



Provincial Human Rights Committee

Human Rights

Workers of Colour Caucus

MERC

# BUILDING COMMUNITY

Provincial Women's Committee

Unions

Locals

Aboriginal Circle

Public Service

CERC

Area Council

Equity

Community Agencies

Provincial Francophone Committee

Executive Board

CAAT

Rainbow Alliance

Equity Chairs

Provincial Young Workers' Committee

Disability Rights Caucus

**12th ANNUAL** **JOINT LEADERSHIP DAY** Sept. 17 **2013**

★ DELTA TORONTO EAST  
★ 9:30 AM- 4:00 PM

# 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Leadership Meeting

## *-Building Community-*

**Date:** September 17, 2013

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** Delta Toronto East

**Theme:** Unions, strong public services and equity seeking groups working together to build community.

**Hosts:** Chairs of Equity Committees and Caucuses

- Marco Costa: Human Rights Committee
- Elizabeth Ha: Workers of Colour Caucus
- Robert Hampsey: Rainbow Alliance
- Kevin Herbert: Young Workers Committee
- Helen Riehl: Disability Rights Caucus
- Pauline Saulnier: Aboriginal Circle
- André Savoie, Francophone Committee
- Jennifer Van Zetten: Women's Committee

**Guests:** OPSEU Leadership

- Executive Board Members
- MERC Chairs
- CERC Chair
- BPS Sector Chairs
- OPSEU Administrators and Supervisors

## Agenda

	<b>*Morning Session*</b>
9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 10:00	Getting Focused
10:00 - 10:30	OPSEU Successes
10:30 - 10:45	<b>Break</b>
10:45 - 11:45	Defining the Issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Derek Fudge, NUPGE</li><li>• Judy Duncan, ACORN Canada</li></ul>
<b>12:00 - 1:00</b>	<b>Lunch (provided)</b>
	<b>*Afternoon Session*</b>
1:00 - 2:00	Building a Movement <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Olivia Chow, MP Trinity—Spadina</li></ul>
2:00 - 2:45	Fighting Back
2:45 - 3:00	<b>Break</b>
3:00 - 3:45	Group Presentations
3:45 - 4:00	Wrap up and evaluations

## **OPSEU Statement of Respect**

Harassment or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated at OPSEU functions.

Whenever OPSEU members gather, we welcome all peoples of the world.

We will not accept any unwelcoming words, actions or behaviours against our sisters and brothers.

We accord respect to all persons, regardless of political affiliation, including people of colour, women, men, First Nations, Métis or other Aboriginal peoples, members of ethno-racial groups, people with disabilities, gays, lesbians, bisexual, trans-gendered/transsexual peoples, francophones and all persons whose first language is not English.

In our diversity we will build solidarity as union sisters and brothers.

If you believe that you are being harassed or discriminated against contact \_\_\_\_\_ (specify names) \* for immediate assistance.

\*It is the event coordinator's responsibility to designate at least two qualified persons. The names and phone numbers of such persons must be listed. One of the designated members shall be female.

Revised May 2012

## **Joint Leadership Theme**

**Building Community:** Both equity and unions are under attack. To fend off these attacks we need unions, strong public services and equity seeking groups to work together.

### **Objectives for the day:**

- Identify the need for equity to be woven into the fabric of the union;
- See equity as a vehicle that strengthens the union;
- See that Unions are a strong proponent of equity;
- Share ideas on how to deal with current attacks on unions and equity;
- Recognize the differences in equity issues around the province;
- Identify issues in our communities and ways to resolve them;
- Identify allies to work with in our various communities; and
- Provide recommendations as to how to move forward/promote change while keeping a lens on equity.



## Task Sheet 2

In your group discuss what is happening in your regions in relation to attacks on Equity and Unions. Use the chart below to direct your conversation.

