

FALL | 2022

LABOUR ACTION

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TORONTO & YORK REGION
COUNCIL



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BUILDING LIVEABLE CITIES - TOGETHER



Message from the President

Dear Sisters, Brothers, Comrades,

The return to an in-person Labour Day parade was a huge celebration of our collective strength and of labour's 150th anniversary marching in the streets of Toronto. Workers and their families are excited to see the peak of the pandemic behind us, and they came out in the thousands to demonstrate labour's collective strength by marching together (Pages 3-6 includes photos and reflection). And it's clear that we'll need to continue to be vocal and active on worker issues: with Ford's Conservatives winning a second election in June and Pierre Poilievre's leadership win, there are serious threats looming to workers' rights to organize. Let's carry the Labour Day momentum forward to challenge their divisive and profit-hungry agenda, continue fighting the racial and economic inequity highlighted by COVID, and demand worker-friendly change.

As you read this, we are very close to the municipal election on October 24th. City governments make important decisions on issues that affect workers, like affordability, access to housing, employment, and more. We must remember that we have labour sisters, brothers and comrades – even ourselves – struggling to make ends meet. In the face of rocket-high real estate prices and soaring rents, many of us work hard day and night but still cannot afford a decent roof over our heads – a fundamental human right. (Read page 16 about housing issues).

We must remember that frontline workers are still sacrificing to keep our city and region safe and working, but even 10 paid sick days is still a luxury for many. Lack of respect, lousy benefits after being injured at work, and even the loss of life of some frontline workers, tips the scales negatively every day (Go to page 19 to read why nurses are leaving the profession).

We have only eight years until we hit 2030, a key milestone in the climate change calendar. The fight for climate justice takes place as much at the local level as at the provincial, federal or international levels.

There is so much to think about: what can we do to make the change we need? I think the answer is solidarity. Our power is in our numbers: when we fight together, we win. I ask everyone to stand up and speak about what we truly need.

This October, tell your friends, family, neighbours, and co-workers that one way to get what we need and improve our well-being is to have our voices represented: **get out and vote!** Let's elect progressive city councillors and school trustees who are committed to working for workers and our communities – for fair wages, good faith bargaining, investment in quality public services and education, community benefits, and climate action.

We are ***Electing to Build Liveable Cities – Together***. Know your candidates, check out their platforms, and share your support with them. (Go to pages 8-11 to read our city council and school board endorsements). Let's show up for those who genuinely fight for working people. Take some time to volunteer for one or more wonderful candidates. I know that through our collective efforts, "a change is going to come". See you at the polling station on October 24th!

Solidarity,

President

150 Years Together – Together We Will

The Labour Council Leads Thousands at the 150th Anniversary of the Labour Day Parade



The Labour Council is thrilled to have marched with thousands of working people to celebrate our power on Labour Day.

Workers have had a lot to deal with in the past year: the prolonged pandemic, return to austerity by governments, employers ignoring workers' sacrifices, and high inflation.

In response, labour organizing and worker activism are on the rise. Together we brought the benefits of unions to more workers. Together we will keep fighting for union members to get fair collective agreements. Together, we also fight for social, racial, and climate justice.

On Labour Day we demanded more liveable cities: a post-pandemic future that includes a just, job-rich transition for workers and communities that is democratic, worker-focused and public-service-led.

Marching since 1872, we keep fighting to improve what working people demanded 150 years ago: higher pay, better working conditions and the right to bargain collectively. We will keep growing our movement and continue the culture of solidarity. Together we will!

Letter From The President of Toronto & York Region Labour Council

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Comrades,

Labour Day 2022 was a great celebration of our 150th march in the streets of Toronto. After three years of a global pandemic, thousands of workers and their families joined the parade. Together we demonstrated the resilience of our movement. People were really excited to be on the streets again and to resume family Labour Day traditions.

Amid the excitement and relief that Labour Day marches have resumed, concerns have been raised about where and how the Labour Day Parade ended. We have been listening carefully to those concerns and have been reflecting on them. I want to assure you that the Toronto & York Region Labour Council Executive Board and its staff consulted extensively with OPSEU/SEFPO, other unions, and with both the OFL and the CLC, prior to deciding to end the parade at the CNE.

In any strike or lockout, unions make strategic decisions regarding what support they want or do not want. Central labour bodies, such as the Labour Council, respect those decisions. In this case, OPSEU/SEFPO chose strategies to increase solidarity amongst labour and to focus attention on the responsible parties: the Ford government and the employer (TSSA).

OPSEU/SEFPO decided not to set up picket lines at the CNE on Labour Day and did not ask other unions or the general public to boycott the CNE. They also did not ask the seven unions whose members work every day inside the CNE, to pull their members off the job. We know these decisions were not made lightly.

We listened carefully and consulted broadly on how we can best support OPSEU/SEFPO in its struggle to win a first collective agreement for the striking safety inspectors of OPSEU/SEFPO Local 546.

