



January 26, 2016 - Vol. 5 No. 1

January 30 Day of Action in Hamilton

Keep Stelco Producing! Manufacturing Yes, Nation-Wrecking No!

Hamilton Day of Action

Saturday, January 30, 2016 -- 1:00 pm



Hamilton City Hall, 71 Main St. W.

For information: Local 1005 USW 905-547-1417
or Local 8782 USW at 519-587-2000.

January 30 Day of Action in Hamilton

- Keep Stelco Producing! Manufacturing Yes, Nation-Wrecking No!

Health Care Is a Right!

- Province-Wide Protests at Pre-Budget Consultations Demand an End to Cuts and Privatization

City of Toronto Budget Consultations

- CUPE Local 79 Stands Up for Public Sector Workers and Public Services and Assets

January 30 Day of Action in Hamilton

Keep Stelco Producing! Manufacturing Yes, Nation-Wrecking No!

Ontario Political Forum calls on everyone to go all out to make the January 30 Day of Action in Hamilton a great success. The historic fight being waged by steelworkers in Hamilton is to demand an end to U.S. Steel's arrogance and abuse of the active and retired steelworkers and their families, the City of Hamilton and Canada. It is to demand that governments at all levels intervene in this situation by defending public right, not monopoly right.

More than 20,000 people are affected by U.S. Steel's cuts to retiree benefits permitted by the courts through the company's phoney CCAA bankruptcy. Join with the steelworkers to demand that retirees and workers be put at the top of the creditors' list in CCAA and to **KEEP STELCO PRODUCING!**

*Governments Must Uphold Public Right Not Monopoly Right!
Our Security Lies in Our Fight for the Rights of All!
All Out for the January 30 Day of Action!*



Health Care Is a Right!

Province-Wide Protests at Pre-Budget Consultations Demand an End to Cuts and Privatization

**Health Care Is a Right!
Take Action to Defend Public Health Care!**



Toronto

Monday, February 1 -- 12:00 noon

South Lawn of Queen's Park Legislature (College & University)

[Facebook](#)

*For information: Ontario Health Coalition,
416-441-2502, ohc@sympatico.ca*

The Ontario Health Coalition (OHC), supported by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and the Ontario Common Front has been holding protests at the various cities across Ontario where the Ontario Provincial Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs has been holding "pre-budget consultations." Rallies have taken place in Hamilton, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Sault-Ste. Marie and Ottawa. The final demonstration will take place at Queen's Park in Toronto on February 1.

The main focus of the actions is to oppose the Wynne government's cuts to health care spending in Ontario and the continued privatization of health care services the people need and depend upon for their well-being, as well as to reject the phoney austerity agenda used by the Wynne Liberals to justify their anti-social actions.



Rally outside pre-budget consultations in Hamilton, January 18, 2016.

At the Hamilton rally on January 18, OHC Executive Director Natalie Mehra pointed out that 2016 marks the ninth consecutive year of cuts to health care services across the province under the Liberals -- the longest stretch of health care cuts in Ontario's history. Another trend Mehra noted is that health care services that were previously delivered publicly are now being privatized at a rapid rate, have had user-fees imposed or both. Gary Howe, President of Local 1005 USW in Hamilton spoke out against the destruction of the manufacturing base taking place as a result of the austerity agenda. He noted that only with a strong manufacturing base in the province can the wealth be created to fund publicly-provided health care. He also pointed out that Local 1005 has always been front and centre in defending health care and other social programs and called on everyone to come out on the January 30 Hamilton Day of Action to keep Stelco producing a success. The rally was also addressed by former President of Local 1005 Rolf Gerstenberger, amongst others.



Natalie Mehra speaking in Hamilton.

In Windsor on January 19, the rally took place outside the Windsor Casino, where Natalie Mehra pointed out among other things that under the Wynne Liberals, Ontario is trailing all other provinces in Canada when it comes to investments in health care. She decried the loss of more

than 160 front line health care jobs in the Windsor area in the recent period and the refusal of the Ontario government to heed the demands of the community for increased funds to health care services.



At the Thunder Bay rally on January 20, Jules Tupker, co-chair of the Thunder Bay Health Coalition, noted that the local and regional hospitals "are running at absolute full capacity with no room for any loss of services or staff." It was pointed out that the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital's geriatric ward was closed as a result of budget cuts in 2014 even though there was a long list of seniors waiting for support. Some local residents also shared their personal stories about the deterioration of the health care system in Thunder Bay as a result of the Liberal government's cuts to hospital and health care spending.

