

## IN THIS ISSUE

Our Shared Humanity **8**

Victories in Toronto! **5**

What can you do about  
Climate Change? **6**

Changing Lives with  
Community Benefits **4**

Asbestos Ban **15**









# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The whole world is watching Donald Trump now he has assumed the position of most powerful man on earth. As we ponder what the future will bring, it's worth reflecting on two facts. Last year the British people finally learned about the web of deceit that surrounded Tony Blair's decision to invade Iraq; while in the U.S. Donald Trump was elected with a pledge to be the retaliator-in-chief against any country who dares challenge American supremacy. In a world with too much violence - and the possibility of far more - it's worth knowing why peace matters.

Back in 2003 the people of Toronto joined millions of others in the global demonstrations against the planned invasion of Iraq. We knew the so-called weapons of mass destruction were either a ruse or a convenient excuse to invade an oil-rich country that failed to fall in line with the Bush doctrine. We knew that Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with Bin Laden and those who destroyed the World Trade Centre. In our hearts, we also knew that nobody could predict how this saga would unfold.

Hundreds of thousands of lives later, with a country in ruins and suffering from ongoing turmoil, the consequences are obvious. The massive oil reserves, second largest in the world, have been effectively privatized for American and European energy giants. The U.S. imposed regime in Iraq alienated huge sections of the population, plunging

the country into vicious civil war. Eventually that dynamic gave rise to the group known as Daesh that has brought so much grief to the Middle East and Europe.

U.S. foreign policy then supported regime change in Libya and Syria, with dramatic impact on the entire world. It was not just politics at play. A terrible drought linked to climate change forced millions of Syrians off the countryside and into cities that were soon cauldrons of dissent. The Assad regime responded to unrest with brutal force. Civil war engulfed the region, with foreign interests deeply involved. Sadly the chain of events connects directly to the surge of refugees into Europe and the rise of extremist anti-immigrant parties whose rhetoric echoes that of Donald Trump.

Canadians may have been astounded by the tone of the American election, but vitriol and xenophobia has become a shameful new norm. Many observers credit the Brexit vote and Trump's success to the anger of a white working class betrayed by global restructuring. The billionaire class left millions of unemployed and communities in crisis, while right-wing populism blames immigrants and Muslims for the problems instead of the real culprits.

Canadians have a proud history of standing for peace and solidarity, including supporting refugees who refuse to serve in unjust wars. Not all Canadians, of course – Steven

Harper would have taken us into Iraq, applauded militarism and pursued the deportation of U.S. war resisters. When I was a TV spokesperson for the peace marches in 2003 there were callers who insisted that I could never have also served as an infantry sergeant in Canada's military reserve. What they could not understand was that the labour movement was out in full force in those marches, with hundreds of union flags among the crowds.

We were there because we understood that war can be unjust, and unjust wars can have immense consequences. The world is still paying the price for the arrogance of individual leaders and the ignorance of too many others. Those lessons need to be reviewed today, at a time when wedges are being driven daily between people due to race, religion and nationality.

In the year 2017 all of us need to reach out to our families and neighbours who feel uneasy about the changing world, and patiently challenge prejudice or intolerance whenever it appears. If the worst happens south of the border and the drums of war and belligerence beat more loudly, the future of the world will be at risk. We need to build bridges between all communities, and work hard to affirm our shared humanity in the face of adversity. We owe that and much more to the next generation.

.....  
John Cartwright

**LABOUR**  
TORONTO & YORK REGION  
**COUNCIL**

[www.labourcouncil.ca](http://www.labourcouncil.ca)

LabourACTION is a publication of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council that is published several times a year.

Got feedback? Comment on an article?  
Story ideas?  
Email: [kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca](mailto:kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca)

CONNECT + FOLLOW + SHARE

Stay connected with Twitter & Facebook  
Follow @torontolabour  
Like [facebook.com/labourcouncil](https://facebook.com/labourcouncil)  
Visit [labourcouncil.ca](http://labourcouncil.ca) for video, articles,  
press releases & more!



# How Ontario Is Changing Lives With Construction Job Opportunities

On December 7th, Premier Wynne was joined by four of her cabinet colleagues for an announcement about a unique agreement for “Community Benefits” for the Eglinton Crosstown transit project. The room was crowded with representatives from Metrolinx, the builder, community groups and unions. Most importantly, a number of young men who are hoping to enter a career in the trades sat behind her as she spoke of setting goals of ten per cent of the work hours to be performed by apprentices or journeypersons from diverse communities.



On the same day, a court in Toronto sentenced one of the shooters from the 2012 Danzig tragedy. He was 17 at the time he pulled the trigger, and the incident sparked a massive debate about youth violence and how to address it.

In a column shortly after the shooting, John Lorinc posed a question: if there are many young black males who don't see a future for themselves and fall into destructive lifestyles, but at the same time we will need thousands of workers to build the massive transit projects in Toronto -- why can't someone put those things together and come up with a plan?

Four years later, the announcement at a packed training workshop was exactly what Lorinc had called for. It represented four long years of organizing by the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN), a community-labour coalition that started in the Weston-Mt. Dennis neighbourhood after the Kodak plant

closed. The original focus was to secure jobs for local residents at a planned TTC maintenance garage. But after Metrolinx took over the site as part of the Eglinton Crosstown line, a broader conversation started with their CEO Bruce McCuaig. There had already been strong commitment by building trades unions to diversity training. Could that become the part of Metrolinx approach?