We could have made a different decision about Labour Day, which might well have sparked a different debate. Debate is healthy and is expected in our movement. Examining and re-examining our decisions is a fruitful endeavour, especially if it is constructive and open. It allows us to grow together and learn as leaders.

Labour Council has continued to support the striking safety inspectors of OPSEU/SEFPO Local 546 because this Labour Council has always been – and will always be – a militant supporter of working-class people in Toronto and York Region.

Solidarity forever,

Andria Zibbif
President







For 150 years, Toronto workers have marched for each other—and for you

For the first time in three years, working people from across Toronto and the GTA marched in celebration of Labour Day, marking the 150-year anniversary of this historic event. The city streets we returned to, however, looked quite different from when we left them in 2019. After three years of pandemic tragedy, job losses, rising inequality and uncertainty, it is clear we cannot continue down our current path. This Labour Day was a moment not just to reflect on the victories of labour's past, but the struggles working people faced today in this new normal, and how together we will build a new liveable city for all of us.

For a century and a half, workers have used this day as a moment to celebrate and reflect on how far we, and our city, have come. From major events like the Toronto General Strike of 1919 in support of the eight-hour work day to the Metro Days of Action in 1996 when we stood up to the Tory government, our message has always been one of solidarity with the people who built this city – those who not just work in it but make it work.

Time and again, we have shown our strength to persevere, our resolve to fight injustice, and our hope to build stronger communities. When I arrived in Canada from Jamaica as a teenager, this hope inspired me to become involved in my union. As president of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council today, I fight on behalf of our 220,000 Members for racial, economic, social, and climate justice.

Even after 150 years of organizing, marching, and winning victories for people across Toronto, our work remains unfinished. The COVID-19 pandemic focused a spotlight on society's inequities. Our city's institutions are besieged by those who wish to dismantle what workers have fought so hard to build.

In the middle of a pandemic, healthcare workers are burned out.

As the school year begins, education is under attack.

With winter on its way, rents are skyrocketing.

People struggling to make ends meet are seeing costs go up.

When I speak to people about their concerns, I hear their frustration the loudest. They are angry, pushed to the brink by employers clawing back benefits, corporations squeezing their wallets, and governments quietly forcing austerity. We are witnessing the city services we built slip into disfunction by a callous, inept leadership that does not have our best interests at heart.

How do we charge ahead, using the foundations laid by those who came before us to build a more just and equitable society?

This Labour Day was historic not only because of the 150 years that came before it. Today the labour movement takes the next steps toward a more liveable region. During the pandemic, we have seen working people fight to save our public services. Together we will continue this struggle, because the only ones we can truly count on to get through these difficult times are each other.

This Labour Day, we marched for high quality public healthcare and for paid sick days. We marched for quality publicly-funded education, higher ODSP, and greater investments in public services. We marched for fair treatment of marginalized communities, fair collective agreements, and good jobs for all. We marched for each other, and for you. We marched to remind workers it is critical they vote in this October's municipal elections. We will fight for what we need now and drive demand for worker-friendly change.

It was hope that brought me into the labour movement. The sacrifices I saw my fellow hotel workers make every day for their families' better future, and the solidarity in our mutual struggles, kept me in this movement. I was inspired by the path labour has walked and the challenges we have overcome to march together this Labour Day. Workers are winners. We are proud of the work we do, the battles we fought, and the victories we have won. We owe it not only to ourselves, but to the next generation, to build a liveable city for all of us.

Our city's best years still lie ahead. Together we marched toward them.



President

Electing to Build Liveable Cities – Together

The Decisions That Govern Our Communities Also Shape Our Lives

This October, voters across Toronto and York Region will go to the polls to elect mayors, members of council, and school board trustees. Let's ensure that we elect the best possible candidates to become the champions, caretakers, and activists we need for our communities.

It can be easy to overlook municipal elections, especially when we have so much happening in our day-to-day lives and other struggles at hand. And yet, local governments are the closest to the people, and stand to make the greatest impact on our daily experiences. From public spaces to public transit, access to work and recreation, affordable utilities and housing, and child care and public education, there is no doubt that the decisions that govern our communities also shape our lives.

The good news is that, through engagement, motivation, and mobilization, we as workers can create the changes we need to make Toronto and York Region liveable for all.

- Together, we can articulate a worker-friendly agenda for city and regional councils and for school boards.
- Together, we can support labour-endorsed candidates by ensuring they are known by our members and organizing ourselves to drop leaflets, erect signs, knock on doors, or make phone calls.
- Together, we can mobilize workers to **get out their vote** for labour-endorsed candidates on and before Election Day, October 24.
- And together, we will hold our elected local leaders to account to ensure they stand strong for workers' issues, now and throughout their terms.

The current context for municipal governance is a difficult one: Ontario municipalities, and Toronto in particular, have

been subject to upheavals and austerity for several years. Incoming councils and school board trustees will be faced with compressed budgets, a greater need for programming and services, and an unfriendly provincial counterpart in the Ford government.

