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CONVENTION ACTION PLAN 2009 – 2011

**ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR
10th BIENNIAL CONVENTION 2009**

ACTION PLAN: 2009 - 2011

INTRODUCTION

We are in the midst of an economic crisis brought about by corporate globalization and neo-liberal policies like free trade, privatization and de-regulation. Corporations have been allowed to make millions of dollars in profit and then leave with no social, environmental or economic accountability. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost in Canada alone. In the last 12 months, between October 2008 and October 2009, total employment in Canada declined by over 400,000 jobs. The unemployment rate rose from 6.3 percent to 8.6 percent. More than 200,000 of these job losses have been in Ontario.

While there has been much talk of “green shoots” and the stock market recuperation, workers have not participated in any recovery. Unemployment continues to rise. These losses can have long-term, chronic effects on the overall health and well being of workers, creating social, financial and economic consequences for families, communities and the province as a whole.

Women, newcomers, refugees, Aboriginal peoples, workers of colour and others, such as persons with disabilities, who already face barriers to the labour market, are particularly affected by economic downturns.

Today’s crisis hits us in the midst of another one: that of global warming. In light of these extraordinary circumstances, extraordinary leadership is required from all levels of government.

We reject the blatant attempt to scapegoat workers by labeling decent wages and benefits as the source of the economic problem. Job loss, declining pay as a result of decreased working hours, reductions in wages and benefits, shifts to precarious and temporary employment, cuts to public services and privatization will only worsen and prolong the economic crisis. In the last year, permanent employment declined by 3.8 percent while temporary employment actually rose by 0.7 percent.

We need to increase wages and benefits for all workers, and create strong, healthy, sustainable communities. We urgently need a green jobs, green energy and energy conservation program that form the basis of a sustainable and just economic strategy.

In this time of economic crisis, comprehensive legislative reform is urgently required to promote fairness for workers with and without employment. Such

reform must include measures that stop the spread of temporary, precarious, and part-time employment.

Even before the global economic crisis struck, we know that communities of colour, Aboriginal peoples, women, and persons with disabilities, are over-represented in precarious employment and among those living in poverty.

Therefore, the creation and maintenance of good, sustainable jobs and principles of equity must be the foundation of all economic development and training strategies. Training and education are meaningless if future employment is part-time, low-waged, precarious, and permanently in flux. All Ontarians need good jobs, decent wages and benefits, secure pensions and much wider access to training, with adequate support. Unions are a crucial part of the solution.

THE FIGHT FOR SUSTAINABLE JOBS

A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR GOOD, GREEN JOBS FOR ALL

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will fight for a comprehensive sustainable jobs strategy that will include:

- a. Action to address all forms of discrimination and ensure successful outcomes for all workers with and without employment;
- b. “Buy Ontario”, municipal and provincial procurement and hiring policies, that nurture local and provincial communities in order to further industrial capacity and expand employment;
- c. Action to link climate change policies to job creation in "green industries", helping existing industry transition to "greener production" and that includes Just Transition and necessary training;
- d. Local, provincial and sector-wide strategies to diversify and create value-added jobs, especially in the resource and manufacturing sectors;
- e. Implementation of regional pricing structures for power and energy that facilitate economic growth in Northwestern Ontario;
- f. Strong publicly-funded and delivered services that are universally accessible regardless of where one lives, including health care, child care, elder care and home care;
- g. Universal access to training and education, including workplace-based literacy, language, basic skills and authentic apprenticeship training, funded by an employer-paid training levy;
- h. Particular action for economic development and training to meet the regional needs of Northeastern and Northwestern Ontario, and to provide universal access to social programs and supports;
- i. Measures to make it easier to join unions, including card-based certification;
- j. Effective public energy policies that provide a stable and low-cost supply of energy to manufacturers and consumers;
- k. Expanding of public research and innovation and opposing the privatization of research which happens when public institutions look to corporate sponsors for research;

