



Pride conference

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# uniforum



Unifor members rallied recently outside the GTAA head office in Toronto.

## Study shows importance of auto

A new study released confirms the massive economic benefits from the General Motors operations in Oshawa.

"Canada is a great place for GM to do business, and we all benefit greatly from them being here," Unifor National President Jerry

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## NS health care workers approve Health Councils

The membership of the four health care unions in Nova Scotia voted overwhelmingly in favour of supporting the Bargaining Councils model agreed upon by the unions and the government. Of

those members who voted: Unifor members voted 94 per cent in favour; NSGEU members voted 98 per cent in favour; CUPE members voted 93 per cent in favour of the bargaining council; and NSNU members voted 95 per cent in favour.

Atlantic Regional Director Lana Payne was very pleased with the new agreement and highlighted the Unifor team's leading role in the events of the last several months.

"We took a principled stand and we stuck to it,"

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## Unifor fights airport job cuts

The Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA) has become an important front in the struggle for good jobs in Canada.

Last month, the GTAA changed providers leading to layoffs of more than 260 workers who service passengers with special needs.

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## #unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@MBurden\_DN

@UniforTheUnion in new statement says Canada selling shares in @GM is for "short-term political gain," calls it disappointing.

@Unifor2002

The #GTAA campaign to convert good jobs to low-wage jobs will lead to demonstrations at #Pearson #Unifor #Unifor2002

## In brief

### Bring your family to Port Elgin

The Unifor Family Education Program is your chance to take your family on vacation to Unifor's beautiful Port Elgin Family Education Centre on the shores of Lake Huron.

You will meet people from across Canada, learn about our union and issues facing families, all while enjoying one of the most beautiful sunsets in the world. The program has been offered for more than 40 years.

Members and families can apply to attend one of these one-week Saturday-to-Saturday sessions: August 1 to 8 and August 8 to 15. Pre-teens participate in recreational programs run by fully-trained child care workers and counsellors. Teenagers participate in a specially designed program incorporating social unionism in the curriculum.

Accommodations, meals and programs are covered by the National Union. Those travelling more than 500 kilometres will be provided with flights or mileage. Members use vacation time to attend. For more information visit: [unifor.org/en/member-services/education/family-education-program](http://unifor.org/en/member-services/education/family-education-program). Registration deadline is April 17th 2015. See your local union for an application. 

## Photo spotlight

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS TO [COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG](mailto:COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG)



PHOTO BY BILLY O'NEILL

Activists from across Unifor have come out to support Pearson Airport workers.



PHOTO BY ASSE

Unifor activists took part in April 2 anti-austerity rallies in Montreal.

## BC minimum wage an insult

The recent announcement by BC Labour Minister Shirley Bond that the province's minimum wage would be fixed at \$10.45 in today's dollars for the indefinite future is a poverty sentence, Unifor says.

"Seattle's minimum wage is \$15. British Columbians toiling at the minimum wage won't reach that rate until 2034," said Joie Warnock, Unifor's Western Director. "The Christy Clark government is clearly

doubling down on its budget strategy to make the wealthy their priority."

In the 2015 budget, the provincial government lowered taxes on BC's highest income earners at a public cost of more than \$200 million.

Bond's announcement that the minimum wage will increase by \$0.20 goes against the North American trend of increasing minimum wage towards a rate that reflects a family's

real costs of living.

More than 120,000 British Columbians earn the minimum wage, more than 63 percent of which are women.

"The Christy Clark government is out of touch with today's working families," said Warnock. "Unifor will continue to press for a \$15 minimum wage so that no worker has to choose between rent and food." 

## Come to the first Unifor Pride Conference

After an exciting entry into the Pride season last year, Unifor is bringing together LGBTQ activists from across the country for the first Unifor Pride Conference - taking place April 24-26 at the Unifor Education Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario.

The conference is open to all lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender, transsexual, queer members and allies. Partners and children welcome (childcare is provided upon request). The theme is: LGBTQ health matters - taking action for an inclusive system of care.

The conference is a chance to meet LGBTQ

union members and allies from across the country, to talk, learn, and exchange practical ideas about strengthening the union and building healthier workplaces and communities.

For more information, please visit: [unifor.org/pride](http://unifor.org/pride). 

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS: SARAH BLACKSTOCK, KATIE ARNUP, IAN BOYKO, SHELLEY BURGOWNE, SHANNON DEVINE, STUART LAIDLAW, SARAH LESNIEWSKI, MARIE-ANDREE L'HEUREUX, AND ANNE MARIE VINCENT

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said Payne. "Our goal was to ensure the interests of our members were protected so they could continue to deliver the best possible health care to Nova Scotians. I believe we did that."

The four new collective agreements will affect all workers across the province in each of the four work units and will be bargained by a council of unions. Each unit will have a Chief Negotiator assigned based on majority of membership share and on the basis that one union may lead the bargaining for only one unit. Unifor will be the Chief Negotiator in the Support unit.

For more information and details on the councils, read "What Bill 1 means for you" in the Tools & Resources section of [unifor.org](http://unifor.org) under the Member Services tab. 

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Dias told a press conference March 31.

The study, "Economic Impact of GM Operations in Oshawa," released that day by Unifor, found the manufacturing complex boosts Canada's Gross Domestic Product, supports tens of thousands of jobs, generates vital tax revenue to support such services as health care and education, and even significantly bolsters the Canada Pension Plan.

The report was authored by Robin Somerville of The Centre for Spatial

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Unifor is accusing the GTAA of "contract flipping," the legal but unethical practice of switching service providers every few years to suppress wages and benefits. When a new contract begins, employees must re-apply for their job and face uncertainty or unemployment.

