight on Monday, October 31.

"In each round of our negotiations, the union has set clear objectives, and so far we have reached these, including our top priority to secure investment and defend good jobs in local communities," Dias said.

BC NDP leader makes pledge to Unifor

BC NDP Leader John Horgan met with Unifor members to send a clear message about the need for change to put an end to the slash and burn strategy of the current BC government.

During a membership meeting with Local 2301 in Kitimat, Horgan re-affirmed his commitment to good job growth and a worker-friendly government should he be elected premier in May 2017.

The announcement comes on the heels of more controversy for BC Liberal Premier Christy Clark, whose record in Northern BC continues to fail workers and communities. Clark's promises about jobs resulting from Liquefied

Natural Gas extraction and export have simply not materialized. Her resource industry strategy would also result in the dramatic increase of greenhouse gases in BC.

Under Clark's leadership there has also been an increase in precarious work and temporary foreign workers, which Unifor has criticized. To restore good jobs Horgan also committed to reversing these trends.

While in Kitimat, Horgan also toured the newly-expanded Rio Tinto Smelter facility with management representatives, area MLA Robin Austin, Local 2301 President Sean O'Driscoll, and BC Area Director Gavin McGarrigle.



IN THIS ISSUE: Unifor delivers demands to Canada's Health Ministers. FCA members ratify new pattern Agreement with majority vote. Support workers strike at Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board. BC NDP Leader John Horgan visits Kitimat members and more!

CCPA study finds austerity isn't working for Nova Scotia

Unifor economist Jordan Brennan published a study through the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) that looked at the economy in Nova Scotia and what is needed to foster growth in the province. "After years of anti-worker legislation and attacks focused on wage freezes and cost cutting across the public sector, it was worth looking to see if this strategy was working for Nova Scotians," said Brennan. "Not only has the government mis-identified Nova Scotia's economic challenges; the proposed solution— austerity— will likely do more harm than good." The study cites comparisons

with other Atlantic Canadian economies, with provinces elsewhere in Canada and uses case studies from around the world. "When even traditionally neo-liberal institutions like the IMF are now openly criticizing austerity measures and citing strong examples of its failures, we have to look for other ways to operate," said Brennan. "We know that corporations are sitting on billions and not investing, expanding or creating new jobs - that's where we need to focus, not on tearing down our public sector workers and services." Brennan highlights Nova Scotia's low debt-to-GDP ratio, and its debt-servicing



costs which are at a quarter-century low. "There hasn't been a better time to invest in much-needed infrastructure projects and social services," said Brennan. "Furthermore, a strategy of public sector wage restraint may spill

over into the private sector insofar as it signals to employers that they can scale back on wage increases without risking employee retention." To read the full report, visit: policyalternatives.ca