- l. Working with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) to lobby for effective strategies to offset the impact of currency fluctuations on the ability of manufacturers to operate in a global environment;
- m. A Jobs Protection Commissioner to advocate for jobs;
- n. Working with the Canadian Labour Congress to revamp Employment Insurance to ensure more workers qualify during times of unemployment and end the practice of deducting severance pay for those entitled to benefits;
- o. Establishing a permanent provincial forum or council, comprised of employers, labour, and other labour market partners (Labour Market Partners Forum) to assess and respond to labour market needs;
- p. Implementing an employer-paid training levy, based on the Québec model, to expand workplace-based training, including apprenticeship, literacy, language, and skills upgrading;
- q. Expanded education and training provisions for workers and their families, including adequate income support and the reduction and elimination of user fees for all public education and training;
- r. Working to re-establish labour's connection with the community college system, including labour's right to select representatives to sit on local college governing boards;
- s. Opposition to inter-provincial trade deals and other legislation that could erode the rights of Ontario and Ontario municipalities, school boards and hospital boards to implement local procurement policies and equity hiring strategies; and
- t. Working with the Canadian Labour Congress to increase retirement security for all Canadians through doubling of the Canada Pension Plan benefits and increasing the security of workplace pensions.

GREEN ENERGY

Because any meaningful job development strategy must be predicated on a green energy strategy, the Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates to campaign for:

- a. A comprehensive energy conservation program that makes the use of energy efficient appliances accessible to all, including free exchanges of low efficiency appliances for high efficiency ones and tankless water heaters for hot water tanks;
- b. Regulation of plugged-in electrical appliances that use energy even when the appliance is not in use;
- c. Provincial incentives to integrate Deep Lake Cooling technologies and services into publicly-run utilities;
- d. “Buy Ontario” and other local procurement policies;
- e. A public, not-for-profit, electricity system—including generation, transmission and distribution—that is publicly-owned, publicly-run, and publicly-accountable. Such a system must:
 - Remove any prohibitions against Ontario Power Generation from investing in renewable energy projects;
 - Reverse the privatization of all private electricity generation projects in Ontario;
 - Return generation and transmission to one Crown corporation — mandated to provide energy services, managing supply and demand not just generating and transmitting electricity but correcting the public accountability problems that previously existed;
 - Return public control over local utilities and provide low interest loans backed by the provincial government for local electricity generation projects including wind, solar and the capture and burning of biogas in sewage treatment plants to generate power while still allowing co-generation projects where companies capture and re-use waste energy, such as: industrial operations capturing waste heat to generate power and agricultural operations using biomass or biogas to generate power; and

- Integrate the Precautionary Principle into the primary decision-making process dealing with energy and distribution proposals that could impact human or environmental health.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

To expand access to and the quality of apprenticeship training, the Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates to:

- a. De-bunk the myth of the widespread “skills shortage” and “labour shortage”;
- b. Monitor and improve the functioning of the College of Trades to ensure that it meets its stated goals;
- c. Oppose inter-provincial trade deals and other provincial legislation such as the *Labour Mobility Act*, that could erode trades qualifications standards;
- d. Lobby the Ontario government to implement a training levy to ensure that employers are investing in apprenticeship and other crucial training;
- e. Campaign to restore shop classes and industrial arts into the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools;
- f. Insist that the Ontario government give direction to college administrators to follow the trade guidelines for applied education;
- g. Promote strategies that eliminate barriers to authentic trades and apprenticeship training for women, internationally trained tradespersons, and those from communities of colour and Aboriginal peoples; and
- h. Educate both OFL affiliates and the general public about the importance of authentic apprenticeship training, including:
 - The difference between compulsory and non-compulsory trades;
 - The significance of a Certificate of Apprenticeship, the Certificate of Qualification, and the Red Seal; and
 - The consequences of continued fragmentation and de-skilling of the workforce.