Further, in Toronto, vast wards and fewer councillors mean intense pressure on each to perform and to make good choices for the whole city. Mayor Tory, the status-quo mayoral candidate with the greatest chance of re-election, will now also wield the threat of the "strong-mayor" veto that would undermine our democratic council. This wrong-headed "strong-mayor" power is not available at any other level of government in Canada.

That's why it is crucial that we support candidates who are not only strong community advocates, but who are also leaders on policies that will help all working people and our communities across the city. We need activists; champions who are willing to stand up and fight for what is right, and call out those who lack the courage or the will to do so. We need elected leadership who can rally their colleagues and their community toward a greater vision for a more liveable city.

We all must vote and volunteer for a strong progressive City Council – and for strong progressive trustees who will say no to cuts to education. We can fight for what we need now, and drive demand for change.



TORONTO COUNCIL



**Charles
OZZOUE**

for

WARD 1
Etobicoke North



Health Equity
Champion

Community
Advocate

A Voice for
Newcomers

**Amber
MORLEY**

for

WARD 3
Etobicoke-
Lakeshore



Social Justice
Change Leader

Health Equity
Champion

Committed to
Her Community

**Gord
PERKS**

for

WARD 4
Parkdale-
High Park



Environment
Champion

True Friend of
Labour

Experience We
Need on Council

**Chiara
PADOVANI**

for

WARD 5
York South-
Weston



Tenant Rights
Organizer

Fierce Labour
Ally

Social Justice
Champion

**Anthony
PERRUZZA**

for

WARD 7
Humber River-
Black Creek



Friend of Labour

Community
Leader

Social Justice
Champion

**Alejandra
BRAVO**

for

WARD 9
Davenport



Trusted
Community
Leader

Effective
Progressive
Advocate

Principled
Changemaker

**Ausma
MALIK**

for

WARD 10
Spadina-
Fort York



A Voice for
Workers

Experienced
Local
Advocate

Social and
Climate Justice
Champion

**Norm
DI PASQUALE**

for

WARD 11
University-
Rosedale



Equity
Champion

Waterfront
Defender

Values-driven &
Effective

**Chris
MOISE**

for

WARD 13
Toronto Centre



Proven Leader

Experienced
Local
Advocate

A Voice for
Underserved
Communities

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Paula for **WARD 14**
FLETCHER Toronto-Danforth



Proven Council Leadership

Trusted Friend to Labour

Community Champion

David for **WARD 15**
RICCI Don Valley West



Active CUPE 4400 Member

Affordable Housing Activist

Champion for Public Spaces

Stephen for **WARD 16**
KSIAZEK Don Valley East



Community Leadership

Invest Local Advocate

Affordable City for All

Shelley for **WARD 17**
CARROLL Don Valley North



Trusted Council Leadership

Committed Social Justice Advocate

Effective Local Representative

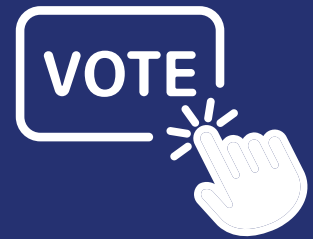
Jamaal for **WARD 23**
MYERS Scarborough North



Public Transit Champion

Affordable Housing for All

Community Benefits Advocate



OCT 24, 2022

The Labour Council has rolled out our endorsement for City Council and School Board Trustee candidates. Community is our everything. We need representatives who understand how to create the kinds of neighbourhoods, employment opportunities, public services, and investment in public education so that our future can also thrive. Visit our municipal election page at <https://www.labourcouncil.ca/municipal2022> to know the labour-endorsed candidates in your area. Let's keep moving forward in solidarity.

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TORONTO SCHOOL BOARDS TRUSTEE ENDORSEMENTS



Matias for
DE DOVITIIS **WARD 4**
Humber River-
Black Creek



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

Angela for
BRANDT **WARD 5**
York Centre



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

Lanny for
FERREIRA **WARD 6**
York South-
Weston



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

Debbie for
KING **WARD 7**
Parkdale-
High Park



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

Alexis for
DAWSON **WARD 9**
Davenport and
Spadina-Fort York



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

Deborah for
WILLIAMS **WARD 10**
University-Rosedale
and Toronto Centre



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

James for
LI **WARD 13**
Don Valley
North



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

Sara for
EHRHARDT **WARD 15**
Toronto-
Danforth



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

Neethan for
SHAN **WARD 17**
Scarborough
Centre



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

LABOUR ENDORSED



LABOUR
TORONTO & YORK REGION
COUNCIL

TORONTO SCHOOL BOARDS TRUSTEE ENDORSEMENTS



**Guled
ARALE**

for
WARD 18
Scarborough
Southwest



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

**Zakir
PATEL**

for
WARD 19
Scarborough-
Guildwood



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

**Manna
WONG**

for
WARD 20
Scarborough-
Agincourt



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

**Yalini
RAJAKULASINGAM**

for
WARD 21
Scarborough
North



TDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

**Gianfranco
CRISTIANO**

for
WARD 5
North York



TCDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

**Frank
D'AMICO**

for
WARD 6
York



TCDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

**Cameron
MIRANDA-RADBORD**

for
WARD 9
Toronto



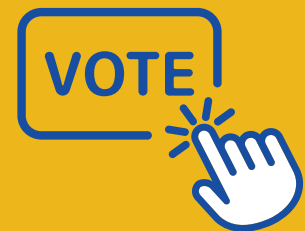
TCDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE

**Daniel
DI GIORGIO**

for
WARD 10
Toronto



TCDSB TRUSTEE CANDIDATE



OCT 24, 2022

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Tell Ford: Hands Off Toronto - We need better representation, not less.

