



IN THIS ISSUE:
 PREPARING FOR A SOFTWOOD LUMBER BATTLE
 >> PAGE 2
 CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY >> PAGE 3
 UNIFOR DEMANDS RELEASE OF JAILED UNIONISTS
 >> PAGE 4

VOLUME 5, NO.4

WWW.UNIFOR.ORG

MARCH 2, 2017



uniFORUM



Bob White April 28, 1935- February 19, 2017

Bob White, a Canadian labour hero

Word that Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) founding President Bob White had died on February 19 led to an outpouring of tributes from union members and labour activists across the country and in the House of Commons.

"Bob was a true maverick in the Canadian labour

>> Continued on page2

Nova Scotia Liberals pass seventh anti-worker bill

On February 21, the majority Liberal government in Nova Scotia unanimously passed Bill 75, mandating a contract and imposing wage freezes for 9,300 teachers. This marks the seventh piece of legislation designed to remove or restrict the rights of workers in the province by the McNeil Liberals.

"Government imposed wage freezes found in Bill

75, do not stay in a vacuum; it emboldens employers to suppress wages and rights for all workers," said Atlantic Regional Director Lana Payne. "The Nova Scotia government has proven itself incapable of bargaining and has instead strong-armed its way through by trampling workers' rights and making up their own rules."

>>Continued on page3

Unifor active in federal budget

The federal government will table its budget in the coming weeks and Unifor has been and will continue to be actively engaged in the budgetary process to fight for improvements to workers and public services.

"Budgets are where the government sets its priorities, so it is vital that our union is involved," Unifor National President Jerry Dias said.

As it has in past years, Unifor submitted a formal budget submission to the federal government. To lobby and offer a workers perspective, members of the National leadership have met with and continue to meet with several cabinet ministers and MPs through lobby sessions and one on one meetings.

"Since the defeat of Harper, we have in Ottawa a government more willing to listen," Dias said. "Having a direct line for dialogue has

>> Continued on page3

Celebrating IWD

Women's rights are human rights and every person has a role to play in pushing back sexism. This is Unifor's important message for International Women's Day (IWD) and on every day. Help spread this message by posting the IWD poster in this edition in your local office or workplace. Don't forget to share with us how you and your local celebrate IWD. Email photos to communications@unifor.org or post at [Facebook.com/UniforCanada](https://www.facebook.com/UniforCanada).

IMPORTANT EVENTS

- Aboriginal and Workers of Colour conference – May 5 -7
- Pride conference (open to LGBTQ members and allies) – May 12-14
- Canadian Council is coming to Winnipeg! August 18 to 20.

For more info visit unifor.org/events



Uniforum is published every two weeks by Unifor, Canada's largest union in the private sector.

Reach us at:

Uniforum

Unifor Communications
205 Placer Court, Fifth Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M5H 3H9

1-800-268-5763
communications@unifor.org

www.unifor.org

Unifor ready for softwood battle

On February 15, Unifor forestry representatives from across Canada met to strategize about the upcoming talks with the United States about softwood lumber. Unifor members make up over 50% of softwood industry.

The trade rhetoric from the new U.S. President, combined with the volatile history of softwood lumber negotiations, is a serious cause for concern. Unifor is concerned that countervailing or anti-dumping duties will be again levied on Canadian lumber entering the U.S.

In the event that the U.S. imposes new duties, forestry job losses in Canada could measure in the thousands.

"The federal government would be wise to include workers during every step of this process," said Scott Doherty, Executive Assistant



Unifor forestry representatives from across the country meet in Ottawa.

to the National President. "Québec's model of sectoral inclusion and consultation is a model to emulate."

To quickly act to defend the industry and good jobs, Unifor is launching a campaign to pressure the federal government to prioritize Canadian forestry jobs and develop a plan if duties are levied on Canadian softwood lumber. To protect communities and stabilize the industry, the federal government needs to act swiftly to provide a loan

guarantee to counteract the financial impact to Canadian exporters.

There are signs that the federal government has started to take notice. On February 22, the Ministry of Natural Resources announced the creation of a federal-provincial task force.

To meet with MPs and talk about the threats to communities from coast to coast to coast, Unifor forestry representatives will be in Ottawa on March 20-23.

>> Continued from "Bob White, a Canadian labour hero..." on page1

movement. His compassion and energy to fight for justice will be deeply missed and I extend my condolences to his family on behalf of Unifor," said National President Jerry Dias.

"It is thanks to Bob that we have grown into the strong national union that we are today."

In December 1984, White led the Canadian branch of the United Auto Workers in its historic split from the American organization to establish the CAW. White was elected CAW President three times—at the founding convention in 1985, and then in 1988 and



Bob White with Unifor National President Jerry Dias during a rally at the Unifor founding Convention in 2013.

1991, before being elected president of the Canadian Labour Congress in 1992.