The inspiration came from Los Angeles, where a referendum passed in 2008 to raise \$40 billion for transit funding through a small increase in sales tax. A key piece of the argument by the proponents was that the investment would do double-duty. As well as bringing much needed rapid transit to poorer areas of the city, there would be careers opened up for African-American and Latino youth in the construction workforce. That brought a chorus of voices in support -- community groups, faith leaders, politicians, unions and anti-poverty organizations. A project agreement was put in place that set goals for hiring from historically disadvantaged communities, and a monitoring system created to ensure the goals were met.

The concept of Community Benefit Agreements spread to other cities in the U.S., and has a growing level of support from civic leaders and charitable foundations. After the initial Framework Agreement was signed between Metrolinx and TCBN, the government of Ontario introduced legislation to require large

infrastructure projects to support both apprenticeships and community benefits. At the federal level, York South Weston MP Ahmed Hussen's private member's Bill 227 is making its way through the parliamentary system with the same objective.

There is one significant difference between the U.S. precedents and the agreement reached on the Eglinton project. All of the previous versions addressed blue-collar jobs in the trades. In Toronto, for the first time, there is an addition of white-collar careers in the professional, administrative and technical occupations associated with the project. To date over 40 people from diverse communities -- either internationally trained or recent graduates -- have been hired. In fact, three of them were in the back of the room, smiling with pride, as the premier made the announcement on December 7th.

There's really only one unresolved question. It's in the numerical value of community benefits. Are the project dollars doing double-duty, or, given that building transit reduces Toronto's carbon footprint, is this really an innovative investment in shifting to a triple bottom line? Either way, hundreds of lives are being changed and local economies strengthened. Sometimes, it turns out, that when there is a will, there can be a way.

# VICTORIES IN TORONTO



Members of CUPE Local 416 drew a sigh of relief at the end of January when Mayor Tory effectively withdrew his plan to privatize solid waste collection east of Yonge Street. It was the third major victory defending public services and assets in Toronto in the last year.



Conservatives and right-wing Liberals on City Council had targeted the Parking Authority, Toronto Hydro and Solid Waste collection for sell-off in the lead up to the 2017 budget. Tory announced the intention to move on Toronto Hydro at a speech to the Board of Trade last September. But he didn't count on the fierce resistance from a coalition of unions and community groups that immediately responded. CUPE, Labour Council and the Society of Energy Professionals joined with the Toronto Environmental Alliance, Social Planning Toronto, the Council of Canadians and others to denounce the plan.

Rank-and-file members of ACORN went door to door in key wards across the city asking residents to respond, and they did in droves. City Councillors were flooded with calls demanding they keep Toronto Hydro Public. When Cesar Palacio announced to Tory's Executive Committee that he would oppose the sell-off, it was clear that the votes weren't there to proceed. Unlike the Wynne Liberal's majority control of Queen's Park that allowed privatization

of Hydro One despite public opinion, municipal votes are more fluid and will often respond to pressure from the people.

That's probably why the Parking Authority idea got shelved. It provides \$60 million per year in revenue to the City, and like Hydro is a fiscal "gift that keeps on giving". There are too many examples of the public getting fleeced by private operators in American cities to pretend that losing that annual revenue steam would benefit the city.

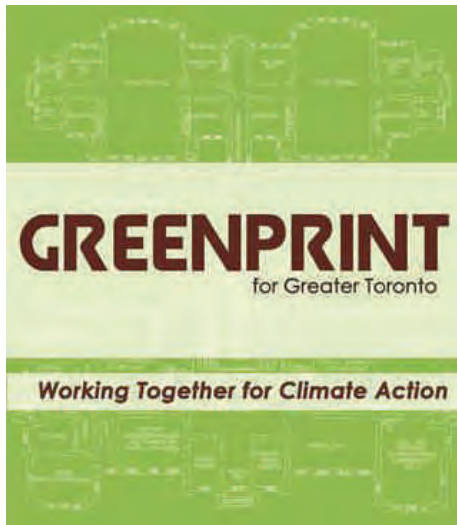
To defend solid waste collection, CUPE 416 launched a brilliant campaign. "Kicked to the Curb" featured radio ads, social media and postcards delivered across the city. Petitions were collected by door knocking and internet, and delivered to individual Councillors. TEA produced research that showed that the diversion rates away from landfill was far lower with private contractors than public collection. And Tory couldn't get away from the fact that private contractors in Etobicoke COST MORE than the public service in Scarborough. Even the fiscal conservatives on Council couldn't swallow that reality.

Across the globe, private corporations are relentlessly trying to take over public assets and services. Too often they succeed. But at least in Toronto, we have proved that when labour has a strategic plan, membership engagement and community allies – the public interest can prevail!



## WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

There is a role for every union and every workplace!