ENGAGING WORKERS WITHOUT JOBS

In this period of job-loss and the erosion of union density, it is imperative that the labour movement work to engage laid-off workers. The Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates to:

- a. Ensure adequate income support for laid-off workers while they are without jobs or enrolled in approved training programs;
- b. End the practice of means-testing for any income support programs for workers without jobs;
- c. Work with the CLC and its affiliates on the CLC Campaign for meaningful improvements to Employment Insurance, including expanding access, extending benefits and increasing income support;
- d. Increase support for action centres and adjustment committees staffed by properly trained peer-helpers;
- e. Take the lead on developing community action centres where appropriate;
- f. Develop adjustment-related resources and training materials; and
- g. Support adjustment committees and action centres by:
 - Distributing and promoting the labour/government guidelines that outline the rights of unions to participate and shape the adjustment process;
 - Adapting the adjustment committee/action centre model for the public and services sectors and building trades;
 - Developing a "best practices" protocol as a guidance tool for the development of union-based community action centres;
 - Compiling, updating and disseminating adjustment-related resources and training materials, including best practices regarding mental health protocols; and
 - Coordinating and connecting adjustment committees and action centres to central labour bodies locally and provincially so that experiences can be shared and best practices generalized. Possible initiatives include:
 - i. Creating a provincial website and labour-based adjustment blogs;

- ii. Facilitating labour-based training to create effective websites with appropriate software;
- iii. Publishing and distributing newsletters; and
- iv. Organizing conferences for adjustment committees, action centres and labour adjustment advocates.

HOLDING EMPLOYERS ACCOUNTABLE

Employers must not escape their obligations and the Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates to lobby for legislation and regulations that will oblige employers to:

- a. Adhere to a triple bottom line of accountability: social, environmental and financial;
- b. Restore and enforce employment equity and pay equity legislation and human rights laws in the workplace and in hiring practices;
- c. Provide full-time jobs; turn part-time jobs into full-time jobs wherever the total number of hours worked by multiple part-time employees exceeds 35 hours per week; restore out-sourced labour and justify any use of temporary, part-time and otherwise precarious labour;
- d. Contribute a training levy (modelled on the one existing in Québec) to fund workplace-based training, including authentic apprenticeship training; literacy, language and basic skills training; and skills upgrading;
- e. Pay workers first in the event of insolvency or bankruptcy and ensure that workers are included first in the definition of “secured creditors” under the *Companies’ Creditors Arrangement Act*. This must also include payment of pension obligations;
- f. Contribute to a fund used to guarantee and pay out all outstanding workers’ wages, benefits and pension obligations in the event of bankruptcy or insolvency;
- g. Pay severance and termination monies to all laid-off workers, without affecting workers’ Employment Insurance;
- h. Justify and disclose all layoffs, regardless of the numbers involved;
- i. Bargain adjustment and fund adjustment committees and action centres staffed with peer helpers;

- j. Return resource rights to public control in the event of closure; and
- k. Contribute to the costs of cleaning up and addressing environmental degradation that may have resulted from the company's commercial activities.

LABOUR RELATIONS

Because increasing union density and maintaining bargaining rights is critical to improving the lives and working conditions of all workers, the Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates to campaign for amendments to the *Labour Relations Act* such as:

- a. Restoring card-based certification for all workers;
- b. Restoring anti-scab legislation; and
- c. Strengthening union successor rights, especially in cases where services are sub-contracted.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Job security, decent pay, and fairness on the job should be basic rights afforded to all. However, too often, employment standards are not enforced, leaving workers in precarious employment with few rights. The Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates, community groups and other allies to advocate for:

- a. Increasing the minimum wage to a single, living wage applicable to all workers;
- b. Improving the *Employment Standards Act* with respect to hours of work and overtime pay, vacation entitlement and more;
- c. Ending any and all unfair labour practices undertaken by employment agencies;
- d. Ensuring the full enforcement of legislative standards and regulations;
- e. Clear, strong language in the *Employment Standards Act* to regulate all forms of precarious work, including self-employment;
- f. Leave provisions that include job protection for abused women who need time to find housing; address custody, divorce or other legal issues; and importantly, adequate time to heal; and
- g. Paid sick leave provisions for all workers.