In an address to the House of Commons on February 21, NDP MP Tracey Ramsey paid tribute to White and his

legacy of standing up for working people. Watch it at [Facebook.com/UniforCanada](https://www.facebook.com/UniforCanada)

Arrangements are being made for a tribute to be held in the spring; details to be announced.

>> Continued from “Unifor active in federal budget...” on page1

already brought success and our union has been instrument to help bring in new policies that support working people.”

A number of Unifor’s key policy priorities were embraced by the government over the past year.

By reducing the age of eligibility for Old Age Security from 67 to 65 and by expanding the CPP, the government heeded Unifor’s

advice to strengthen Canada’s retirement security system.

The Trudeau Liberals committed to providing investment support for Bombardier and have agreed to overhaul the Automotive Innovation Fund to attract international investment in Canada’s auto sector.

In terms of labour market support, the government lowered the eligibility requirements to collect employment insurance, extended the

duration of EI benefits and earmarked new money to strengthen Labour Market Development Agreements, which will better enable the provinces to retrain unemployed workers. The government also invested in union-based apprenticeship training.

In the 2017, Unifor will look for budget measures that address climate change and the development of renewable energy, clean technology and ‘green jobs’. Unifor will also carefully

monitor the ownership status of Canada’s public assets, such as airports, and look for legislative measures that properly tax and regulate e-commerce companies and digital content distributors.

Dias said Unifor will continue to push for an affordable national child care system so that working families are not working in poverty.

Stayed tuned for updates on the federal budget.

>> Continued from “Nova Scotia Liberals pass...” on page1



Unifor members protested in Antigonish, Sydney and Halifax in solidarity with NS teachers.

Wage freezes send a chill throughout the local and provincial economy. When the cost of living increases, but wages fall behind, workers have less disposable income to spend in the community. This means fewer jobs are created because spending power is lost. The negative impacts have been outlined in a study by Unifor’s Economist Jordan Brennan, read the report at www.policyalternatives.ca

With legislation like Bill 75 and Bill 148 that attacks public sector workers and mandates concessions and wage freezes, the McNeil government has caused a bargaining crisis for many workers. Currently, Unifor’s health care workers in Nova

Scotia have been without a collective agreement since March 2014.

“Although Unifor doesn’t represent teachers, members have been active at rallies and called our MLAs because our union stands in solidarity to defend workers and free collective bargaining rights,” said Payne. “Our hope now is that teachers, health care workers, parents, students and other Nova Scotians see Premier McNeil’s true colours and make their feelings known at the ballot box.”

A spring election is rumoured and if called, Unifor members will be active in getting out the vote.

Take action on International Women’s Day

On March 8, we celebrate International Women’s Day (IWD) to recognize the roles and contributions of women world-wide, while acknowledging that the plight of women is not equitable, or equal.

To amplify the demand for Trudeau’s government to move women one step closer towards gender equality, Unifor is calling for two key solutions to be implemented immediately - establish a national funded public child care program and paid domestic violence leave legislation.

Every member is encouraged to add their voice and send an electronic letter to their Member of

Parliament. With a few simple clicks our union can deliver a united message to tell the government to enact paid domestic violence leave and fund a national child care program here. To send a letter to your MP go to unifor.org/iwd2017.

In addition to this online lobbying action, Unifor is donating a total of \$146,000 to women’s shelters nationwide to support survivors of domestic violence. Donations will be distributed by members of locals to shelters across the country. For more info on our union’s commitments for IWD read the statement at unifor.org/women.



UNIFOR
women | femmes



IN THIS ISSUE Labour's loss - Bob White remembered. Unifor engaged in the upcoming federal budget. Gearing up for the battle over softwood lumber. The fight against Nova Scotia's anti-worker bills. Celebrating International Women's Day and more!

Unifor joins call to free Bangladesh workers

Unifor members lent their voices to the international action calling to free imprisoned Bangladesh trade unionists at a February 16 rally, held outside the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa.

"We demand the immediate release of jailed unionists and an end to the targeting of labour activists and the intimidation of workers," said Unifor Eastern Ontario Area Director Harry Ghadban, who was part of a labour delegation that met with officials of the Bangladesh government at the High Commission.

At least 34 Bangladeshi labour organizers have been

arrested for trade union activity since thousands of garment workers participated in wage strikes last December. In retaliation to the strike the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association closed down 60 factories for several days, with most refusing to pay workers. At least 1,600 workers were suspended or dismissed while union offices and the homes of labour leaders were raided, forcing workers into hiding for fear of arrest.

"Bangladesh garment workers are among the lowest paid in the world and the government's anti-union policies have kept them in poverty, while denying the



Unifor joins fellow labour activists outside the Bangladesh High Commission to demand the release of jailed union leaders.

right to organize and protest for a living wage," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

Unifor stands in solidarity with the imprisoned union leaders and fired workers, and joins IndustriALL in this international campaign to force the Bangladesh

government to take immediate steps to release imprisoned trade unionists, reinstate fired workers, and respect fundamental labour rights.

To show your support on twitter, please use the hashtag #everydaycounts.