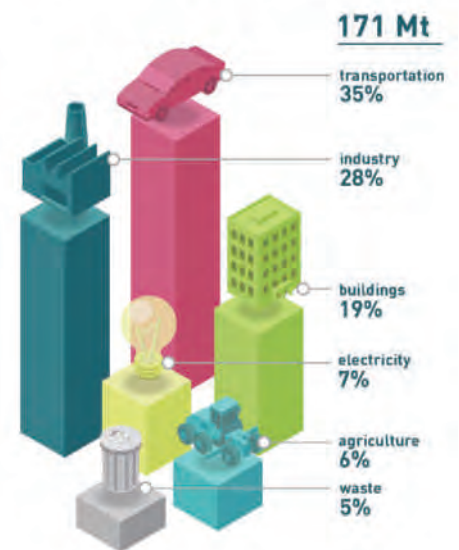
The newly published Greenprint for Greater Toronto was placed as an insert in the most recent Labour Action, as well as being sent out to every politician at all levels of government in our region. It is being widely shared with our allies in civil society and the environmental

movement. Labour Council has re-established its Environment Committee, and we want to engage every union in a collective effort to address the threat that climate change poses to our children and grandchildren.

We are asking every affiliate to consider doing the following:

- Circulate the Greenprint to leaders and stewards (download from [labourcouncil.ca](http://labourcouncil.ca) or get hardcopies from our office)
- Form an environment committee - we can help create the framework for a successful workplan
- Ask your provincial or national union to strengthen their plan on climate action
- Help us share interesting stories of environmental work done by your union or members

### Emissions by Sector, 2013



MT: MegaTonne

Graphic from Ontario's Five Year Climate Change Action Plan 2016-202

- Identify activists who want to take training on environmental issues and action

If you have any questions or suggestions, contact Kiruthiha at [kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca](mailto:kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca) or 416 441-3663 x 221.

## LABOUR COMMUNITY ADVOCATE TRAINING PROGRAM

*"I am grateful for the opportunity to be a Labour community advocate. As a graduate, you are exposed to resources and services that help you support your fellow union members to much needed services available in our communities. It was an opportunity to learn and make friends from different unions."* Walied Khogali, UWTYR Labour Representative

*"LCAT boosted my knowledge in community resources. It was a great opportunity to network with union members and guest speakers. I am much more confident than before and see a positive change in my life. Now, I reach out to union members to help with different issues. I strongly recommend LCAT to all the union members and look forward to Level 2 training."* Wendy Zhang, OPSEU Local 586

### For Union Members Living and/or Working in York Region

#### Level 1—Education Seminar

March 23 - June 1, 2017

165 Pony Drive, Newmarket, ON

### For Union Members Living and/or Working in Toronto Region

#### Level 1—Education Seminar

March 22 - May 31, 2017

15 Gervais Drive, Toronto, ON

To Register, contact: [nsoufian@labourcommunityservices.ca](mailto:nsoufian@labourcommunityservices.ca) • For more info [labourcommunityservices.ca](http://labourcommunityservices.ca)

# WORK & WAGES

It is common knowledge that the strength of the labour movement has been the major factor in securing decent levels of wage and benefits for most Canadian workers. But as union density falls and companies restructure, more workers are being left out of a prosperous economy. How should we respond?

















As Canada celebrates its 150th birthday, let's take a look at who does what in greater Toronto. From a small city based on industry, food processing and booze, Toronto has emerged as the financial centre of the country, with strong representation in the knowledge economy, arts and culture, construction while still maintaining an advanced manufacturing base. The Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) includes Toronto, York and Peel Regions, and parts of Halton and Durham regions, but excludes Oshawa.

Altogether the total Toronto CMA Workforce of 3.18 million represented 46% of the Ontario workforce. Of those, 543,000 are self-employed and 2.6 million are employees, of whom 350,000 are temp workers.

The average wage is \$26.25, while the median wage (paid to the person who is half-way between the highest and lowest-paid earners) is only \$22.05 per hour. The gap between average and median is most pronounced in the retail sector.

Because Toronto is the capital of Canada's finance sector with almost no union presence, the unionization rate here is recorded as 21.4%. This figure is a bit deceptive, as it includes every employee in a sector, including many in management or sales who would never be in a bargaining unit. But the reality is that three out of every four of our neighbours go to work without any union protection or collective ability to determine wages or conditions. In those scenarios, only those with very high level of education and skills are rewarded, while many more are consigned to precarious work and often poverty wages. The following graph breaks the numbers down by sector, average wage and unionization rate.

## WHO DOES WHAT ?

 <b>Educational Services</b> \$32.96 avg 63% union 223,000	 <b>Construction</b> \$29.28 avg 36% union 202,000	 <b>Arts Entertainment Recreation</b> \$20.00 avg 15% union 71,000	 <b>Accommodation Food Services</b> \$14.59 avg 8% union 194,000
 <b>Public Administration</b> \$36.91 avg 62% union 97,000	 <b>Transportation Warehousing</b> \$23.80 avg 35% union 163,000	 <b>Manufacturing</b> \$25.13 avg 14% union 319,000	 <b>Finance Insurance Real Estate Leasing</b> \$31.08 avg 4% union 343,000
 <b>Utilities</b> \$36.97 avg 58% union 16,500	 <b>Information Cultural Industries</b> \$31.14 avg 25% union 97,000	 <b>Other Services</b> \$22.61 avg 12% union 128,000	 <b>Wholesale Trade</b> \$28.84 avg 4% union 160,000
 <b>Healthcare Social Assistance</b> \$26.52 avg 38% union 306,000	 <b>Administrative Support Waste Management Building Services</b> \$18.23 avg 17% union 161,000	 <b>Retail Trade</b> \$17.52 avg 11% union 325,000	 <b>Professional Scientific Technical Services</b> \$33.28 avg 3% union 353,000

# OUR SHARED HUMANITY



Canadians mourn the tragic loss of life of six of our neighbours gunned down because of their religion in a mosque Sainte-Foy Quebec. The murder by a white supremacist fuelled by the Islamophobia of Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump stands as a shocking notice of what is at stake in 2017 and beyond.