STATUS OF THE ARTIST LEGISLATION

The Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates to fight for meaningful and appropriate legislative changes to improve the livelihoods and working conditions of artists including:

- a. Labour standards and taxation measures that treat artists fairly;
- b. Protections for child performers;
- c. Access to training and professional development programs and funds;
- d. Protection for senior artists; and
- e. An appropriate collective bargaining mechanism for all professional artists and producers/engagers in Ontario.

WORKERS COMPENSATION

The Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates and the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups for the following legislative reforms:

- a. Elimination of deeming;
- b. Full cost of living protection for injured workers;
- c. Elimination of experience rating;
- d. Full coverage for all workers;
- e. Real independence of the Appeals Tribunal;
- f. Reinstatement of the Occupational Disease Panel;
- g. A bipartite Board of Directors; and
- h. Removal of time limits for applying for compensation and appeals.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Occupational health is a crucial workplace issue, but it is also an issue in workers' everyday lives—from violence to toxic chemicals. For too many, the workplace, home and public space pose serious risks to life, health, safety and security. The Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates to:

- a. Lobby for violence in the workplace regulations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*;
- b. Lobby for the implementation of all recommendations from the SARS Commission, which among other things, would put in place the Precautionary Principle (shifting the burden of proof to those employers who wish to introduce new substances, processes or job designs into a workplace);
- c. Fight for toxic use reduction, substitution and extended producer responsibility legislation;
- d. Fight for meaningful protection from reprisals for workers who exercise their rights under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*;
- e. Lobby to bring about Agricultural sector regulations to address hazards specific to the sector;
- f. Lobby for an occupational health registry to track exposures at work and the illnesses that result;
- g. Lobby for meaningful occupational health protection for construction workers;
- h. Work at strengthening coalitions and community connections between labour and environmental groups;
- i. Lobby for the establishment of a public institute to deal with issues of toxic use reduction and green chemistry, so we can move forward on clean production;
- j. Encourage affiliates to take the position that clean drinking water is a fundamental human right and lobby the government to recognize this right;
- k. Lobby to protect drinking water sources and establish water conservation initiatives;

- l. Lobby for a reinvestment in public services to research the solutions and co-ordinate the work of environmental restoration of our lands, water, wetlands and forests;
- m. Work with affiliates and progressive organizations to develop a comprehensive plan for protecting our food sources to be brought back for discussion at the next OFL Convention in 2011;
- n. Lobby for a ban on garbage incinerators;
- o. Lobby for a ban on florescent lights from the waste stream and the establishment of municipal recycling facilities funded by manufacturers and suppliers;
- p. Lobby for a green procurement program that includes green tax reform and an Environmental Ventures Fund;
- q. Lobby for meaningful “Just Transition” programs;
- r. Campaign for community “Right to Know” legislation, so that communities have the legal right to know about the hazards they may face from the workplaces in their community;
- s. Work with affiliates to educate our membership on the issue and the health risks faced by those who are sensitized to build broad support for scent-free working environments inside and outside the labour movement; and
- t. Work with the Canadian Labour Congress and the affiliates to lobby for legislation that will ensure meaningful labeling of scented products.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Women, workers of colour, workers with disabilities, Aboriginal workers and newcomers face direct and indirect discrimination in the labour market and in society at large. The Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates to:

- a. Continue the fight for an end to violence against women including:
 - Ongoing development and distribution of educational union resources; and
 - Continued work to lobby the federal and provincial governments to launch a comprehensive public anti-violence education campaign in consultation with the OFL, CLC and women’s equality groups.