	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Unions</b>
<b>What is going on?</b> (i.e. anti-labour city politicians, decrease in funding for affordable housing)		
<b>What can we change?</b> (what issue can we get action on)		
<b>What do we need to be successful?</b> (i.e. resources)		
<b>Is there anyone we can partner with?</b>		

Be prepared to share your conversation with the rest of the group. You may do this in any manner you would like (i.e. skit, poster, song, art project, etc.). But please fill in the blank chart provided for the equity chairs' committee who will be following up with the information.

# **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**



## EQUITY STRUGGLES TIMELINE

### CANADA AND THE WORLD

### OPSEU

**1763: Royal Proclamation of October 1763 is signed.** This document explicitly recognizes aboriginal title; aboriginal land ownership and authority are recognized by the Crown as continuing under British sovereignty. It states that only the Crown could acquire lands from First Nations and only by treaty. By the 1850's major treaties are signed with First Nations east of the Rocky Mountains.

**1857: Harriet Tubman becomes a renowned Underground Railroad "conductor"** after escaping enslavement herself in 1849 by traveling north from Maryland. Between 1851-1857, Tubman makes an estimated nineteen trips back into enslaved territory and rescues over 300 people from bondage

**1870: Métis People in the Red River Valley declared a provisional government** under Louis Riel, and demanded entry into the confederation of Métis People.

**1909: Kispiox Chiefs stop road building in their valley;** the RCMP arrests seven.

**1911: The Civil Service Association of Ontario** is created as a coal-buying cooperative and social club and to discuss ways of improving the civil service. About 200 attend the initial meeting. Women are not invited. They agree to get the government's approval before proceeding further. The provincial government then had about 1,000 employees. Salaries were set by the Lieutenant Governor. Pay increased with service, and long-term employees got first crack at promotions. There was no overtime. Ministers could fine staff up to \$20 for misbehaviour. There was no appeal. There was no retirement age. A pension of one month's salary a year was granted to old-timers let go for ill health and widows of career officials.

**1918: An Act to confer the Electoral Franchise upon Women** grants White women the right to vote in Federal elections. In effect as of 1919, Indigenous women and women of colour are excluded from this right.

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**1931: Black Canadians challenge racist practices** of separation and refusal of public services and take their cases to court. One such case in 1919, a Québec court rules that racial discrimination is not contrary to public order or morality in Canada. In another known case, a Montreal tavern refuses to serve a Black customer in 1931; the customer takes the case to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1939, where the nation's highest tribunal concludes that racial discrimination is legally enforceable.

**1944: Racial Discrimination Act** prohibits discriminatory signs and symbols

**1947: Married women now eligible to hold positions in the federal public service.**

**1947: *The Saskatchewan Bill of Rights*** becomes Canada's first general law prohibiting discrimination, passed under Tommy Douglas.

**1947: Chinese Canadians are given right to vote** in federal elections. South Asians win the right to vote in federal and provincial elections

**1947: Indigenous People are able to engage in legal actions** or political resistances. For the first time, provincial and national Indigenous organizations were consulted about changes in the Indian Act.

**1948: UN General Assembly adopts the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights***, the primary international articulation of fundamental and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, and the first comprehensive agreement among nations as to the specific rights and freedoms of all human beings.

**1951: ILO passes Equal Pay for Equal work, Convention 100.** While federal government and provinces pass pieces of legislation in line with Convention 100, Canada did not ratify until 1972.

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**1956: The Civil Service Commission stops discriminating against married women** in employment. Within two years, the proportion of women in the OPS who are married reaches 50 per cent, up from 10 per cent. They start demanding equal pay.

**1960: Canadian Bill of Rights** established under the government of John Diefenbaker.

**1960: 'Status Indians'** living on reserves **receive the right to vote** in federal elections for the first time.

**1962: Ontario Human Rights Code.** Ontario Human Rights Commission is established.

**1965: Last segregated Black school** closes in Ontario.

**1967: Through the Immigration Act, the Canadian federal government introduces Point System** – An immigrant selection method that purports to eliminate racial prejudice while it selects 'suitable' immigrants through a Eurocentric point system. Points are allocated according to six categories: education, languages (English or French), work experience, age, arranged employment in Canada, and Adaptability.