More recently, the GTAA de-railed bargaining between Unifor and Air Canada by demanding that similar work done by Unifor Local 2002 members be contracted out.

"Unifor was formed to fight back against the abuse of low-wage and precarious workers," said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President. "We will do whatever it takes to ensure these workers are treated fairly and aren't thrust into unemployment by the whims of the GTAA."

Economics, an independent economic modeling firm.

"The benefits to all Canadians are evident in this report. This underlines why Canada needs a focused strategy to win new auto investment, just like other countries have," Dias said.

The analysis finds that if the Oshawa complex closed entirely, Canada's GDP would shrink by more than \$5 billion per year within two years.

A total of 22,000-24,000 jobs would be lost immediately, with close to 33,000 jobs lost in Ontario within two years.

Eventually employment partially rebounds, but at



A recent leafletting at Person garnered attention.

Unifor held two large demonstrations and several information pickets to raise awareness about the GTAA's attack on good jobs.

"The campaign against the GTAA is symbolic of our

broader battle against bad employers," said Dias. "If we let this happen at the GTAA, it will happen at airports right across Canada, costing hundreds of jobs." 

## Did you know?

Unifor represents nearly 14,000 workers in the Aviation industry, including pilots, air traffic controllers, air traffic services, aircraft mechanics, airport authority workers, air paramedics, ground handling and customer service workers.

lower wages – even for workers who do not work in the industry.

The federal and Ontario governments would see a permanent loss of revenues. Lost CPP contributions would lead to an increase in contributions or benefits cuts to help preserve the solvency of the fund.

"This study confirms that a major auto assembly facility like Oshawa is an economic anchor, generating enormous spin-off benefits felt throughout the economy," Unifor Economist Jim Stanford said.

"But it's not just that GM is good for Canada," said Stanford. "Canada is good

for GM."

He cited several recent investments and expansions in Ontario's auto industry as proof that Canada is a good place for automakers to invest, including Ford in Oakville, Chrysler in Windsor, GM in Ingersoll and Honda in Alliston.

"This report is a call to action," said Dias.

"All stakeholders need to combine forces to make sure that GM maintains its strong manufacturing footprint in Oshawa, in St. Catharines and other Canadian locations."

To see the report, go to [unifor.org](http://unifor.org) and click on the link. 

# Universal pension supported to mirror CPP

With only one-third of Ontario workers having a workplace pension, the province needs a universal and mandatory pension plan to ensure that workers can retire with dignity, Unifor told a legislative committee recently.

"We have a chance here to create a universal pension plan that will benefit the workers of Ontario," Unifor Ontario Regional Director Katha

Fortier told the Ontario Legislature's Standing Committee on Social Policy March 31. The Committee is reviewing Bill 56, the Liberal government proposal to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) by 2017.

"We urge the province to take this opportunity to improve the retirement prospects for working people, particularly for the next generation of young

workers."

Fortier told the Committee that pension coverage is particularly troubling in the private sector where only 24 per cent of workers have a workplace pension and less than 12 per cent have a defined benefit plan.

"Women, recent immigrants and racialized seniors are at greatest risk," she said. "We need to act now to prevent a tragedy in

the future."

Unifor strongly supports an ORPP that is mandatory and universal with shared contributions from both employers and employees, and includes low income and self-employed workers. Fortier called for the ORPP to mirror the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) so that it can be wrapped into the CPP in the future.

Go to [unifor.org/pensioncampaign](http://unifor.org/pensioncampaign). 

## Workers stand up for full-time jobs

Unifor Local 3264 members at Carmeuse Lime in Beachville, Ontario have been on strike since January 17, standing up for full-time jobs and no mandatory overtime.

Carmeuse Lime is trying to force mandatory overtime, make dramatic changes to working hours, cut benefits and pensions, and phase out full-time jobs through attrition and contracting out. The facility once employed 320 people,

reduced through attrition to about 87.

"Over my years as a labour activist, I've seen Canadian companies bought out by foreign corporations and our contract gains diminish. Under new foreign ownership, companies no longer share the wealth in the way they once did," said Unifor Local 3264 President Rick Cecchin.

He said the strike underlines the importance of having anti-scab laws.



Unifor recently held a rally for members at Carmeuse.

Their collective agreement expired on March 31, 2014.

To make a donation,

send cheques to: Jeff Ebel, Financial Secretary; Local 3264; 758 Salter Avenue; Woodstock, ON; N4S 2P5 

## Unifor makes headway for long-term care workers

Unifor health care members employed in long-term care facilities across Ontario are ratifying strong agreements this month that include increases in wages and benefits.

"Unifor is committed to protecting our health care system in Canada and the first, and most important step in that is protecting the workers themselves," said Jerry Dias, Unifor

National President. "With these agreements, we are fighting back against the expectation that these profitable, multi-national long-term care facilities should continue to reward their senior executives and shareholders handsomely while imposing austerity measures on the workers. It's just not right."

Collective agreements have been ratified for

some 5,600 health care workers in the province so far; one for workers at Extencare homes, another agreement for workers at Revera homes, and one for a group of 22 independent long-term care facilities. This pattern of settlement will eventually result in new agreements for approximately 17,000 health care workers across Ontario.

"I am proud of the agreements we have been able to achieve and the progress we have made for our members," said Katha Fortier, Ontario Regional Director.

"These negotiated settlements were made possible by the hard work and dedication of the Unifor bargaining committee members from across Ontario." 