- b. Continue the campaign for Status of Women funding;
- c. Work with the Canadian Labour Congress to campaign for the inclusion of gender identity/expression and women under the prohibited grounds of the federal Hate Crimes legislation;
- d. Work with the Canadian Labour Congress and other allies to amend the federal *Employment Equity Act* in a manner that improves conditions for all originally designated equity groups and that includes numerical targets, timetables for implementation, and strong enforcement;
- e. Lobby the Ontario government to implement new employment equity legislation so that no person is denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and to eventually eliminate the systemic barriers to employment faced by equity seeking groups;
- f. Initiate an Ontario *Employment Equity Now* campaign as a top priority to push the Ontario government to establish new, transparent, accountable and effective employment equity legislation;
- g. In conjunction with the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition and affiliates, campaign to:
 - Fully restore funding of public sector pay equity adjustments;
 - Fully restore funding to the Pay Equity Commission, the Hearing Tribunal and legal support services for women workers;
 - Develop strategies to support legal challenges; and
 - Carry out a union education campaign on maintaining and enforcing pay equity legislation.
- h. Encourage affiliated unions to initiate special programs to overcome historic systemic discrimination in collective agreements and other labour management forums;
- i. Assist in the development of appropriate resources and tools such as generic collective agreement language, policies and procedures to circulate to the unions;
- j. Develop updated plain language equity resource materials such as brochures, fact sheets and a tools resources kit on bargaining employment equity;

- k. Create an updated and easily accessible library of equity information and resources for affiliates and community partners to download and utilize from the OFL website in formats accessible to all equity seeking groups;
- l. Work to ensure that all OFL materials and resources include and address equity issues;
- m. Facilitate a series of educationals for heads of unions, union staff and activists on bargaining and implementing employment equity in their unions and workplaces;
- n. Develop, provide and facilitate anti-racism training for affiliates as needed;
- o. Facilitate a second Aboriginal Conference;
- p. Facilitate a SolidarityWORKS!-type program specifically for workers of colour, Aboriginal peoples under 30, and persons with disabilities, to give them hands-on organizing experience with labour movement campaigns;
- q. Develop model employment equity legislation language that includes Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-Identified peoples (LGBT) as one of the designated groups;
- r. Establish a working group specifically to address the issues concerning the rights of Aboriginal peoples;
- s. Join with affiliates in the current campaign to urge the federal and provincial governments to eliminate the appalling barriers facing Aboriginal peoples in all aspects of their lives and develop educational materials to inform the broader membership on Aboriginal issues;
- t. Continue to build relationships and support community organizations around equity issues like land claims, good jobs for all, bullying, violence in our communities, racism, racial and religious profiling, poverty and all other issues that directly affect equity-seeking groups; and
- u. Work to ensure that participants at all OFL trainings and educationals reflect the diversity of our unions, including women, communities of colour, youth and persons with disabilities.

RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS PROFILING

Too often, workers of colour have been victimized by racial and religious profiling (which refers to any action taken for safety, security or public protection that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion or place of origin) and not on reasonable suspicion. The Ontario Federation of Labour will work with its affiliates and community allies to:

- a. Stand up against all instances of racial and religious profiling whenever it occurs;
- b. Lobby for provincial legislation to end racial and religious profiling and ensure the rights of Aboriginal peoples, workers of colour, and other equity seeking groups are protected; and
- c. Work with the Canadian Labour Congress to enact federal legislation to end racial and religious profiling.

The OFL Executive Board will:

- a. Develop a plan of action to engage OFL affiliates, community organizations and the broader public to redress human rights and civil liberties issues that have emerged in the post-9/11 climate; and
- b. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a legal defence fund to pursue a limited number of strategic, legal test cases to address the human rights and civil liberties issues that have emerged in the post-9/11 climate.

JOBS, PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET

In times of economic crisis, public services and the social safety net become even more important. Not only for the services and supports they offer, but also because investing in public services and infrastructures are a crucial stimulus for the economy. For instance, investing in green, public transit using local and provincial procurement policies would: create jobs; reduce traffic and improve productivity; reduce carbon emissions; and make cities more accessible for all. An energy retrofit program would: help the environment; reduce the cost of heating and cooling for individuals; and create good jobs in our communities. Providing publicly-funded and publicly-delivered child care would create good jobs and increase choices for women.