**1969: Amendments to Criminal Codes decriminalize provision of information on birth control and legalized abortion and legalize homosexual acts between consenting adults.**

**1970: Federal government's Task Force on the Status of Women.** Each provincial government and many municipalities forming similar task forces.

**1970: Ontario becomes the first province** to pass a law **guaranteeing a blind person the legal right to be accompanied by a specially trained dog** guide in all facilities open to the public.

**1970: Jeanette Corbière begins challenge to the Indian Act** on the grounds of sexism. She wins in 1985.

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**1972: National Action Committee on Status of Women formed.**

**1973: As a result of the Calder case involving the Nisga'a, Native title to land is proclaimed to exist under English law, predating colonization.** This is seen to be the basis for contemporary Aboriginal law in Canada.

**1975: A group of women activists in Region 5 start meeting** informally as the Region 5 Women's Caucus. It's the precursor of the Provincial Women's Committee.

**1980: OPSEU hires its first Equal Opportunities Coordinator.**

**1980: Convention establishes the Provincial Women's Committee (PWC)** with a formal role in the union. As a "constitutional committee" it has elected representatives from each region and can propose resolutions and constitutional amendments to Convention. It has a mandate to enhance the role of women in the union, the workplace and society.

**1980's: OPSEU organizing in Broader Public Sector.** OPSEU continues to expand its membership throughout transfer payment agencies: association of community living, hospitals, children's aid societies, universities, housing support groups, legal clinics, women's shelters.

**1982: OPSEU wins paid parental leave** for the Ontario Public Service.

**1982: Formation of OPSEU's Rainbow Alliance** with a mandate to promote LGBT rights.

**1982: Canada's Constitutional Act, Section 35** recognizes existing Aboriginal and treaty rights, and the Métis as an Aboriginal people.

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**1983: OPSEU publishes the book Madness**, by John Marshall, its second critique of the province's system for dealing with psychiatric patients. A blistering indictment of the system, it is the result of a union-sponsored commission of inquiry which held hearings in communities around the province.

**1983: Fred Upshaw becomes the first black person** to lead a major trade union when he succeeds James Clancy, who becomes president of NUPGE. Upshaw goes on to be re-elected twice.

**1984: Childcare care resolution at OPSEU Convention:** to provide childcare for educationals, conventions and regional bargaining conferences.

**1984: Womens' caucus organizes breakfast rally and motion to support a women's right to choose.** Women's committee enshrined in the OPSEU constitution. Women's conference "Equality before 2000."

**1984: Chinese Head Tax Redress campaign** launched by the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) for the 62 years of legislated racism. Over 4,000 head taxpayers and families registered with CCNC across Canada. Currently, there are only a couple of hundred head tax payers or surviving spouses alive today and they are all over 82 years old.

**1985: As a result of Sandra Lovelace's success**, where the UN finds Canada in breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - Section 12 (1) (b) of the **Indian Act is repealed**. The Introduction of Bill C-31 attempts to re-instatement Indian status to the women who lost it under Section 12 (1) (b), the discriminatory clause of the Indian Act. However, this section is replaced by a hierarchical structure of status with seven levels. Women who regain their status under Bill C- 31 are relegated to the lowest status level, which denies the right to pass status onto grandchildren. Thus, discrimination under the Indian Act has not been removed; it has merely been partially suspended for two generations. This

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has grave consequences for Indigenous women and their communities.

**1986: Ontario government's Bill 7** prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

**1987: Harassment-free workplace.** In a Supreme Court Decision, the Court ruled that employers have a duty to provide a harassment-free environment.

**1988-1996: Michael McKinnon, Corrections Officer, files a complaint of harassment** in his correctional institution and the complaint is upheld by the Human Rights Tribunal. The Tribunal orders that anti-racism be part of the systemic change process in Corrections.

**1989: The *Canadian Human Rights Commission* ruled that same-sex couples, and their children** if any, should be considered **families**.

