



WINNING THE FIGHT

CUPE ALBERTA | CONVENTION 2024

DAY 2 · March 21, 2024

COMING UP TODAY

10:45: Panel-Building worker power

12:00: Rally at Danielle Smith's office

13:55: Panel-Building worker power

14:30: CUPE President Mark Hancock



AUPE President Guy Smith and past CUPE AB President Marle Roberts chat before Convention.

GILL: CUPE AB WAGING AHEAD WITH A NEW APPROACH TO WAGES

With a hostile government in the Alberta Legislature, and crippling inflation hurting the buying power of workers, CUPE Alberta President Rory Gill used his convention report to stress the need to focus on wages in the days and months ahead.

Gill said that wages for CUPE members are not keeping up with inflation. "We should be unapologetic about demanding good wages, good benefits and good pensions for the people who do our jobs."

Gill just completed a two week, 18-meeting "Waging Ahead" tour across the province hearing from workers about low wages.

"The stories we heard were heartfelt and emotional, but the determination to fight

for something better was inspirational."

Delegates heard Gill warn that the only way to get higher wages was to fight for them, and the only ones who can fight for them are workers themselves.

"The government won't save us, the courts won't save us, we need to stand up and be ready to walk."

With over 250,000 public sector workers negotiating new contracts in 2024, Gill said there was a big opportunity to substantially raise the wages of members.

"We should be unapologetic about demanding good wages, good benefits and good pensions for the people who do our jobs."



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“Anti-racism builds worker power for everyone,” CUPE anti-racism strategy

Yesterday, at a lunch and learn on CUPE’s Anti-Racism Strategy, convention delegates heard stories about how anti-racist organizing is a tool that builds power for all workers.

Walking through the strategy’s 10 points, CUPE Human Rights Officer Aditya Rao discussed the importance of organizing all workers in a workplace because non-union workers tend to be indigenous, black and racialized. Rao discussed the struggles faced by migrant workers whose fear of deportation is exploited by employers. Domestic workers may interpret that fear as an unwillingness to be involved in the union, which can lead to resentment and racism.

Recognizing the lived experience of these migrant workers and fighting alongside them will strengthen their ability to join a union and raise the wage floor for all workers.

CUPE’s Anti-Racism strategy is not a new idea, it is a deepening and strengthening of ongoing commitments that have been made by CUPE members for decades. Rao cited CUPE’s 1999 workplace statement on racism which states, “Racism is also a way for employers to attack our solidarity as workers. As long as we allow racism to exist in our workplaces, we will face our enemies divided and weakened. This is why anti-racism work isn't optional. It's essential.”

PANEL: THE POWER OF SOLIDARITY

A convention panel discussion illuminated the role of worker solidarity in safeguarding public services and advancing workers' rights. Panel members reported that workers are harnessing the forces of anger, hope, and action to forge a path toward an equitable future.

Panel members urged delegates to assert rights through collective action rather than rely upon legal mechanisms. “When we talk to each other, when we meet each other where we’re at, when we make the effort when we do the work, we win”.

