



2014

# Convention Update Day 3: May 10, 2014

## ‘You make our province work’

NDP candidate Andrea Horwath arrived at the convention to a standing ovation from cheering OPSEU delegates. She began her speech with her trademark smile and said “There’s nothing like an OPSEU convention!”

If elected, Horwath wants to provide Ontarians with a solid government—one that will own up to its mistakes, not one that will “wipe the hard drive,” one that will deal with real world struggles and not provide Queen’s Park bonuses.

Citing Tim Hudak’s “new” strategy to deregulate power and institute toll roads Ontarians, Horwath noted that “back to the future is not the change we need.”

Horwath noted that the Liberal government promises are no better than those of the conservatives saying that if Premier Wynne’s government could fulfill the three promises made during the last election, she doesn’t know how Wynne will keep the seventy promises this time around. Horwath wondered how the Wynne government could “build a ship when they can’t build a raft.”



Horwath added that Liberal privatization, cuts to jobs, and deregulating hydro is like “burning furniture to heat the house.” Horwath does not believe in broken promises, and she vows to invest in communities and stop the subsidy of private exports.

Horwath received another standing ovation when she vowed to put patients first and protect front line public services. The next step, she says, is for Ontarians to choose a government that stops promising and starts delivering.

Noting that she has a lot of work to do, she believes that with shared values, Ontario workers can join together to produce positive results.

# Inequality isn't fair!

Is it fair that the incomes of most Canadians have stagnated for two decades while the earnings of the richest few have skyrocketed? The rich are exerting more and more influence on our lives, livelihoods and democracies.

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) doesn't think this is fair. This year a big green bus called the "Fairness Express" is hitting the road to spark conversations about the growing inequality between those who have money and power and those who don't. The Fairness Express is a rolling roadshow of public service employees from across Canada. Members of the roadshow are committed to turning the tide against growing inequality. Roadshow members will listen to your suggestions about how this equality gap can be lessened and will be sharing their four-point plan:

- Ensuring tax fairness: Making sure corporations and the wealthy are paying their fair share of taxes.
- Strengthening public services: Public education, public health care and public social services ensure that everybody has an equal shot at a prosperous and productive life.
- Creating a modern industrial strategy: For too long, our politicians have focused on growing our economy through "race-to-the-bottom" trade deals and the simple extraction and export of our natural resources. It's time to build industries and economies that put people and nature first.
- Protecting Labour Rights: Unions ensure decent wages, safe workplaces and secure livelihoods. They also foster the greater good, advocating for things like Medicare, the Canada Pension Plan and respect for the basic human rights of all people.



*The Fairness Express has been shuttling delegates to and from OPSEU Convention 2014 from Sheraton Centre on the hour every hour from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. To learn more about the Fairness Express campaign, please visit [www.fairnessexpress.ca](http://www.fairnessexpress.ca)*

# New & Improved OPSEU website

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May 1 - Liberal? Conservative? NDP? It's all up for grabs



### VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May 7 - Corporate Welfare - Hudak Style

OPSEU President Smokey Thomas opened Day 2 of Convention by introducing OPSEU's redesigned website. The latest website delivers a crisp, clean look with enhanced functionality and an emphasis on being user-friendly.

OPSEU is the second-most visited Canadian union website. It is hoped that the redesign will help OPSEU continue to lead the way in union communication.

While the current website was excellent at providing information, it lacked the flexibility needed to stay current. As the scope of digital information broadens, it's important to provide a web platform that keeps pace with changing technology.

One of the challenges when re-designing a website is to make sure the technical side works smoothly providing seamless navigation while safeguarding data. Another challenge is to allow users to access information they need without having to navigate through pages they don't need. The new design meets both these challenges.

Some of the highlights of the improvements are:

- enhanced web security,
- adaptable customized user experience,
- increased flexibility in accessing social media,
- easier toggling between French and English,
- a new membership portal,
- external web access,
- internal intranet access,
- live video plug and play experience,
- better scaling between electronic devices, and
- a better mobile experience.

This new "window to the world" for OPSEU will be launched mid-May.

As the website becomes fully operational, members will be able to access their personal information through a member portal which will make the website even more interactive.