Handing local city councillors' powers over to the mayor makes it even harder for people to have their say at City Hall

Doug Ford is meddling with Toronto City Hall again. Ford wants to expand the mayor's powers in Toronto and Ottawa to create a "strong mayor" system where, as Ford said, "one person [is] in charge, with veto power."

Labour Council Addendum: This article was written in July 2022. On August 10th, the Conservatives introduced *Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022*. The Bill was rammed through at Queen's Park, and passed on September 8th. The "Strong Mayors" legislation gives Toronto's Mayor the right to impose provincial priorities on City Council and veto Council decisions that go counter to those provincial priorities. Only if two-thirds of Council opposes the veto would the original decision stand.

Read on to see why this won't help solve our housing crisis.

What is happening?

On Tuesday, July 19 the Toronto Star released an article exposing Doug Ford's plans to overhaul and weaken Toronto and Ottawa's local democratic systems. Once again in the middle of an election and once again without consultation. People and City Councillors first learned about this through this Toronto Star article.

Ford has not made any details available. He has told the media that "one person [is] in charge, with veto power." and that this will be happening this Summer. Unsurprisingly, Mayor Tory has expressed his personal support for centralizing power in his hands and away from local city councillors.

At the July City Council meeting, Councillor Matlow and Councillor Perks added an urgent motion to the City Council agenda on this issue. City Council voted and asked the Province to consult with the city before making governance changes. They said that "City Council affirms its position that any changes to Toronto's local elections or its governance structure should be decisions made by Toronto's City Council." They also voted to once again ask the Province for additional powers around traffic safety, housing, and raising funds for the city (revenue tools).

Why does a "strong mayor" system make our city less democratic?

We don't know the details of Doug Ford's proposed strong mayor system, but we do know that it includes veto power for the mayor and the ability for the mayor to override local councillors - weakening local democracy.

Right now, mayors and councillors have one vote each at City Hall. This helps decision-making power to be more equally

shared and allows for better local representation. If the mayor is given expanded powers, it will mean that the democratic process will be significantly limited and the ability for you to impact change will be more difficult. The local city councillor you elect will have less power in shaping our city.

This is not the first time Doug Ford made sweeping undemocratic changes to City Hall. In 2018, during the municipal election, Ford cut council seats from 47 to 25 and took away local decision-making power from residents. Progress Toronto fought this all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. Now, he's doing much of the same by essentially making the city into one big ward and taking away power from councillors and the people they represent.

But if the mayor has more power does that mean more affordable housing can get built?

Short answer - no. Mayor Tory has won just about every single vote at City Council and had 8 years to address our housing crisis. If he wanted to address our housing and affordability crisis, he would have made it a priority.

Toronto is facing a massive financial crisis, and our city continues to get more and more unaffordable under Tory's leadership. We are in these crises because of the decisions he and the majority of council are making.

We need to change who is in power - not further entrench those who are already holding power.

Adult Online Classes in Demand Even as COVID Winds Down



The Literacy & Basic Skills program (LBS) at LEC provided more than 34 online classes to over 550 adults during the COVID-19 Pandemic. More people signed up for online classes in these COVID years than those that attended in-person classes prior to the pandemic. The demand for online basic digital skills training that is affordable (LBS classes are free) and accessible (contact us for more information on digital access) continues to be high.

During these COVID years, more than half of the adults in the online basic digital skills classes were workers in the hospitality industry, a sector that was, and still is one of the hardest hit sectors by the global pandemic. Shortly after the pandemic began, LEC and the Hospitality Training Action Centre (HTA75) partnered together to provide customized online Basic Computers classes to many of their members who were laid off because of the pandemic. We also created a customized curriculum and provided online basic digital skills training in partnerships with local community services such as TNO, Flemington Health Centre, and Better Living.

In the last two and a half years, LEC has seen an influx of learners who may have never thought it possible to join classes online, some of whom may not have even considered digital skills a necessity prior to COVID. These learners were: laid-off workers looking to upskill; individuals interested in learning work-from-home skills; seniors looking to stay connected with friends and family; individuals with mobility issues or other health issues preventing them from leaving their home; parents supporting kids in online learning; adults looking for digital skills for the purpose of attending online post-secondary classes, and even individuals suffering from fear and anxiety about attending traditional (in-person) classes.