The inauguration of Donald Trump was met with the largest outpouring of anger in living memory. Across the world, millions marched to protest his politics, his attitude and his agenda of bigotry, sexism and division. In Toronto over 50,000 women and allies from all walks of life jammed Queen's Park in the largest protest in decades. Many in the crowd had never been to a demonstration, while others were veteran activists dismayed at the prospect of past gains undone by a vile demagogue in the White House.

In the first week he proved the worst fears to be justified. His cabinet of billionaires representing oil and

finance capital are determined to gut labour standards, public education and equality rights. Executive Orders to build a wall against Mexico, bar Muslims are conscious steps to build a climate of fear and division against people of colour and immigrants. On World Holocaust Day, despite the tragic record of Anne Frank and her Jewish family being refused entry to the United States, he signed the order to ban refugees from seven majority Muslim countries.

In Canada, the Trudeau government is positioning itself to accommodate the new reality of Trump's America First doctrine. The cabinet was shuffled, the corrupt former PM Brian Mulroney was recruited, and the Keystone pipeline decision applauded. Business leaders are trying to position themselves for future trade relations, while oil, gas and mining interests prepare to claw back measures for carbon pricing or climate justice.

There will be much to protest in the





next four years. Hatred will spread as the most powerful man on earth gives permission to xenophobes, racists and misogynists to act out their worst instincts. Workers' rights, equality rights and civil liberties will be under attack by Republican majorities and the Supreme Court. Federal Right-to-Work legislation is been tabled. Canadian demagogues like Kevin O'Leary and Kellie Leitch will try to ride to power on the Trump momentum. It will become a much nastier world, and people may feel overwhelmed unless they see inspiring and effective response.

The spark of resistance was evident on January 21st, as millions repudiated the Trump agenda. The turnout of hundreds of lawyers at U.S. airports to assist those caught in the net of repression was a hopeful sign, along with rulings by a number of judges that challenged the legality of Executive Orders. Mayors and State Governors have vowed to obstruct the repression against undocumented

residents, and a sanctuary movement is blossoming. Sadly, some labour leaders stood by Trump as he made his pipeline announcement, just hours before his wholesale attack on human rights and the most vulnerable in society.

How should Canadians respond? Across this country, there needs to be a deep movement to reject division and hate. No Canadian politician or businessman can be allowed to "normalize" the rule of Trump and the Republican wrecking crew. Nor should they be allowed to mimic weaker rules on climate action, workers rights or corporate tax cuts. Toughening our fight for economic justice so that people have decent work and dignity is vital to countering the despair that is a fertile ground for right-wing populism. We need to be resolute in standing for the true values of Canada, and be guided by the courageous last words of Jack Layton as he urged us to affirm our shared humanity:



My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world.

**Labour Council will work with affiliates, the CLC, national unions and community allies to develop a comprehensive response to the dangers facing humankind over the next four years:**

**Undertake constant mobilization** to maintain a broad public rejection of the agenda of the Trump Republicans and their corporate backers. Build on key events such as IWD, International Day for the Elimination of Racism, World Refugee Day and Canada's 150th Anniversary to highlight our commitment to justice.

**Build powerful movements** to challenge Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination, and deepen the equity agenda in schools, workplaces and the labour movement. Strengthen the refugee, migrant rights and sanctuary movements and support those in the U.S. who are working to uphold civil liberties. Rescind the "Safe Third Country" agreement and repeal Bill C-51.

**Strengthen the fight for good jobs for all.** If NAFTA is being re-negotiated, delete Chapter 11 and enshrine labour and environmental rights. Secure Just Transition policies for those affected by transformation to a greener economy. Defend public services and fight for fair corporate tax policies. Fight for new laws that strengthen workers' rights and economic security.

**Support Indigenous peoples** in their struggle to defend land and water, for justice for missing and murdered indigenous women, and implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Report.

**Defend the principles of professional journalism** and financial sustainability of Canadian media as a key component of democracy.

# Trudeau Breaks Electoral Reform Promise

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has chosen his Party over Canadians by breaking his promise to Make Every Vote Count. “Canadians are outraged and disgusted that the Prime Minister has cynically abandoned his commitment to make 2015 the last unfair election. Instead, he will take another roll in the false majority casino,” said Fair Vote Canada’s Executive Director, Kelly Carmichael. “In 2015, so many voters believed him and cast strategic votes for the Liberal Party. We played his game and he played us”.