# Resolutions & Constitutional Amendments

## Constitutional Amendment:

**A6-** An amendment to article 29.8.2 to lower numbers required for quorum at meetings to increase attendance—**Defeated**

## Resolutions:

**C1-** That OPS negotiations procedures be approved—**Carried with amendments**

**EB1-** That the Convention delegation endorse seventeen resolutions including those dealing with tax fairness, Ontario pension plan, financial transaction tax, corporate income tax, personal income tax rate, labour law, a modern industrial strategy, pharmacare—**Carried**

**F2-** That by May 2014, OPSEU re-establish good standing with the OFL and its affiliates and to return to paying dues—**Defeated**

**L1-** That OPSEU lobby via NUARC the federal government to provide necessary funding to the province to restore and expand health care for mental health and addiction problems, etc., and lobby the provincial government to take immediate steps to provide alternative services for offenders with mental health and serious addiction problems—**Carried**

**E2-** That OPSEU educate its members on the perils of the end of door-to-door mail delivery and urge members to lobby MPs to voice disapproval of this attack—**Carried**

**P3-** That OPSEU work with the Ontario government to restore public service retiree benefits—**Defeated**

**L16-** That OPSEU develops and implements a six-month, province-wide campaign to defend workers' rights and to fight Hudak austerity—**Carried**

**N1-** That OPSEU continue to organize college part-time workers—**Carried**

**K3-** That OPSEU lobby to have a dementia test removed from provincial driver's license testing for seniors and file an age discrimination complaint with the human rights tribunal on behalf of OPSEU retirees—**Defeated**

**L15-** That OPSEU endorse the campaign to lobby the provincial government to demand minimum wage be raised to \$14.00 and indexed to reflect the annual rate of inflation and cost of living—**Carried**

**L10-** That OPSEU work with other unions to develop and promote a global minimum corporate tax of at least 30 per cent of profits for large multinational corporations and their subsidiaries—**Carried**

**J3-** That OPSEU policy be revised so regional hardship committees get funding for retired members and they be eligible to apply to receive hardship grants—**Carried**

**I1-** that OPSEU support international indigenous solidarity with OPSEU aboriginal members—**Carried**

## All part of a bigger picture

After lunch on Friday, President Smokey Thomas introduced to Convention his good friend Harry McMurry, lawyer and son of Roy McMurry (long time Ontario Progressive Conservative). McMurry was instrumental in introducing this year's Stanley Knowles humanitarian award winner—Tom Cochrane.

President Thomas told the story of when Roy McMurry wanted to know what was really going on at the Roy McMurry Youth Centre in corrections, he had his son Harry call Smokey to find out the “real goods.” Smokey sold him the story for a lunch.

Harry McMurry's legal career was cut short due to his Parkinson's disease diagnosis, but he remains active in charity work. Recently, he and his supporters were instrumental in raising \$500,000 for the Morton and Gloria Shulman Movement Disorders Centre at Toronto Western Hospital.

The recipient of this year's Stanley Knowles award took the stage after much applause.

Canadian music legend, Tom Cochrane, quickly told the Convention floor that the first time he met Harry McMurry was in 1997 at a charity function to support physically disabled children. Cochrane told a story of Harry—a strong and vibrant volunteer counsellor—who carried a disabled child under one arm and a canoe overhead while portaging from lake to lake in Ontario's north.

Cochrane bashfully accepted his award and noted he was here because of McMurry and that he shares this award with McMurry. Cochrane is humble in talking about his humanitarian work saying “I sing songs and attend galas – you (people on the ground floor) are like Harry and the canoe – doing the heavy lifting.”

Cochrane concluded by explaining how he keeps focused. When he experienced chaos in Mozambique, Cochrane turned to the current



World Vision president and asked how to keep motivated while surrounded by corruption. The World Vision president replied that he tried his best to keep his sphere of concern narrow—if your sphere is wide, you will get nothing done. If your sphere is narrow, much like where a pebble hits a pond, the ripples spread out.

It was after this experience that Cochrane wrote the famous *Life is a Highway*, as a pep talk to himself, and millions of others.

Cochrane reminded us that we are all a part of the bigger picture.

# Equity Update

The Equity Unit seeks to breathe justice into the daily life of our union by developing and implementing OPSEU's Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Personal Harassment Policies. Discrimination and oppression are alive and well in our communities, our work places, our homes and social circles. OPSEU and the Equity Unit are working hard to bring equality into our—union it is OPSEU's vision, its mandate. There is still much work to be done.

The voices of equity for OPSEU are comprised of the Provincial Women's Committee, Human Rights Committee, Rainbow Alliance, Young Workers' Committee, Aboriginal Circle, Workers of Colour Caucus, Disability Rights Caucus, and the Francophone Committee.

Marco Costa, the Chair of the Provincial Human Rights Committee, spoke of the ways his committee is tackling the socioeconomic inequalities that continue to plague our communities across the province. The committee promotes that every person has the right to learn, live, work and be free from all forms of discrimination and the committee is motivated to find ways to improve, educate, and advocate on their members' behalf.