Even as COVID winds down, LEC continues to see interest in online classes from individuals who can attend classes simply by switching on their computers from the comfort of their homes, sometimes with a child in their lap or in between shifts at work.

As a result of these classes developed during COVID to respond to local needs, LEC now has three core online classes: Computer Basics, Smartphone & Tablets Basics, and Online Communication Basics (see below). All classes are designed to be culturally relevant and bring worker-centred and union education principles into online training.

Computer Basics is a class for adults with limited computer skills who want to learn about email, online searching, file organization, online safety, and more. Classes are Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1:30 to 3pm. This is an ongoing class, adults can join anytime throughout the year and finish when they have achieved their goals. Contact Ryan Pike for registration details: rpike@laboureducation.org 416-537-6532 ext. 2222

Smartphone and Tablet Basics is a class for adults with limited experience using smartphones or tablets who want to learn about apps, file storage, camera, digital communication, safety and more. This is a 10-week class which runs several times per year on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3pm. Contact Ryan Pike for registration details: rpike@laboureducation.org 416-537-6532 ext. 2222

Online Communication Basics is a class for adults who want to improve online writing and speaking skills (email, video meetings, text messages, voice messages, video interviews) and learn about strategies for online reading and listening. This class combines the best of our experience teaching digital and English communication classes. The next 10-week class begins September 26, 2022 (Wednesdays, 6:30 to 8pm). Contact Audrey Gardner for registration details: agardner@laboureducation.org 416-537-6532 ext. 2231

To join, individuals must have a device and an internet connection. Contact us for details about how we can support individuals to join classes.



United for the 2022/23 United Way Campaign

In 2021/22 United Way raised \$100.7 million, reaching over 2 million people and supporting 700 community programs delivered by a network of over 300 agencies. Your role in helping United Way reach their goal was made possible through your commitment to making a difference in our communities in the Toronto and York regions. This year, United Way's goal is to raise \$110 million.

While COVID-19 remains with us for the foreseeable future, we know that the only way we can get closer to food, jobs, homes, and the kind of region we know we can be for everyone is by working together, united. Throughout this crisis, United Way has been doing just that. Together, United Way has flowed emergency funds to communities to address rapidly changing—and growing—need. Please connect with a Labour Liaison below to learn how you can support United Way or visit their website at www.unitedwaygt.org to donate.

Annual Presidents' Breakfast: October 12, 2022

Thanks to your support, we reached our 2021 Presidents' Breakfast single-day event goal of \$20,021. This year, we're optimistic and looking to double our goal at our 2022 event happening on October 12, 2022. Stay tuned for event updates by visiting the Labour Community Services website at www.labourcommunityservices.ca.

Start A Workplace Fundraising Campaign

We're here to help. Connect with our Labour Liaisons on ways you can support United Way throughout the year or to learn more. Thank you!

UWGT Labour Liaisons

- Marcia Lopez – mlopez@uwgt.org
- Richelle Himaya – rhimaya@uwgt.org

Labour & United Way

With Toronto & York Region Labour Council being a founding member of United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) in 1956, we all share a vision and drive that doesn't shy away from tackling what may seem impossible challenges. Our work together led to a formal partnership and the creation of Labour Community Services (LCS) in 1983.



Just Transition is a Workplace Issue

The Labour Education Centre (LEC) has been delivering labour adjustment programs since the late 1980s. Climate Justice is Union Business. In recent years LEC's Working Green program has focused on what a Just Transition will mean in the workplace.

A Just Transition secures the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities in the transition to a low-carbon economy. It is based on social dialogue between workers and their unions, employers, and government, and consultation with communities and civil society. A plan for Just Transition provides and guarantees decent jobs, social protection, more training opportunities and greater job security for all workers affected by global warming and climate change policies.

Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) is the lead department of the federal government for Just Transition, and is seeking input.

A good place for labour to start its recommendations to NRCAN could be:

- 1) ensure that our members receive the assistance and support they need, so that good jobs await them if their workplace closes, or work is reduced or changed, but the workplaces stay open, because of high greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2) workers are represented at both the workplace and sectoral level including where closure or job change/reduction decisions are made
- 3) That communities receive the support they need to remain viable after any plant closure

There is a need to have sectoral tables so that information on low-carbon technologies can be shared from one workplace to another. In cases where public money is used to subsidize new technologies, the public interest (rather than corporate confidentiality) so be the norm.

If the example of Algoma Steel in Sault Ste Marie is instructive, about 150 jobs will be lost in the transition to electric arc furnaces to replace coke ovens with a \$420 million public investment, and no Just Transition plan, and no advance notification to the Steelworkers.

In Toronto and York Region, we do not expect many plant closures, but work could be changed for jobs such as diesel mechanics and other fossil fuel-based motors, pumps and engines.