**1990: *UN convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*** is adopted.

**1990's: Canadian central labour bodies designate equity positions** for aboriginal, workers of colour, disabled workers, gays and lesbians.

**1990: Oka crisis receives national attention** when Mohawk warriors and community form an armed stand-off with the Quebec police and Canadian army over the land at Oka. First Nations across the country rally to support the Mohawks and to emphasize their demands for recognition of inherent aboriginal title and rights.

**1990: The World Health Organization (WHO) removes homosexuality,** listed as a mental illness, from the International Classification of Diseases.

**1991: OPSEU adopts an employment equity policy,** and becomes one of the first unions to hire a Human Rights Officer.

**1991: About 80 members and staff participate in Toronto's Caribana parade** dressed as butterflies. The union also sponsors a band in the event.

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**1991: The annual Humanitarian Award is presented to Nelson Mandela**, the long-imprisoned leader of the African National Congress who becomes South Africa's first post-apartheid prime minister.

**1992: Convention establishes a Provincial Human Rights Committee**, to parallel the Provincial Women's Committee. Similarly, it has authority to initiate resolutions and constitutional amendments. Its mandate is to promote a wide range of human rights throughout the union.

**1992: Judy Rebick accepts the Humanitarian Award** on behalf of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

**1992: First Nations Summit, Canada, and British Columbia establish Treaty Commission.**

**1993: The first Provincial Human Rights Committee (PHRC) is elected**, mirroring the Provincial Women's Committee.

**1993–1994: An initiative called Building Powerful Locals** emphasizes the training of local leaders and the need for more autonomy at the local level to get more members active in the union.

**1993-1998: Cheryl O'Brien, Corrections Officer, files a grievance on gender discrimination.** Her victory gets Tribunal orders for systemic change in Corrections underway.

**1995: Ontario black activist Bromley Armstrong receives the Humanitarian Award.**

**1995: The Ontario Federation of Labour organizes the first of a series of community Days of Action** which feature cross-picketing of workplaces by many unions, large protest marches and rallies. They involve community and church groups as well as unions, and are designed to show massive community opposition to the harsh policies of the Harris

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government. The first one, in London, is held Dec. 11 in bitter cold.

**1995: The Province of Ontario extends family benefits to its gay and lesbian employees** in same-sex relationships

**1995: An Ontario Court judge ruled that same-sex couples must be allowed to bring joint applications for adoption.**

**1996: Sexual orientation is added as a prohibited ground of discrimination** in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

**1997: Women's anti-poverty "Bread and Roses" march** from Vancouver to Ottawa.

**Mid 1990's: Human Rights Groups resist efforts to dismantle Human Rights Commissions** (most notably in British Columbia and Ontario).

**1997: The Supreme Court hands down its unanimous decision in the Delgamuukw Case. The court ruled that aboriginal title to the land had never been extinguished.** The previous trial judge had erred by not accepting oral history as evidence in the case. The claim was sent back to trial, suggesting that negotiations were the best way to resolve outstanding claims.

**1999: The Nunavut Act creates the third and newest territory of Canada** with its own Indigenous Inuit government. The Nunavut agreement is the biggest land rights agreement signed in Canadian history.

**1999: The Ontario Legislature passed Bill 5.** This outlawed discrimination in the province against same-sex couples. They are now treated in the same way as heterosexual common-law couples.

**2000: Establishment of the OPSEU Aboriginal Circle:** Aboriginal members of OPSEU requested the permanent establishment of an Aboriginal caucus and appropriate funding under the umbrella of the PHRC.



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**2000: Establishment of the Disability Rights Caucus (DRC):** Members of OPSEU meet to discuss the formation of the disability rights caucus

**2000: World March of Women,** rallying for the elimination of poverty, the end to violence against women, in opposition to war, military interventions, and opposing restrictions on immigration and refugee policies

**2001: OPSEU and four other unions launch a pay equity challenge** under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They argue that the government is perpetuating sex discrimination by underfunding public services

**2001: OPSEU participates in the protests against the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City,** along with 20,000 others from Canadian and international unions and citizens groups.

