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Ontario

Support the Just Demands of Education Workers and Teachers!



Education workers and teachers rally outside PC annual convention, October 22, 2022.

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Support the Just Demands of Education Workers and Teachers!

Education workers' and teachers' demands for proper wages and working conditions, for class size caps and overall investments in education will contribute to solving the problems that the anti-social offensive has given rise to, exacerbated manifold by the conditions imposed during the pandemic.

Inflation and the stress of the pandemic are now causing their own serious crisis in the education system with lack of staff and more significant social problems for students and families and, by extension, for the staff. Education workers who work with the most vulnerable students have

long since been at a breaking point with the majority of them making less than \$39,000 per year. Furthermore, they are laid off for two months every year without pay during the summer break. Many are now leaving the profession because their working conditions and pay are untenable.

Teachers point out that to address the learning that was missed during the pandemic, small class sizes are decisive, as are more immediate one-on-one human supports to help identify where problems lie and develop individualized solutions in real time. This means using public funds to take immediate measures to solve this problem which has emerged as a result of the interruptions in learning during the pandemic. Retaining educational support staff and providing them with a standard of living that doesn't require them to live in poverty will contribute to addressing the immediate problem of staff shortages.



Smoke and mirrors about online apps or handouts for private tutoring as the government proposes will not solve the problem. These proposals are, in fact, a scam to divert attention from whatever the government is up to to pay the rich. They cause chaos in the schools and then the very people who are the solution are blamed.

It is urgent we all support the just demands of education workers and teachers!

Education Workers Confront Ford Government



Education workers, CUPE Local 4400 contingent at October 22, 2022 rally in Etobicoke.

Education workers in Ontario represented by the Ontario School Boards Council of Unions (OSBCU) took their demands directly to government Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPPs) on October 21 and 22 to make their voices heard.

In Etobicoke on October 22 a large rally was held outside the annual convention of the Progressive Conservative (PC) Party of Ontario which was attended by MPPs and party members. Speaking at the rally, OSBCU President Laura Walton told the crowd that the action was about workers using their voice. "We are the people of Ontario and we are using our voice," she said, pointing out that the unions' demand to raise wages is a demand of all workers in Ontario for wages that do not force them into poverty. She called on everyone to take the message back to their co-workers in all sectors that this fight is the fight of all working people in Ontario. In a most shameful display of arrogance, which fools no one about who defends the well-being of students, Education Minister Stephen Lecce is reported to have said of the rally that the union is "reminding us all that they will impose greater hardship on children, following historic learning loss and mental health adversity."



Education workers rally, Etobicoke, October 22, 2022.

The day before, Friday, October 21, education workers in Windsor held a rally outside of a local elementary school and then marched across the street to the office of Windsor-Tecumseh PC MPP Andrew Dowie. Before the march a representative of the workers spoke to the crowd and explained the deteriorating conditions in the schools and the necessity for proper funding and supports for the students in schools and for the workers like her who provide the education. A high school teacher then spoke, pointing out that for teachers their fight is one with that of education workers, not just a matter of supporting them. He pointed out that the Ford government is preparing to use force to attack education workers and it is incumbent on everyone to make plans now to stand as one when this happens.



Windsor rally, October 21, 2022

(Photos: CUPE 4400, F. Hahn, CUPE 1358)

Unscientific Gibberish from the Ontario Government and Mass Media

– K.C. Adams –



The Ontario Financial Accountability Office (FAO) has released a report on Bill 124 which can only be described as an attempt to turn a pig's ear into a silk purse. Bill 124 was decreed as law by the cartel party government of Doug Ford in 2019. The decree directly attacks the wages of Ontario public workers. It imposes a cap on compensation of one per cent per year for three years, with the three-year period starting after the expiry of the collective agreement covering the affected workers.

The direct government assault on the wages of the working class is also an attack on social services, including health care and education. Social services are labour intensive, meaning an attack on the workers who provide the services is an attack on the services themselves. This truth is clearly evident in the Ontario health care system, which is in crisis.



The government launched its Bill 124 attack on the working class using an unscientific thesis. It asserts that the wages of public sector workers are a negative cost to the government and a drain on the provincial treasury. The thesis is based on the absurd notion that public sector workers do not produce value for the province and people.