Yet, instead of making these important investments, governments at all levels are preparing to cut the very services and supports that are critical at this time. For those who deliver our public services and supports, wages, benefits and working conditions are at risk. Without a strong and united fight, this failed government strategy will exacerbate job loss, worsen the economy and leave too many Ontario families without the services and supports they need. We need governments at all levels to lead by example by investing in the human, social and public infrastructure that will grow the economy and improve outcomes for all.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will:

- a. Campaign for investment in publicly-funded and publicly-delivered services at all levels of government, including, but not limited to, Employment Insurance, Food Safety Inspection, public transit, child care, education, training, and health care;
- b. Oppose any unilateral cuts to staffing or to the wages, benefits, and working conditions of public sector workers, including the imposition of unpaid vacation days;
- c. Oppose any and all attempts to scapegoat public sector workers for shortcomings in services that result from government neglect and under-funding;

- d. Fight to increase staffing and services to ensure that publicly-delivered, high quality services at all levels of government are accessible to all Ontarians, regardless of where they live;
- e. Oppose any public/private/partnership model as a means of creating, building or delivering public services;
- f. Establish local and provincial procurement policies and local hiring policies that take equity into consideration when creating public infrastructure; and
- g. Campaign for an energy retrofit program in the MUSH (municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals) sector.

CHILD CARE

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Create a publicly-delivered and publicly-run system of child care;
- b. Implement the Pascal Report's broad vision of early learning and care; and
- c. Work with the Canadian Labour Congress and affiliates to continue the campaign for a pan-Canadian system of accessible, high quality child care.

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICES

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Ensure strong federal public services that are adequately staffed and adequately funded, but not limited to:
 - Food Safety Inspection;
 - Employment Insurance;
 - Border Services; and
 - Revenue Collection.

HEALTH CARE

Public Health Care

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Convince the McGuinty government to rebuild and maintain an adequately funded, properly staffed, publicly-funded and publicly-delivered health care system in Ontario; and
- b. Oppose any challenge to a single-tier health care system.

Home Care

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Stop the competitive bidding process in home care;
- b. Establish a public system of home care drawing on the successful working models found in Manitoba and Saskatchewan where a continuum of care is provided on a universal and equitable basis, with enforceable standards and without presuming that unpaid care will be provided by family members;
- c. Ensure that services are accessible to Ontarians where and when they are needed; and
- d. Ensure successor rights for workers in the home care sector.

Hospital Care

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Ensure fair treatment for all health care workers;
- b. Stop any privatization of the health care system;
- c. Increase staffing;
- d. Reduce staff workloads;
- e. Ensure access to care in hospitals and communities;
- f. Appropriately fund all public health care facilities;
- g. Recognize and positively address the broad determinants of health, including public health programs;

- h. Improve our capacity to evolve the public system to incorporate programs and services such as home care, pharmacies, chiropractic, physiotherapy, dental and vision care programs;
- i. Build a health care system firmly rooted in democratic principles where the decision-making process is open and transparent and fully involves and addresses the needs of communities, patients/residents and health care workers; and
- j. Provide a healthy and safe environment for all workers who provide the array of needed services for other Ontarians.

Long-Term Care

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Establish a required minimum standard of 3.5 hours per day of nursing and personal care for all residents, and include it as a bargaining demand;
- b. Challenge any cuts to services through grievance and arbitration;
- c. Launch an intensive lobby to address staffing levels not only by aggregate numbers of staff, but also the appropriate classifications and qualifications of staff to ensure that residents receive the care that is appropriate to their needs;
- d. Solicit ongoing input into long-term care policies by workers through their unions and from residents and their families;
- e. Create a *Retirement Homes Act* to establish the appropriate legislative and regulatory framework for the operation of retirement homes in Ontario, as with other kinds of residential care facilities;
- f. Ensure regular inspections of retirement homes;
- g. Develop a clearly understood and simple process for residents and/or their families to lodge complaints about the operations of retirement homes; and
- h. Campaign to shift long-term care from the for-profit model to the not-for-profit model.

Mental Health Care

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Stop further divestment and bed closures;
- b. Fully fund children's mental health services;
- c. Undertake a full assessment of needs in order to develop policies and allocate resources to offer a continuum of needed services to Ontarians. This must be done with the full involvement of both those affiliates in mental health services and users of these services in the broader community; and
- d. Provide needed services in the not-for-profit public sector across Ontario. Assistance.