**2001: The first World Social Forum takes place in January at Porto Allegro,** Brazil, and advocates for civil societies' greater participation in international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

**2002: OPSEU releases a report entitled "Reality: Ontario's Mental Health Care System isn't Working"** which spells out many deficiencies in the province's approach to mental illness.

**2002: The Ontario Superior Court ruled unanimously that restricting marriage to one man and one woman is unconstitutional.** The court gave the Ontario and Federal governments 24 months to change their legislation to allow same-sex couples to marry. The Ontario government decided against appealing. The Federal government released a public opinion poll indicating that most Canadian adults favor allowing the marriage of same-sex couples. Three days later, the federal government started the process of appealing the ruling to the *Ontario Court of Appeals*.

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**2003: Race Relations and Minority Rights Committee makes a presentation to the Executive Board for recognition as the Workers of Colour Caucus (WOCC).**

**2005: Parliament passes Bill C-38: The Civil Marriage Act, which extends marriage rights to same-sex couples,** making Canada the fourth country in the world to take such a step.

**2005: Six Nations People and supporters hold an information picket** at Douglas Creek to raise awareness of Canada's ongoing theft of Six Nations land.

**2006: Workers of Colour Caucus begins analysis of participation** by OPSEU members of colour in OPSEU. Their analysis is available on the Equity part of the OPSEU website, under the "Living Wall" project.

**2006: Six Nations People and supporters assert their rights to the land in Caledonia** and block construction by Henco Industries in Southern Ontario. Clan Mothers issue a statement reaffirming Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) sovereignty and calling for nation-to-nation negotiations. Hundreds of people gather in support of Haudenosaunee sovereignty, including an action involving 50 women (including Clan Mothers) blocking construction crews. Ontario Provincial Police swarm the Six Nations camp in cruisers and vans, using batons, tear gas cannons, and tasers. The people resist the invasion and manage to push the police back and hold the line.

**2006: The UN General Assembly passes the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*** with 143 states in favour. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States vote against.

**2007: OPSEU Youth Caucus becomes Provincial Young Workers Committee (PYC)** with a formal structure like the PHRC and PWC.

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**2007: In February 07, The Supreme Court of Canada rules that Security Certificates violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.** The court suspends its judgment from taking legal effect for a year, giving Parliament time to write a new law. However, by October 2007 the government introduces a new law, Bill C-3, which is almost identical to the old law, with the addition of a 'special advocate'. The special advocate addition does nothing to ensure justice as it remains within an unjust process where a court's decision can still rely on secret evidence.

**2008: Social Mapping Project passed by Convention.** Survey of staff and members takes place in fall of 2009; Systems Review begins in the fall of 2010.

**2009: Disability Rights Caucus starts accessibility audit of OPSEU buildings.**

**2010: OPSEU plants cedar tree in memory of the many contributions of Tim Brown,** a respected Aboriginal activist who died April 25, 2010.

**November 2010: Get Up, Stand Up, OPSEU Human Rights Conference** organized by activists from all OPSEU equity committees and caucuses.

**2010: Declared Year of the Métis Nation.**

**2010-2011: International Year of Youth.**

**2011: OPSEU Francophone Caucus becomes Provincial Francophone Committee** with a formal structure like that of the PHRC, PWC and PYC.

**2012: OPSEU Aboriginal Circle becomes the fifth constitutional committee.** It is composed of two members selected from each OPSEU region.

**2012: Gender identity and gender expression** are included as prohibited grounds of discrimination under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

**2013: The House of Commons passes Bill C-279** and with Senate approval, will

## CANADA AND THE WORLD

OPSEU

officially extend human rights protections to transgender and transsexual people in Canada.

**2013: Canada's first openly gay First Minister**, Kathleen Wynne is sworn in as Premier of Ontario.

### The Future

**2014: World Pride in Toronto.**



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**DAY** Sept. 17  
**2013**

*Chairs of the Equity Committees and Caucuses*