Accurate Labour Market Research will be needed to deliver effective programs as listed above. Information on how many workers will be affected by closures or how many may be laid off with new technologies, such as electric arc furnaces, will be needed well in advance. Information on

new job opportunities is equally important. Experience in Canada and Australia has shown that it is almost impossible to track down laid-off workers to determine demographics, new job preferences, and more after their last day at work. Many workers disperse, and many do not have active email addresses.

The federal government could design a Just Transition program and put it in a package that could be pulled off the shelf and customized (for example, by region or sector) as needed. They should also consult with workers, union leaders, employers, mayors/councillors and others in communities that we anticipate will be in transition shortly, such as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia coal plant communities. This would determine what kind of transition plan would inspire confidence.

Many Canadians presume that workers in GHG sunset industries will be able to find jobs in the new green economy. But new green sectors, such as manufacturing components for renewable energy, batteries, heat pumps and more, may not be located in the same communities where plants close. However, one aspect of moving to a net-zero economy is the need to do deep retrofits to virtually every building in Canada, which will generate work in communities affected by the transition. A just transition strategy in these communities could include training programs such as cladding, insulation, installation of heat pumps, etc. Training for these jobs should be available to workers where workplaces remain open, but work is changed or reduced.

In cases of plant closure, there should be a statutory requirement with provisions for penalties for employers to engage workers, their union and their communities before closure. In cases where work is changed, employers should be required to provide adequate training to retain workers.

Author: Steve Shallhorn, Executive Director at Labour Education Centre

If Workers Lose Their Homes, People Will Lose Their Cities

Elect Progressive City Councillors To Fight For Accessible and Affordable Housing

The Toronto region is maintaining its spot as one of the most unaffordable areas across Canada. For many, the dream of owning a home or renting their own adequate space still feels far out of reach, even with the cooling housing market. Prices of everything are mounting. Working people are being squeezed financially.

With the October 24th municipal election just around the corner, affordable housing is, again, an important election issue. We need to elect progressive council candidates to address the housing crisis we have been in for decades, made worse by the recent dramatic rise in real estate and rental costs. This crisis is especially hard for people with low incomes and marginalized communities. We need a real solution with a long-term vision that represents workers' voices.

Toronto ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), is a membership based community union made up of low-to-moderate income people. ACORN points out that In Toronto, 46.8% of tenant households spend more than 30% of their pretax income on shelter costs, so they live in unaffordable housing. Many parts of York Region are not far behind that shocking statistic. This election, ACORN is asking candidates to commit to championing the following changes to make Toronto an affordable and liveable city. Many changes are also applicable to York Region:

Affordable Housing

- Mandate 100% of developments in Housing Now as rental and 50% of units as affordable housing
- Stronger inclusionary zoning
- More financial support for small non-profit buildings so they remain as non-speculative housing
- Tax all luxury homes
- Increase the Municipal Land Transfer Tax on high value homes
- Tax all vacant units, to reduce speculative holdings

Landlord Licensing

- Strengthen the Landlord Licensing/RentSafe program to ensure multi-unit buildings remain in good condition
- Introduce a new fine system with major financial penalties for negligent landlords
- Automatic tickets for any property standard violation
- Automatic repairs by the City when landlords ignore violations, with landlord billed through property taxes

No Tenant Displacement

- No renovations until all permits have been acquired
- Conditions on permits requiring landlords and developers to support tenants who must relocate temporarily during renovations, and to continue their tenancy afterwards at the same rent
- Public register of tenant buyouts, building permits, etc.
- No permits, public funds, etc. to predatory landlords

Other Changes

- Use existing powers to require full rent controls on any development getting municipal public funds
- No evictions for rental arrears in TCHC
- Rent relief by forgiving loans to any who used the former Rent Bank program
- Recognizing that retrofitting aging rental housing is vital to fighting climate change, ensure that costs of retrofits are not passed on to low-income tenants

There is much more that other levels of government need to do to address the housing crisis, from re-establishing co-op housing programs to stronger rent controls, and full efforts to stop the increasing financialization and commodification of housing. But with a municipal election around the corner, these solutions focus on real things that municipal governments can do.

We all yearn for a city where people don't need to move away just because they cannot afford a place to live. Or where our younger generation postpones indefinitely starting a family just because of housing issues. Or where people end up on the streets. If workers lose their homes, people will lose their cities. Our future depends on affordable housing for all. Visit our endorsement pages 8-11 and vote on October 24th!



Strikes and Struggles

OPSEU Local 546: Fighting a Union-Busting Employer – Safety Inspectors at the Technical Safety and Standards Authority (TSSA) on strike since July 21, 2022

OPSEU/SEFPO Local 546 represents 170 TSSA safety inspectors across Ontario. Local 546 has been in negotiations for a first contract with the TSSA since November 2021. They organized to remedy a host of inequitable practices in their workplace (understaffing, high workloads, wages that are below industry standard, and more).