During national consultations on electoral reform, 80% of citizens and 88% of experts expressed a very clear preference for proportional representation (PR). The truth, confirmed by all parties in the Electoral Reform Committee, is that there was no support for the winner-take-all Alternative Vote system personally favoured by Justin Trudeau. While the Country was grieving the tragic event in Quebec, the disappointed Prime Minister quietly sent out his the newly appointed Minister to present alternative facts to

justify the broken promise. In truth, he has made a calculated decision to keep an unfair system that provided him with 100% of the power with only 39% of the popular vote.

In the last federal election, the Liberal Party clearly promised to make 2015 the last unfair, first-past-the-post election and to make every vote count. As a result, 63% of Canadians voted for political parties that promised to make every vote count. Since then, Elections Canada, opposition political parties, civil society, and individual Canadians have all collaborated in a

great democratic exercise to reform Canada’s broken electoral system. Instead of giving Canadians what they want, the Prime Minister wants to kill this democratic exercise, and has walked away from his own crystal clear commitment.

Fair Vote Canada remains committed to fair voting through proportional representation and will not give up the fight for equal and effective representation for all Canadians. It just won’t be Justin Trudeau’s legacy.

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

Stop The Hate!  
UNITE THE FIGHT!



*International Women's Day*

March 11, 2017

**New Location!**

Indoor Rally @ 11am  
Medical Sciences Building Auditorium,  
1 Kings College Cir.  
March to begin at 1pm!

[www.iwdtoronto.com](http://www.iwdtoronto.com)

**INTERNATIONAL**  
**DAY for the ELIMINATION of**  
**RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21 March. On that day, in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid pass laws. Proclaiming the day in 1966, the United Nations General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. Recent events in the United States, Quebec and Ontario remind us of how important it is to build a strong movement to stop racism, Islamophobia and discrimination. Learning from each other, building a culture of understanding, reaching out to those who feel marginalized, working to eliminate discrimination in all its forms – these are key steps to embracing our common humanity.

Join with us for a focused discussion on the kind of future we want to share together as Canadians in these uncertain times.

**UNITE to STOP HATE**

**March 21, 2017**  
**Council Chamber, Toronto City Hall**  
**7 to 9pm**

Urban  
on Race



Alliance  
Relations

**LABOUR**  
TORONTO & YORK REGION  
**COUNCIL**



# VIOLA DESMOND A hero like no other.



Everyone enjoys a good movie, in the comfort of a warm cinema. Viola Desmond was no different. Only, she got arrested for it.

Viola Desmond was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia on July 6, 1914. She grew up within the vibrant black community of Halifax, realizing that

there were few professional hair and beauty products for the women of her community. Being of African descent, she was not allowed to train as a beautician in Halifax so she left to study in Montreal, Atlantic City and finally New York. She returned to Halifax to start her own salon business which soon proved to be highly successful. She also started her own school, Desmond School of Beauty and Culture, so that black women from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec did not have to travel as far as she did in search of education.

On November 8, 1946, whilst on a business trip to New Glasgow to sell her products, her car broke down and she had to wait her day. To pass time she decided to see a movie, The Dark Mirror, at the Roseland Film Theatre. She bought a ticket asking for a seat on the main floor, unaware that this was a segregated theatre. As she looked for a seat on the main floor, the theatre manager told her

to go to the balcony that was set aside for black patrons. Viola was incensed, refused to leave the main floor only to be physically thrown out of the theatre by the local police chief and the manager causing serious injury to her hip.

Next morning she was brought in front of the local magistrate on a charge of tax evasion. Though Canada has no segregation laws, some provinces chose to enact their own. The Roseland Film theatre not only segregated their seats but charged an amusement tax of 3 cents for those seats on the main floor and 2 cents for those in the balcony. Viola was charged with not paying one cent of tax. She was convicted, fined twenty dollars and court costs.

Back in Halifax, the angered local African Canadian community raised funds to hire legal counsel to appeal the verdict. The Nova Scotian Supreme Court dismissed the application for judicial review in 1947. Viola and her supporters did not challenge the verdict any further and Nova Scotia eventually dismantled its segregation laws in 1954.

Viola passed away in New York in 1965. Forty five years later, in 2010, the Honorable Mayann Elizabeth Francis, the first Afro-Canadian Lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia, invoked the Royal Perogative and posthumously pardoned Viola Desmond, declaring her innocent.

On December 8, 2016, Viola Desmond was chosen as the first Canadian woman to appear on a ten dollar note. Notes will be issued 2018.

## BROMLEY ARMSTRONG AWARDS 2017

The award recognizes the dedication and contributions that demonstrate outstanding commitment and leadership by persons that fought for and propagate LABOUR & HUMAN RIGHTS and is presented to members of the affiliate locals of the Toronto & York Region Labour

**SATURDAY MAY 13, 2017 at 6pm**  
Award nomination forms can be downloaded from [labourcouncil.ca](http://labourcouncil.ca)

175 Wynford Drive (Toronto Don Valley Hotel), North York  
416-445-5819 x23  
[ssimpson@labourcommunityservices.ca](mailto:ssimpson@labourcommunityservices.ca)  
[labourcommunityservices.ca](http://labourcommunityservices.ca)



