



**SUCCESS
THROUGH
SOLIDARITY**

**CUPE ALBERTA
2017 CONVENTION**

Red Deer, Alberta • March 15-17

DAY 3

March 17, 2017



**LABOUR MINISTER HINTS AT
CHANGES COMING TO LABOUR LAWS**

Calling it ‘staggering’ that Alberta’s workplace laws and regulations have not been reviewed in over 30 years, Alberta Labour Minister Christina Gray promised changes to the Labour Code, Employment Standards, and the Workers’ Compensation Board.

“We are looking to make life better for Albertans through a review of our province’s workplace legislation, legislation that touches the lives of almost every Albertan,” said Gray.

“This makes it imperative that our legislation is fair, up to date, and in-line with other jurisdictions in Canada,” said Gray. “Currently, this simply isn’t the case.”

Gray said Alberta is behind other provinces in maternity and parental leave, job protection for sick workers, and compassionate care leave as reasons labour laws need to be updated.

“Albertans deserve modern, family-friendly workplaces where you are treated fairly.”

Gray said fair labour laws benefit all Albertans, including employers.

“Safe, productive workers who have the confidence of knowing they are protected by sensible workplace legislation get great results for employers, and foster strong, thriving families and communities.”

COMING UP TODAY

10:45 AM
GIL MCGOWAN

11:00 AM
ELECTIONS



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New delegate profile: Lise Comeau

Lise Comeau got involved with CUPE almost as soon as she started working at Keyano College in Fort McMurray in 2003 because she wanted the extra challenge. Now, in 2017, Comeau is the recently-elected president of Local 2157 and is attending her very first CUPE convention.

Her first thoughts? “I’m impressed with how fired up I am!” she says. “Convention is lighting a fire in me that I didn’t know was there.”

Fort McMurray is facing a lot of challenges right now, but Comeau looks at her first convention experience as something to bring home and use to inspire members.



Comeau says she was inspired to get involved with her union because she saw the positive effects they had in her community. “Unions don’t just impact unionized workforces – they impact the whole workforce.” When Comeau worked in the private sector, she noticed how her company set its standards to match the local unionized workforces in order to retain talent.

To Comeau, being engaged in her union means getting involved in the community, making connections outside her own workplace, and spearheading fights for fairness for workers and the whole community. Unions serve a crucial role for their members, but it doesn’t stop there.

“Unions are for all workers,” she says. “We’re all in this together.”

Alberta’s post secondary system: exciting changes happening, more to be done

Skyrocketing tuition, spiraling student debt, underpaid and precarious academic workers are characteristics of Alberta’s post secondary education system – but things are improving under the NDP.

AFL Director of Policy Development Susan Cake spoke to CUPE Alberta delegates about the state of Alberta’s post secondary education system, saying that recent investments in post secondary education are making a difference, but ‘there is much, much more to do.’

Cake said Conservative governments moved debt from government to students and their families by letting tuition and other fees go up by as much as 50% annually.

After the Notley government was elected, the NDP froze tuition and increased funding to universities, colleges and trade schools.

“Now students can anticipate what their education will cost,” said Cake.

Cake said that while tuition has increased, and senior administrative salaries have been grossly inflated, the people doing the actual instruction of students have become increasingly marginal.

According to Cake, 50% of students are taught by contract and sessional faculty, and increasingly - sessionals cannot move to tenure track positions. Tenured staff can cost between \$65-\$150,000 while contractors make as little as \$28,000 per year.

“When a university is selling its unspoken promise, that education leads to a better life, we’re not even seeing it among its own academic staff,” said Cake.