The union met with the TSSA 13 times before deciding to strike. At every meeting, they came up against an employer who stonewalled the negotiation process and showed little or no respect for the workers or their union. The CEO, Bonnie Rose, comes out of the retirement home industry, and is now sharing with the TSSA that experience of ratcheting down inspections. On July 20, **the TSSA walked away from the bargaining table, forcing safety inspectors on strike on July 21, 2022.**

These members inspect everything from elevators, food trucks, and amusement park rides, to fuel-burning equipment, propane dispensing stations, boilers and pressure vessels and elements in nuclear power plants. They are experts in their field who care strongly about public safety. The work they do is critical to the safety of Ontarians.

The TSSA was created 25 years ago by then Conservative Premier Mike Harris, who offloaded provincial inspectors to this new agency. Although public safety is a provincial responsibility, Doug Ford's government declares there is nothing it can do about the employer refusing to return to the bargaining table.

The labour movement has been in solidarity with these striking workers for weeks: joining pickets, organizing rallies, inviting Local 546 to lead the Labour Day Parade, arranging

for petitions and text campaigns. What is an ally to do when it's clear the employer is trying to union-bust while shortcutting public safety, and the Ford government does nothing? Bring Scabby the Rat along! Together with dozens of unions, the Labour Council is shining a light on this union-busting employer and a hypocritical government that pretends to be a friend of workers.

We regularly say "An injury to one is an injury to all." If this employer gets away with refusing to bargain a first contract, think of the implications for many of us down the road.

If this strike is still going on when you read this article, it's important to take action. Visit StrikeForSafety.ca to get updates and information about what you can do!



ATU Local 1587: Fighting For Job Security at GO Transit

At the end of August, the 2,200 members of ATU Local 1587 who work at GO Transit voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike if Metrolinx continued to refuse greater job security and protection against contracting out. After four months of bargaining, ATU 1587 members gave a resounding 93% strike mandate. They are in a legal strike position as of October 1st.

By August, Metrolinx had not made a single offer about job security and contracting out, even though the members made it clear this was their number one priority. For years, Metrolinx has used loopholes and played fast and loose with rules around bargaining unit work. In one example, Metrolinx is increasingly replacing unionized "Station Attendants" with "Customer Care Coordinators", wearing nearly the same uniform and almost

the exact same duties, but who are not ATU 1587 members. Let's all continue the fight to protect the integrity of collective agreements and fight for quality public transit.



IATSE Local 58: Two Years Away, But Now Roaring Back to Life.

Very few sectors were hit harder due to COVID-19 than the Live Performance Sector. In March 2020, all theatres, concert venues and exposition halls abruptly shut their doors for what they initially thought would be for two weeks. Those two weeks turned into two years. This shutdown posed massive challenges for Local 58's membership.

IATSE Local 58 has been representing workers in the gig economy for almost 125 years. Gig work means Local 58 members were not eligible to apply for many of the government programs that were set up to help during the pandemic. Having nineteen different employers every year means that you couldn't be kept on payroll with the help of a wage subsidy and the only avenue for assistance was the CERB. As the pandemic rolled on, our members needed to pivot to other work. Thankfully, many found jobs in a different IATSE Local, Local 873, as the film and television industry thrived during the pandemic.

While there were a few false starts, the industry started rebounding in March of 2022, and employers could start inviting audiences back. Theatres, Concerts and Tradeshows were back as everyone was ready to be entertained once again.

Now Local 58 members were finally returning to the jobs they love, but a new problem developed, where were all the workers? With many needing to find alternate work to survive, when live events came back, not all the workers did, and Local 58 found themselves looking for workers to fill the gaps. We are still recovering, and it will take a few years to get back to where we were before the pandemic, but we know that Local 58 members are once again at the forefront of the live entertainment sector.



Celebrate Women in Construction - The Floor Diva

Desiree Thelma R. Smith, aka "The Floor Diva," started her career in construction through the Women in Skilled Trades Program and works for Toronto Carpenters Union Local 27. She is a proud recipient of the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) - Building Diversity Mentor Award (BDA). Desiree is also a sessional professor in the School of Architectural Studies, at George Brown College.

Desiree is one of the founding members of the Ontario Building & Construction Tradeswomen, who advocates for women, empowering them in the construction industry, providing mentoring, lending support and offering sisterly love. She's an inspiring mentor and a proud mother of two respectable and ambitious young adults. Desiree enjoys travelling, spending quality time with friends and family and laying beautiful floors.

Desiree was one of the scholarship recipients from Local 27 who enrolled in the Labour Community Advocacy Training program (LCAT). She said the program was an eye-opener for her. As a labour advocate, Desiree believes that we all are to be held accountable if we see, hear, or know of things that are not right with a brother or a sister and do not give a helping hand.

"I see myself growing in this labour movement to help build and inspire people. We all need a helping hand, no matter

what walks of life we're coming from. To all my mentees and the young ones who are coming into the trades, hold your head up and persevere. Carved the way to your destiny. And though the roads may be rough, and life throws you some serious curve balls: dodge, then come back stronger than ever before. In your comeback lies your strength and resiliency that will be forged, the star that you are."



