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# uniFORUM

*SaskTel is the goose that lays golden eggs.  
 Don't sell it, Premier Wall.*

*Don't do it, Brad!*

[Unifor.org/sasktel](http://Unifor.org/sasktel)

Unifor launches ads on the dangers of privatizing Saskatchewan Crown corporations.

## Unifor fighting SaskTel privatization

After Conservative Premier Brad Wall openly mused about accepting offers for Saskatchewan's public telecommunication company, SaskTel, Unifor locals sprung into action to fight any attempts to privatize Crown corporations.

Unifor is the largest union in Saskatchewan's Crown corporation sector, representing thousands of workers at SaskTel, SaskWater, SaskPower, and SaskEnergy.

"Brad Wall is deeply mistaken if he thinks he has a mandate to privatize any portion of our Crown corporations," said Joie Warnock, Unifor's Western Director, referring to an explicit promise from Wall during the spring 2016 provincial election that Crown corporations would not be privatized.

## TPP a threat to Canada

A rainy night and U.S. election results rolling in did not stop more than 250 people from turning out to a town hall to discuss the Trans-Pacific Partnership in Toronto on November 8.

"This deal is going to do some serious damage to our country," Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff warned the crowd.

The event, hosted by

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## Grocery store members make gains

Solidarity laid the foundation to ensure Unifor members employed at Dominion and Food Basics grocery stores made significant gains in recent contract talks.

"Achieving consistent improvements in retail is a priority for Unifor," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias. "I'm proud of these bargaining committees for their work

and commitment to better both wages and working conditions for all full-time and part-time grocery store members."

In separate negotiations, members at Dominion stores in Newfoundland and Labrador, represented by Local 597, and Food Basic stores, Local 414, in 20 different Ontario communities led a hard

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Unifor says Wall is deliberately undermining SaskTel's efficiency to foment dissatisfaction with the widely respected Crown corporation. On November 7, the company began shrinking the regional workforce in Moose Jaw.

"Brad Wall's campaign against SaskTel is making families suffer," said Warnock.

In response to the fierce backlash to full-scale privatization, the Wall government introduced Bill 40 on October 29. The Bill changes the definition of privatize in the Crown Corporation Public Ownership Act. If Bill 40 passes in 2017, up to 49 per cent of a Crown

corporation can be sold off before triggering a public referendum on its privatization.

The incremental sale of Manitoba Telephone Service (MTS) was how Conservatives privatized the Crown corporation in the 1990s.

Earlier in the fall, Unifor ran radio ads exposing the folly of privatization in Regina, Saskatoon, and the other areas where cabinet ministers hold seats. The ads are still available to be shared online at

[Soundcloud.com/unifor](https://www.soundcloud.com/unifor)

Print ads accompanied the launch of the radio spots and Unifor members leafleted Labour Day events and engaged with community members about the value of SaskTel and the other Crowns.

**SASKTEL = RURAL SERVICE** 👍

Our rural population is spread out over a very large area, and still gets great coverage, great rates, and great service.

The reason is simple: SaskTel is a **crown corporation** owned by the people of Saskatchewan, and profits are not its single concern. SaskTel's focus on people lets it innovate and focus on what matters to rural residents. Without SaskTel, we can't count on the out-of-province firms to prioritize rural Saskatchewan.

Keeping SaskTel public is critical to rural Saskatchewan's next generation.

**Don't sell our SaskTel campaign ad**

"Brad Wall isn't fooling anyone. He's preparing the groundwork to break an election promise and we're going to stop him in his tracks," said Warnock.

Unifor Locals in Saskatchewan are planning mobilizations for the

winter, including when the legislature resumes in January. In the meantime, Unifor members across the country can send a letter to Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall at:

[unifor.org/backoffbrad](http://unifor.org/backoffbrad)

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fought campaign.

"The advancements we achieved will make a real difference in the daily lives of members," said Christine Connor, President of Unifor Local 414. "I am incredibly proud of members for their solidarity to push and demand more."

Although workers in the retail sector do not formally use a process of pattern bargaining, the contracts negotiated with Dominion and Food Basics achieved the same core provisions included in the Unifor-Metro supermarket contract negotiated in 2015. This is a clear example of how negotiations in one workplace can help to raise the standard across the sector.

The new agreements include annual wage increases for members regardless of their employment status. There is also a revised part-time wage grid, benefit enhancements and improved scheduling practices to provide better notice for shifts. In each round of talks Unifor helped to improve the lives of precarious low wage workers in the industry.

In supermarkets and other retail locations across Canada, Unifor represents more than 20,000 members, making our union one of the country's largest for retail workers.

"The successes gained in each round of bargaining over the last year demonstrate why being in a union matters," said Connor.

## Spying on journalists should never be easy

Unifor National President Jerry Dias is calling for strict measures to make it harder for police to put journalists under surveillance.

"It is too easy to spy on journalists and impede freedom of the press in Canada," Dias said. "Journalists rely on their sources to reveal stories. When police tap the phones of journalists, it puts a chill on people being willing to talk to them."

The federal and Quebec governments have been under pressure to take action since learning that Montreal police monitored the iPhone of La Presse columnist Patrick Lagacé; several other cases have

recently come to light.

While the surveillance was set up under provisions of the Harper Government's Bill C-51, the journalists involved were writing stories about the police themselves, and corruption in the Québec construction industry.

Unifor is calling on federal and provincial attorney's general to immediately direct police forces and Crown Attorneys that warrants relating to the surveillance of journalists must always require the approval of the Attorney General before going to court and that a panel of federal judges must review each application.



**IN THIS ISSUE** Detroit Three bargaining delivers \$1.5 billion auto industry investment. Unifor tells Premier Wall that Saskatchewan Crowns aren't for sale. Stricter measures called for to protect journalistic freedom. Grocery store workers ring up gains at the bargaining table, and more!

## School bus contract addresses industry issues

A new contract for school bus drivers in Toronto and York Region, represented by Unifor Local 4268, sets new standards for the industry that could help avoid driver shortages if more widely adopted.

"For drivers who are members of Unifor in the Toronto and York Region, the job just got better," said Local 4268 President, Debbie Montgomery.

The Local represents 320 drivers with First Student bus company and serves about 18,500 students in the public and Catholic school boards in those regions. Earlier this year, more than 2,600 students in Toronto were

left stranded when school resumed due to driver shortage. The issue of shortage and retention became a main bargaining priority.

"No child should be left on a curb when a school bus should be picking them up. I'm proud of these drivers for working so incredibly hard to improve industry conditions and livelihoods," said Unifor Assistant to the National Secretary-Treasurer Jenny Ahn.

The contract includes higher wages for drivers, and bus drivers getting paid for all the hours they are on duty, not just time when children are on the bus. Non-driving route tasks,



**Jenny Ahn, Unifor Assistant to the National Secretary -Treasurer, and members of the Local 4268 Bargaining Committee achieve new standards for school bus drivers following all-night negotiations.**

previously paid a minimum wage of \$11.42, will increase to \$13.40 over the life of the agreement. All rates in the collective agreement will increase by between six and 17 per cent. As well, all paid

time will be Employment Insurance accredited, allowing workers to qualify for EI benefits during lay off.

For more detail, go to [unifor.org/schoolbuscampaign](https://unifor.org/schoolbuscampaign)