Angela Bick Rossley, Chair of the Provincial Women's Committee, spoke of equality from a woman's point of view and reiterated that women must work through their union for equality in the workplace, more specifically for better wages, working conditions, benefits, job security, human rights, and equity protection.

Other speakers were André Savoie, Chair of the Francophone Committee; Janet Haymen, Vice-Chair of the Disability Rights Caucus; Krista Maracle, Vice-Chair of the Aboriginal Circle; Robert Hampsey, Chair of the Rainbow Alliance; Elizabeth Ha, Vice-Chair of the

Workers of Colour; and Kevin Herbert, Chair of the Provincial Young Workers. The message from all of these knowledgeable individuals is the same, and while they all have different titles, they all share a burning desire to ensure equity is fought for in our society. It's with this belief, that the Equity Committee is able to champion a fighting spirit with a core belief that there is no room in our union, our province and our country for inequality and discrimination.

We are all responsible for making sure that each and every one of us can live, work, and learn in an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination.

## Pictures from the floor





# OPSEU 2014 Video Winner for the second year

For the second year in a row, Brother Paul Marut of Local 669 has created the winning entry in the OPSEU Video Contest. Marut, who works as a systems officer in OPS, has been a proud OPSEU member for 17 years. Marut created his video because he believes the rights and benefits of workers, with unions and without, are quickly being eroded.

If you've not seen this video, check it out on the OPSEU website.



## Social Mapping Project Update

The Social Mapping Project was implemented in 2010 to ensure OPSEU services meet the needs of all its members by identifying gaps and barriers within the organization. In addition, OPSEU's goal was to stay current with our changing times, to improve and monitor programs and policies, and to make changes accordingly. New priorities, programs and policies have been identified to promote greater diversity within OPSEU.

With Phases 1, 2 and 3 completed, it was time for implementation of the more than 260 recommendations. The Social Mapping Implementation Task Force had the responsibility of prioritizing and developing plans for the three different phases of the initiative. It is hoped that these recommendations will help build a stronger union that understands and responds the diversity of its membership.

Highlights for 2014 include a focus on equity based training and education:

- a new course in OPSEU's history to highlight its equity advances
- a new course on the history of Aboriginal cultures
- new recruitment materials specific to each focus group
- changes to the Stewardship 1 course to include a broader description of the equity committees and caucuses, their function and history
- increased visibility of equity to foster greater diversity within OPSEU

The task force will continue to work toward diversity within OPSEU by educating members, improving communications, and implementing the recommendations that were made in Phases 2 and 3.



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# Convention 2014

## By the numbers May 9, 2014



1700

- 932 - Delegates
- 491 - Alternates
- 187 - Observers
- 7 - Retirees
- 19 - EBMs
- 44 - Committees
- 11 - Solidarity Guests
- 9 - Guests

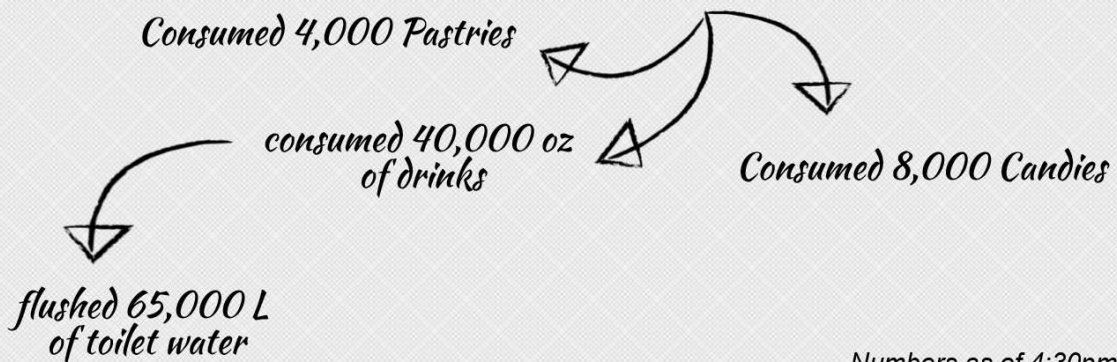


### Resolutions & Constitutional Amendments

- 1 - Constitutional Amendment Defeated
- 3 - Resolutions Defeated
- 7 - Resolutions Passed

#### Real, true, facts-honestly!

Between writing assignments on Convention floor, using highly scientific measures, the In Sol crew has determined attendees have done the following:



Numbers as of 4:30pm