In fact, the vast majority of public sector workers through their work-time produce enormous value in ways such as producing educated and healthy workers.

The value workers in the health care and education sectors produce becomes embedded in the capacity to work of educated and healthy people. Through their subsequent work-time, working people transfer this embedded value into the goods and services they produce.

Employers of the big imperialist enterprises refuse to acknowledge this social value within the capacity to work of the workers they employ. They refuse to pay for it even though the social value forms part of the price of production of the capacity to work they are buying. Both

theoretically and practically they deny the existence of this social value. Their refusal means the public institutions responsible for producing the social value have to look elsewhere for payment, mainly from government revenue.

By refusing to realize (pay for) the social value of the capacity to work yet accepting payment for this value when they sell the finished product their workers produce, the employers seize the social value as profit beyond the added-value workers produce.

The government and FAO justify this scam and sweep it under the carpet by declaring the wages of public sector workers a so-called cost. The scam allows enterprises to profit from social reproduced-value they do not realize (pay for), and for employers to broaden their attack on the working class using the lie of wages as a cost of production.

The wages and benefits of public sector workers are the price they receive in return for selling their capacity to work to their employer. Workers then reproduce this payment as part of the new value they produce. The value they produce through their work includes the social value from social programs embedded in them and reproduced in the goods and services they create.



The FAO through its report declares in the most self-serving manner that it estimates that Bill 124 and its restriction of public sector wages "will save the Province a cumulative total of \$9.7 billion in salaries and wages costs for both unionized and non-unionized Ontario Public Sector employees from the introduction of Bill 124 in 2019 through to 2026-27." The FAO's report was released one week after hearings at the Supreme Court in which unions are challenging the legislation's constitutionality.

The report can only be seen as an attempt to influence the court proceedings with projections about how much the legislation

"saved" and if overturned how much will need to be repaid. The FAO, if it had any integrity at all, would say this money was stolen from the unpaid wages of public sector workers. They are producing the \$9.7 billion in value and far more, which in turn is becoming part of the embedded social value in healthy and educated workers and is subsequently being reproduced in the goods and services they create through their work using the productive forces.

The enterprises employing the workers unjustly profit from this value in the same manner as if they were to refuse to pay for goods and services other businesses supply during the production process yet sell their social product at full value with the stolen transferred-value in the selling price.

Through the police powers of Bill 124, the government does not have to pay the \$9.7 billion being stolen in wages and could use it in other ways, for example giving it to the global auto or battery monopolies in pay-the-rich schemes. At any rate, monopoly media are gloating about yet another successful attack on the working class and ran disgusting headlines in their newspapers. *The Globe and Mail* bleated, "Ontario wage cap bill could save province \$9.7 billion, new report shows."

Ontario Bill 124 directly attacks the rights and well-being of almost 1 million public sector workers. It also denigrates the public services and social programs the people and society rely on for their existence. Workers cannot tolerate this attack on their rights and the social fabric of their society. Their action demanding wage increases agreeable to the workers who do the work directly challenges Bill 124. Higher wages and better working conditions ensure social services

are constantly improved and receive the positive attention they deserve.

In addition to directly challenging the government attack on their right to wages and working conditions agreeable to themselves, public sector workers must question the refusal to realize the value public sector workers produce and why the big enterprises do not pay for the social value they consume. This value is then manipulated and used to promote the big lie that their wages are a cost to the province.

Workers should also bring under scrutiny an outmoded cartel party political system that allows workers' rights to be violated through police powers and social programs to be neglected. The police powers of Bill 124 have been unleashed against the working class with lies and a legislative veneer of respectability. The disinformation and veneer should be torn asunder and denounced.

By tearing off the smiling mask of police powers and demanding their rights be upheld, including wages agreeable to themselves, public sector workers prepare themselves and encourage others to participate in bringing into being the necessary historic political changes required. These are changes whereby working people themselves govern their sectors and society directly with new economic and political forms and exercise control over all affairs that affect their lives.

Let us together fight for wages agreeable to ourselves not those dictated by government!



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