Desiree Smith (in the middle) at the Building Diversity Award night.

Why Ontario Nurses Are Leaving a Profession They Love

The thanklessness of nursing is often manageable, but the disrespect is detrimental and perhaps the predominant factor in the ongoing nursing crisis.

Nurses have been warning of an impending crisis for a while and, more recently, signalling that the crisis is now upon us. Our alarm, however, remains unheeded, without any meaningful effect or response from people who have the power and responsibility to act.

Rather than sit in the proverbial boiling water that has become our health-care system, many nurses are justifiably leaving the bedside or the profession altogether, which is regrettably adding to the rising heat.

There is only so long that nurses can face deteriorating working conditions, lack of public support in facing a pandemic, and restrictions to fundamental wage bargaining rights, before they contemplate the difficult decision to leave a career they once loved.

When I asked one of my nursing colleagues to reflect on his career, his response was not to reminisce on the patients whose lives he saved or pride in skills he has mastered, but rather a despondent, “I am tired.”

This sentiment of exhaustion is frequently and unequivocally echoed by nearly every nurse I speak to: exhausted from advocacy that feels futile, from working multiple jobs due to insufficient nursing wages, and from a physically and mentally demanding workload that is worsening due to staffing challenges and increasing patient acuity.

Most of us who remain at the bedside have recently contemplated leaving, and actually empathize with our colleagues who have left. Another nurse expressed to me that she feels “broken” from nursing, having barely had time to recover from the psychological toll of working through the peaks of the pandemic before facing the burden of a peaking nursing crisis.

“The bottom line is that the inequitable pay that we receive is not worth losing yourself over. So it is better to walk away,” she explained, as to why nurses are leaving.

It is worth noting, though, that it is not just about the money, but rather what equitable pay reflects in terms of the valuation of nursing by our provincial leaders and policymakers. Fundamentally, it is an issue of respect, or rather disrespect, conveyed through wage disparities for nurses who remain at the bedside.

Bedside nurses, particularly in hospitals, are becoming increasingly disincentivized to stay due to unlivable wages that are lagging far behind inflation, and staffing shortages solved by

paying outsourced agency or travel nurses double, sometimes nearly triple, the amount that staff nurses are being paid.

The biggest insult to retention of nurses and advancement of the profession remains to be Bill 124, a legislation that limits our fundamental right to bargain for our wages. It is difficult to imagine the nursing crisis resolving while this bill remains active.

Nurses love what they do; they must, frankly, because the job is mostly thankless, though not unrewarding, and more than a little messy. The thanklessness is often manageable, but the disrespect facing the nursing profession is detrimental and perhaps the predominant factor in the ongoing nursing crisis.

Attempts at solving the problem are misguided as they continue to focus on bringing in new nurses rather than incentivizing the existing workforce to return or remain. This, too, is a form of disrespect; the knowledge and skill of experienced nurses is unappreciated and undervalued.

A new nurse disclosed to me that she expected “there would be a lot more senior staff staying on board to mentor the new grads — but they are leaving too! New grads are forced to mentor one another.”

Another nurse illustrates a similar picture: “With the loss of many seasoned nurses, most floors are being staffed by nurses who have less than two years of experience working.” Honestly, if this does not perturb or motivate our leaders to act, I am at a loss as to what will.

This year, the Canadian Nurses Association themed Nursing Week with #WeAnswerTheCall, but nurses are consistently expressing that they “do not feel the connection to the profession and ‘call to work’ that once existed; rather they feel underappreciated and underpaid in a high stress job.”

Is it even a wonder that nurses are leaving the profession?

For such a multi-faceted problem that seems to be reaching a head after years of policymakers neglecting to act, there will not be a quick fix. We are, however, reaching a decisive point when the public needs to be aware of the issues contained within hospital walls and our leaders must take the crucial step of admitting that a crisis exists.

Author: Enxhi Kondi, The Star contributor, emergency department nurse in the GTA. Originally Published on Aug 1, 2022.

Key Municipal Election Dates

Election Day is Monday, October 24

Toronto



Advance Voting Days in Toronto

- Friday, October 7 - Friday, October 14, from 10 am - 7 pm

Election Day

- October 24, from 10am - 8pm

For More Information

- Please visit toronto.ca/elections

York Region



- Each municipality has advance voting options
- Many have online voting options
- Visit your region's election page below for more information.

★ Town of Aurora

<https://www.aurora.ca/en/your-government/elections.aspx>

★ City of Markham

<https://www.markham.ca/wps/portal/home/about/2022-Municipal-Election>

★ Town of Georgina

<https://www.georgina.ca/municipal-government/2022-election>

★ City of Vaughan

<https://www.vaughan.ca/elections>

★ Town of East Gwillimbury

<https://elections.eastgwillimbury.ca/en/vote>

★ Township of King

<https://www.king.ca/elections>

★ Town of Newmarket

<https://newmarketvotes.ca/>

★ City of Richmond Hill

<https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/election.aspx>

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