PROTECTING CHILDREN

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Fully fund Child Protection Services and fix the funding formula; and
- b. Increase access to services by increasing staffing levels.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Introduce a \$100 monthly Healthy Food Supplement to begin to address serious deficiencies in the Basic Needs Allowance of all adults receiving Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);
- b. Index social assistance rates, commencing with the 2010-11 budgets;
- c. Increase OW and ODSP asset levels to reduce asset stripping and allow those recipients to accumulate an economic cushion;
- d. Eliminate rules that punish sensible money management, such as sharing accommodation, choosing room and board accommodation and living with family;
- e. Eliminate archaic income rules, including the treatment of loans as income, deductions from rates where family/friends assist with groceries and dinners;

- f. Streamline the level of eligibility monitoring. For example, limit the withholding of benefits for failure to provide information to only those circumstances that involve serious issues of current eligibility; eliminate income reporting where there is no income; and reduce ongoing documentary review to a practical level;
- g. Remove income penalties for dependent children who leave school and for children over 18 who stay within the family household;
- h. Allow recipients to continue receiving OW/ODSP income support while enrolled in post-secondary education instead of taking out OSAP loans, and remove restrictions on singles accessing post-secondary education;
- i. Stop the deduction of gross income from other sources when the recipient is actually receiving a lower net amount;
- j. Explicitly include in the upcoming review of social assistance a commitment to ensuring high quality and effective education, training and employment support programs for recipients of OW and ODSP;
- k. In the interim, extend eligibility for all provincially funded and/or delivered employment support and training programs to recipients of social assistance;
- l. Ensure that every annual plan required under the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement explicitly includes the provision of high quality and effective education, training and employment supports to people receiving OW and ODSP;
- m. Increase the Ontario Child Benefit to \$125 per child per month in the 2010 Budget. This increase should be available to all children regardless of the source of their parents' income; and
- n. Introduce a housing benefit that would be available to all low-income Ontarians. The benefit would be equal to 75 percent of the difference between actual rent paid and 30 percent of low-income individuals and families' income.

SOCIAL SERVICES

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Create an accord between the province of Ontario and the non-profit Community Service Sector to ensure that all stakeholder organizations, such as unions, unorganized non-profit workers and communities can have meaningful input on government policy and issues of shared concern;

- b. Improve information and data collection to better monitor and report on the social services sector;
- c. Reform Provincial Funding Frameworks and create a provincial code that would provide:
 - Core and supplementary administrative infrastructure;
 - Stable funding mechanisms, including multi-year funding;
 - Locally raised funds to respond to unique community needs;
 - Funding that is indexed to the cost of living;
 - Accountability processes that are clear and fair; and
 - Funding only to public, non-profit service delivery;
- d. Promote more collaborative funding models and dedicated “Community Hub” funding as an effective way to expand community service capacity; and
- e. Ensure fair compensation to Community Service Workers.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates will work to:

- a. Fix the funding formula to provide adequate and equitable public funding for publicly-delivered education in elementary and secondary schools;
- b. Oppose, with escalating actions, any move toward voucher or charter schools;
- c. Restore shop classes, English as a Second Language classes, arts education, physical education and teacher librarians to core curriculum in public schools;
- d. End the practice of contracting out public services;
- e. Restore support staff levels, including janitorial services;
- f. Restore quality curriculum and a holistic approach to teaching;
- g. Ensure that a quality curriculum reflects the cultural diversity, including Aboriginal cultures, of Ontario’s children;

- h. End the practice of measuring schools and policing teachers through standardized testing;
- i. End the practice of school comparisons based on the socio-economic status of the community or other prejudicial or discriminatory measures;
- j. Fund the deferred maintenance backlog in public schools;
- k. Restore democratic governance within school boards and maintain the role of democratically elected trustees; and
- l. Oppose Bill 177, *An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to student achievement, school board governance and certain other matters*, since it undermines the responsiveness of school boards to local communities and allows government to more easily take over school boards who challenge provincial government policies.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Ontario Federation of Labour will campaign to:

- a. Ensure part-time college staff and faculty have legally recognized collective bargaining rights;
- b. Maintain province-wide, central bargaining within the public college sector;
- c. Restore adequate public funding for post-secondary education, including the deferred maintenance backlog for colleges and universities;
- d. Increase the number of full-time and permanent staff and faculty in colleges and universities;
- e. End the practice of contracting out public services;
- f. Stop the use of public/private/partnership initiatives for expanding infrastructure within the post-secondary sector;
- g. Stop public/private/partnership initiatives for student financial assistance programs;
- h. Stop the practice of collecting illegal ancillary fees from students;
- i. Immediately reduce and eventually eliminate tuition fees for all programs, including in-class apprenticeship training;

- j. Restore democratic governance for colleges and universities by increasing the numbers of student, staff and faculty representatives democratically elected to governing councils and boards by their constituents;
- k. End the reliance on student debt as a substitute for student assistance;
- l. Restore adequate grant programs and expand eligibility criteria;
- m. Oppose “income-contingent student loan repayment” schemes that accelerate tuition fee increases and force those who must borrow the most to pay the most interest on their debt; and
- n. Reduce and eliminate tuition fees and other user fees applied to post-secondary education.

WORKPLACE-BASED SKILLS, TRAINING, AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Too many workers in general are employed in low-skilled, precarious employment, with little access to skills training. Others are employed in sectors that are economically at-risk. Such vulnerable workers are in urgent need of workplace-based training that includes literacy, computer, math, language, Grade 12 completion or equivalency and other skills training.

The Ontario Federation of Labour will campaign for:

- a. Training and support for all workers on the job;
- b. Training and adequate income support for workers without jobs;
- c. The provision of new and adequate infrastructure funding for workplace-based or union-based literacy, language and basic skills training and upgrading. Such training must:
 - Include literacy, computer, math, language, Grade 12 completion or equivalency and other basic skills;
 - Recognize prior learning and internationally acquired credentials; and
 - Meet the retraining needs of workers facing barriers to the labour market, including older workers, workers for whom English is a second language, and those who may not have had secondary or post-secondary education;
- d. Provide new and adequate infrastructure funding for workplace-based or union-based skills training or upgrading, including those required for skilled green jobs; and

- e. Restore and expand the publicly-funded and publicly-delivered education and training system. Such measures must be supported by adequate staffing and infrastructure so that public institutions can offer the appropriate services and support for workers, along with program flexibility and more frequent in-take dates, to meet the needs of workers with or without jobs, throughout their lifetimes.

CAMPAIGNING FOR ACTION

To realize these goals, the Ontario Federation of Labour will work with all affiliates and community allies to:

- a. Integrate principles of equity into all aspects of its work;
- b. Redouble our collective effort to build concrete solidarity between unions when employers demand concessions;
- c. Find ways to build meaningful, concrete and ongoing solidarity with union and non-union workers in different workplaces, and across sectors;
- d. Encourage and facilitate the launch or strengthening of local and provincial labour-community coalitions that involve labour, environmental, youth, student, cultural and other community-based organizations;
- e. Continue to work with social and economic justice organizations such as: the Canadian Federation of Students, the Canadian Humanitarian Appeal for Relief of Tamils (Canadian HART), the Colour of Poverty Working Group, the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance, the Latin American Trade Unionists Coalition, the Workers Action Centre and others, to address social justice issues particularly around poverty, good green jobs for all and employment equity;
- f. Initiate local, community and provincial organizing: petition drives; lobby days; days of action; and special assemblies;
- g. Develop effective lobbying strategies and corresponding resources that are shared with affiliates;
- h. Encourage and lobby all levels of government to endorse, where appropriate, aspects of the 2009 OFL Convention Policy Papers;
- i. Promote a labour analysis of the economy and economic literacy among workers and the community;

- j. Develop local and provincial media, research, education and communication strategies involving multi-lingual print, electronic, audio and visual resources; and
- k. Establish Action/Implementation Committee(s) to move forward on the actions recommended in this document and to report back on the disposition of the Action Plan, at every Executive Board meeting.