## Aboriginal & Workers of Colour Conference 2017

### REJECTING THE POLITICS OF DIVISION

**Saturday June 3, 2017**

**9am to 4pm**

**1377 Lawrence Ave East**

**IBEW Local 353-North York**

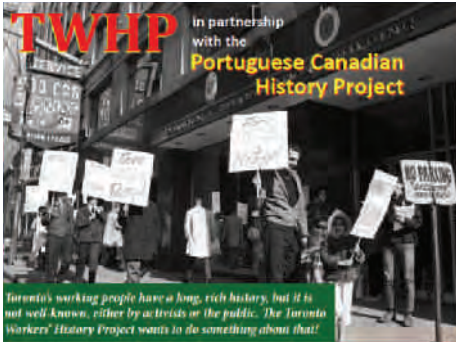
**416-441-3663 [labourcouncil.ca](http://labourcouncil.ca)**

**[council@labourcouncil.ca](mailto:council@labourcouncil.ca)**

cope343



# Toronto Workers History Project



The Toronto Workers History Project (TWHHP) is a large group of workers, unionists, professors, students, artists, teachers, librarians, educators, researchers, community activists, and retirees dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the history of working people in Toronto.

TWHHP is committed to bringing to light the experiences of working people and their contributions as individuals and collectively to the building of this city, in the home, in the paid workplace, and in the community.

Through highlighting the vitality and creativity of working-class cultures in the history of Toronto, the Project hopes to inspire activists in social-justice and labour movements with

the lessons from the past for the struggles of today. Monthly forums at the Steelworkers Hall highlight the full diversity of Toronto's labour history, while the website will provide a collection of articles and stories. TWHHP also hopes to assist local unions in ensuring their records are properly archived so that the rich history of labour is not lost. Find out more at [twhp.ca](http://twhp.ca).

# Federal Infrastructure Bank Scam



The federal Liberals are planning a new public-private infrastructure bank that wouldn't just open the door to privatization – it would kick it right off its hinges.

In defending his Canada Infrastructure Bank, Finance Minister Bill Morneau said private investors are 'clamouring' for access to Canada's infrastructure projects. That's because the only voices he's listened to are from his corporate-heavy Advisory Council on Economic Growth. NDP finance critic Guy Caron calls it the "bank of privatization," and Liberal MP Robert Falcon-Ouellette said it "seems like a massive transfer of public funds toward the private funds in order for them to make money – a subsidy towards business."

Our public infrastructure belongs to all Canadians, and should not be for sale – or a source of private profits. Putting private capital in the driver's seat would lead to the cannibalization of our public infrastructure for private profit, including airports, roads,

bridges, public transit, wastewater, ports, government buildings and more.

Financing infrastructure privately at the expected rate of return of seven to nine per cent – instead of the federal government's less-than two per cent borrowing rate – will mean five times the financing costs. The 2014 report by Ontario's auditor-general found that on the \$26 billion worth in recent P3 projects, the province will end up paying \$8 billion more than it needs to. The public will pay through new or higher user fees and tolls, as well as through contracted payments over the life of the projects. These plans are troubling for many reasons, and should be rejected.



# COMMUNITY BENEFITS IN ACTION



Nancy Merchant



Anita Rex

Meet Nancy Merchant and Anita Rex, employees of Crosslinx Transit solutions, and proud ambassadors of community benefit agreements. Nancy and Anita represent some of the community members who have been hired in the professional, administrative and technical jobs that will be created along with the trades on the largest transit investment in the history of the region.

Crosslinx Transit Solutions (CTS) is a consortium comprised of EllisDon, SNC-Lavalin, Aecon and Dragados. CTS was selected by Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario to build the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit Project. It runs 19 kilometres along Eglinton Avenue, from Mount Dennis in the west to Kennedy Station in the east.

Anita Rex, who was hired as the Community Liaison Officer at CTS is a former student of Seneca College with a masters in social work from her native country of origin, India. Her work-experience in India exposed her to projects that emphasized a community benefits approach to local development. As a newcomer and migrant to Canada, Anita studied public relations, communications and government relations at Seneca College. She attributes her success to the support she received from both Seneca College and CTS after she was successfully referred to apply for the position by her professor.

Anita is a champion for a community benefits approach to local hiring. She believes that local businesses and residents benefit from such agreements. "Local talent will be retained in the community, especially local youth.

Also small businesses benefit from investment in the local community."

Nancy Merchant is a new mother and works as an executive assistant at CTS. She is grateful that she could work in her community, saving her commute time and money that could better be focused on her young family. As a new immigrant who lived in Saskatchewan, her move to Ontario and the City of Toronto was for better economic opportunities. She received support from the City of Toronto Employment and Social Services department which helped her revise her resume and supported her while she applied for numerous jobs. She is grateful for the opportunities she has received at Crosslinx Transit Solutions (CTS) due to the rich and diverse work environment. She admits that she had some misconceptions about women being involved in the construction industry, but her exposure to CTS has proven that just like men, there are plenty of jobs available for women in the construction industry.

Patience Adamu leads the CTS work on community benefits for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT Project. Those include "employment opportunities in the Professional, Administrative and Technical roles; for apprentices

and journey persons who are from historically disadvantaged communities; and procurement opportunities for small- and medium-sized local businesses in the Eglinton area as well as social enterprises located in the City of Toronto."