In Sault Ste. Marie on January 20, speakers from the Sault and Area Health Coalition, the OFL, the Sault Ste. Marie and District Labour Council and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union

called for increased funding for hospitals in the area. At the Sault Area Hospital in particular, cuts have been made across the board including in the operating rooms, Intensive Care Unit, oncology, surgery, hemodialysis, infection control, patient care co-ordination, nursing and personal support. It was reported that in the recent period, more than 59,000 hours/per year of nursing and patient care have been cut and 56 hospital beds have been slated for closure since 2015. The speakers all demanded that the Wynne government stop fuelling the crisis in health care and other social services.

The Ottawa rally took place outside the Marriot Hotel in the downtown on January 22. Participants included a group of striking workers from the Rideau Carleton Raceway who are demanding that the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, which made \$2 billion in net profits last year, negotiate a fair wage increase with their union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada. They have had no wage increase since 2009.

Ontario Political Forum calls on everyone to go all out to make the February 1 rally a success. Let us together raise our voices and organize for an Ontario where ensuring the right of the people to a secure and bright future takes centre stage.

***All Out for the February 1 Rally at Queen Park!
Stop Paying the Rich! Increase Funding for Social Programs!***

Hamilton, January 18



Windsor, January 19



Thunder Bay, January 20



Sault Ste Marie, January 21



Ottawa, January 22





(Photos: OPF, OFL)



City of Toronto Budget Consultations

CUPE Local 79 Stands Up for Public Sector Workers and Public Services and Assets



CUPE Local 79 members hold their first Blue Monday protest, January 25, 2016, in support of their bargaining committee in negotiations with the city. (CUPE)

The City of Toronto Budget Committee recently concluded three days of "public consultations" on the proposed 2016 Operating and Capital Budgets. This is a bargaining year for the unions representing Toronto's 28,000 civic employees represented by CUPE Locals 79, 416 and 2998.

Tim Maguire, President of CUPE Local 79, which represents some 20,000 of Toronto's inside municipal workers, made representation to the city's Budget Committee on January 12. He emphasized that Local 79 has already expressed its readiness to engage as a willing partner with the city in seeking solutions to the city's financial difficulties but at the same time stated solutions should not be found on the backs of the workers.

He noted that the city's divisions have reported that they are leaving vacancies unfilled in order to underspend their budgets and save on salaries and benefits. There are over 2,500 unfilled jobs in

the city's workforce -- close to 10 per cent of the total number of civic employees.



Maguire also spoke out against the sell-off of municipal assets, and stated that the union stands with the 185 Ontario municipalities that oppose the sale of Hydro One. He called on the city to go forward on the basis of an honest analysis, saying, "The City would be better able to predict how to do it if it undertook a projection of the impact of the current sale of Hydro One and the potential sale down the road of Toronto Hydro. Without an honest projection of what that might mean in terms of the cost of providing services, whether its at the city itself or its agencies such as the TTC and school boards, estimates without a risk assessment of the impact of the sale of Hydro

One and Toronto Hydro will be off."

Wages and salaries make up the lion's share of the city's operating budget and from the outset of new contract negotiations back in October, municipal officials have been doing PR that the problem the city faces is the wages of the workers. Counsellor Denzil Minnan-Wong for example erroneously declared the average wage of a city employee to be about \$85,000. Quoted by the *Toronto Star*, Maguire said in response that this is a highly exaggerated figure "that's far in excess of the average city worker," many of whom are now doing part-time work under precarious conditions, without stable and predictable work.

At the Budget Committee consultations, Maguire again set the record straight. He said, "Toronto shouldn't be fostering temporary part-time precarious work, cutting services, contracting out, delaying projects, under-funding programs and leaving 2,500 jobs vacant. We need long term-sustainable solutions to our revenue problem, not a fire sale of City assets that may provide quick cash [...] but makes the City's operating budget even more anaemic."

(CUPE Local 79 website, Toronto Star)



[PREVIOUS ISSUES](#) | [HOME](#)

Read *Ontario Political Forum*

Website: www.cpcml.ca Email: ontario@cpcml.ca