Anita and Nancy have become ambassadors for community based approaches to local hiring because of the opportunities that they were exposed to at CTS. Anita frequently shops and eats around her neighborhood to support local small businesses and the local economy because investing in our local communities is a win for everyone involved.

The TCBN is a network of residents, community groups and labour groups, formed to bring the Community Benefits approach to economic development in Toronto. TCBN promotes inclusive and equitable economic development that delivers employment, career opportunities and neighbourhood improvement to historically disadvantaged and marginalized communities. For more information on TCBN and employment opportunities, please visit [communitybenefits.ca](http://communitybenefits.ca).

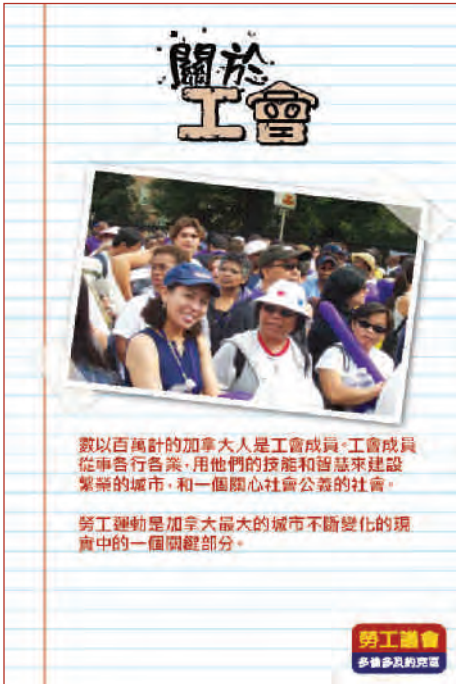


## Steelworkers Job Action Centres stay OPEN

The Steelworkers Job Action Centres in Toronto and Peel/Halton will stay OPEN! Thanks to everyone who helped along the way. This is an amazing show of strength and solidarity in the Labour Movement. In Toronto, the Job Action Centre, at 25 Cecil Street, provides assistance to laid-off members of the United Steelworkers in Toronto. Offering training and resume writing, and help with job searches they also offer programs for plant shutdowns and layoffs, providing support to help workers navigate the services and options available to them. For more information call (416) 597-1143.

# Diverse Workers Organizing Project

Over the last several years, Labour Council has been working with different workers' networks to mobilize the union members in our city differently.



In 2012, we started the Chinese Workers' Network and since then we have built similar networks within our Filipino, Tamil, Somali, and Ethiopian and Eritrean communities. The Labour Council and its affiliates have found that developing these networks has allowed us to engage union members from these communities more effectively. First, we worked to build a proud union consciousness with these members. Next, we ask them to be ambassadors in their own communities, taking our union message to their families and neighbours. These workers' networks

have contributed to the success of our own internal union campaigns – like the Stop Tim Hudak campaign.

In 2017, the question is how do we continue to build worker power in a diverse city like Toronto where many residents do not speak English as a first language? There are many people in racialized communities who work and live exclusively in the 'ethnic economy' where they can access a range of social services – from banking to groceries to medical appointments (and everything else imaginable) in their first language. Many also find work in this 'ethnic economy,' but discover that with their limited English and little knowledge about their rights, they are exploited by their employers. But too often they feel that any job is better than no job.

Raising the expectations of workers toiling in the 'ethnic economy' is the hope of Labour Council's new Organizing Project. One pillar of Labour Council's strategic plan is to fight for good jobs and build union density in the GTA. We want more workers to join unions and we want to make union organizing easier in the future. Over the next 6 months, the Labour Council will pilot (with its two oldest networks) a workers' hotline where workers can find possible solutions to their workplace problems

in their first language. We will put these into a podcast where workers in similar situations can listen to such stories, and find help and comfort in knowing that they are not alone in their struggles. The hope is to build a collective workers' consciousness and make the ground ripe for future organizing.

Relying on our union members in the workers' networks to take our 'pro-union' message out to the community was only the first step, but this must be in tandem with strategic and targeted community outreach. We know that the demographics of Canada are changing, and that simply relying on the traditional method of English-language organizing limits the number of workplaces or industries unions can reach. This Labour Council is dedicated to making this city a great place for all to work and live – and we start by fighting for good jobs for our next generation of workers, and building equity and inclusion in our unions.

以工會為榮

## CONNECT + FOLLOW + SHARE

Did you know? Have you heard? Did you read? Got a campaign? No .. No .. No .. Yes!

Stay connected with Twitter & Facebook...Follow @torontolabour...Like facebook.com/labourcouncil

Visit [www.labourcouncil.ca](http://www.labourcouncil.ca) for video, articles, press releases & much more!

Got feedback about Labour Action? Comment on an article? Story ideas? Email [kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca](mailto:kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca)



# Asbestos Ban is a Victory for all Canadians

Canada's unions are celebrating the recent announcement that the federal government will finally ban asbestos in Canada.



Michelle Cote at Toronto Day of Mourning.

Canada's unions have been calling for this ban for decades, because asbestos is the leading cause of work-related death in this country. More than 2,000 Canadians die every year from asbestos-related cancers like mesothelioma. Because it can take 20 to 50 years for cancer to develop after exposure, that number will initially continue to rise. But a ban means the tide will turn.

"This will, without question, save lives for generations to come, and make workplaces and public spaces safer for all Canadians," said Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff.

Experts know that many Canadians are exposed to asbestos at work, particularly in industries like construction, automobile maintenance, shipbuilding, trade contractors, and waste management. Internationally, the World Health Organization reports more than 100,000 asbestos-related deaths per year.

"I immigrated to Canada from Guyana in my teens, and found work as a mechanic in my 20s and 30s. Like so many others in my trade, I was

exposed to asbestos in brake pads and clutches. I don't know yet if I'll be one of the unlucky ones," said Yussuff.

"What I do know is that there are far too many workers who, unlike me, may have been exposed to this killer for years without even knowing it," he added.

Over the years that Canadian unions were fighting for this ban, Yussuff says he spoke to many people who were affected by asbestos-related disease. Many had lost a loved one, while others were battling an asbestos-related illness themselves. He said some workers unknowingly brought asbestos fibres home, exposing their children and spouses, putting them at risk of a future illness.

Canada's last asbestos mines shut down in late 2011 and many Canadians believed that when Canada stopped mining it, the use of asbestos—and therefore the associated risk of exposure—dropped drastically.

In fact, while more than 50 other countries banned asbestos, imports into Canada of products containing asbestos—like brake pads and construction materials—actually rose sharply, nearly doubling over the last five years. Asbestos imports to Canada grew from \$4.7 million in 2011 to \$8.3 million in 2015. Deaths from mesothelioma increased 60 per cent between 2000 and 2012.

Yussuff spoke of the importance of involving First Nations communities in implementing this ban, as many homes on reserves contain friable asbestos-laced vermiculite insulation. He highlighted the activism of Raven Thundersky, a health advocate who

died of asbestos-related cancer after losing several family members to asbestos-related diseases. Her home on the Poplar River First Nation was insulated with asbestos-filled material.

Unions are still calling on provinces and municipalities to create inventories of public buildings containing asbestos, and for all levels of government to work together to standardize regulations around remediation and disposal.

In order to win this ban, Canada's unions worked closely with organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society, scientific experts, and family members who have seen loved ones suffer through an asbestos-related illness.

Michelle Côté's father Clem was a London-area boilermaker who died of mesothelioma in July 2016. Michelle has advocated tirelessly for a ban on asbestos since her late father's diagnosis in 2014, and in 2016 she joined forces with the Canadian Labour Congress' campaign.

"My father told me he didn't want anyone else to suffer the way he did, and he didn't want other families to go through what we went through. His dying wish was that we'd win a ban on asbestos in Canada, and now we've done that. I'm so grateful to everyone who's worked so hard to make this a reality," said Côté.

"Canada's asbestos ban is the result of years of advocacy and hard work by people dedicated to safer, healthier workplaces. I celebrate with them and thank them for giving the next generation of Canadians a better future, free from the pain and suffering caused by asbestos," Yussuff said.

# DO YOUR PART TO "MAKE IT FAIR"



The Ontario Changing Workplace Review is nearing completion – and now the hard work starts. For months now, labour and community activists in Ontario have been mobilizing to improve workers' rights and tackle precarious and low-wage work. As the government decides what to do with the recommendations of the Review Panel, the Make it Fair campaign is launching a mass postcard blitz. We aim to collect tens of thousands of postcards across the province. Every union is asked to create a workplace committee to utilize these postcards as a discussion starter with their members.

It is essential that we build pressure on the Liberals to table legislation that makes it easier for workers to join and keep a union, as well as gain more rights in every workplace. Of course, if they make significant changes to Labour Law and Employment Standards there will be a massive backlash by employers to stall or defeat any reforms. Union members from every sector need to step up and engage in this crucial struggle. Even if you feel you have a good job - we all know people who are falling behind in today's economy or can't even get a decent start. Please take the time to help out in this campaign. Go to [makeitfair.ca](http://makeitfair.ca) or contact Andria at [ababbington@labourcouncil.ca](mailto:ababbington@labourcouncil.ca).

## Have you signed a postcard?

Ask your Union members to sign postcards and send them back to the Labour Council. Your family and friends can sign them too.

.....  
Call 416 441 3663 for more info.

Dear: \_\_\_\_\_, Member of Provincial Parliament

As your constituent, I want you to know that I appreciate the efforts of the Changing Workplaces Review and your participation. Now is the time to make positive change for workers and modernize our laws in Ontario.

I am very concerned about the rise in precarious work, from my own experiences or those of my friends and family who are struggling to get by. I'm particularly worried about young people who are getting stuck in low-wage, part-time and temporary jobs. Your constituents need well-paid, stable jobs with protections under the law to make sure they are treated fairly at work.

As my MPP, I urge you to use the Changing Workplaces Review this year as an opportunity to improve the Employment Standards and Labour Relations Acts, to make sure all Ontarians have decent working conditions and that it is easier for them to join and keep a union.

To find out how you can raise the bar for all workers, go to [makeitfair.ca](http://makeitfair.ca) or [15andfairness.org](http://15andfairness.org).

Yours Truly,



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Toronto & York Region Labour Council, 15 Gervais Dr, Ste 407, Toronto, ON

☐ I would like to receive Labour Council eNews & newsletters

Canada Post Corporation  
Publication Mail Agreement  
No. 41123033