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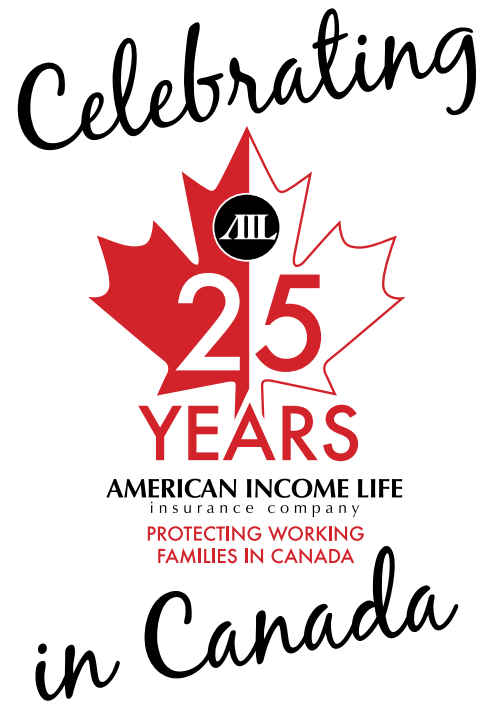
## NEWS FROM THE CLC, FEDERATIONS & NATIONAL UNIONS

**Auto union leaders expressed** concern over Chrysler's decision to withdraw requests for \$700 million in subsidies from the provincial and federal governments, although CEO Sergio Marchionne said the next-generation minivans will be built in Windsor. Unifor National President Jerry Dias called the decision to withdraw the request for financial assistance

regrettable. He expressed concern that "we are going to lose an incredible opportunity to secure Ontario's manufacturing industry well into the future." "The bottom line is that the people of Ontario and our leaders need to understand the importance of developing a long-term strategy, including public investment, if we want to have a strong, competitive advanced manufacturing sector," said Dias, whose union represents 300,000 members, including 39,000 in the auto industry. He said he looks forward to talking with Chrysler officials about the future of the Windsor and Brampton plants. Windsor has employees



Worker on the Dodge Caravan line at the Windsor, Ontario assembly plant. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from Chrysler Group.



on three shifts making the Chrysler Town & Country and Dodge Caravan minivans. The automaker has said the next generation will only have one minivan and one crossover. Unifor's next negotiations with Chrysler will be in 2016.

**The Canadian Union of Postal Workers** launched a nationwide campaign to stop cutbacks in postal service, including plans to end door-to-door mail delivery and hike postage rates. The actions came in the face of Canada Post's ambitious \$2 billion mechanization program. Thousands of postal workers and their supporters recently held a rally in Ottawa to oppose the plans promoted by the Harper Government. "The Conservatives are wrong to think that

people are going to accept these cuts,” Gayle Bossenberry of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers told a cheering crowd at the Prime Minister’s office. “Stephen Harper, axe this plan and consult with the public!” The CUPW has since taken their campaign to provincial and township councils. Rallies, town halls, forums, petitions and other activities are happening across the country. Vancouver, Victoria and Medicine Hat are among the municipalities that officially opposed the cuts to door-to-door delivery.

**A delegation of British Columbia**, union leaders recently met with Premier Christy Clark and Jobs Minister Shirley Bond to discuss an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$13 an hour from the current \$10.25. “That \$13 represents the poverty line and we believe that no government should tolerate a wage in British Columbia that when you go to work full-time, you’re not at the poverty line for a single person,” said B.C. Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair. B.C.’s current minimum wage was increased to \$10.24 in May 2012 after a ten-year freeze. The unions want the government to boost the wage floor to \$13 hourly immediately, followed by annually adjusted cost of living increases. He said the union leaders also pressed the Liberal government to improve apprenticeship training and urged changes to the temporary foreign worker program.

## INTERNATIONAL LABOUR NEWS

**IBM’s sale of its x86 computer server business to Lenovo** sparked a recent strike by more than 1,000 Chinese IBM factory workers where the product is made. Workers at the factory in the southeastern city of Shenzhen fear that layoffs will follow the sale. News videos showed hundreds of workers in blue factory smocks demonstrating in front of the IBM building in Shenzhen, a sprawling electronics industry hub adjacent to Hong Kong. They waved homemade banners declaring “Workers are not a commodity” and “Give us back our respect.” According to Geoffrey Crothall, the communications director at the China Labour Bulletin, the IBM

strike is reminiscent of one by thousands of Nokia workers in November in Dongguan, next to Shenzhen. In that case, Nokia shareholders had approved the sale of its mobile phone business to U.S. software giant Microsoft Corp. “We’ve seen so many similar cases over the last two to three years,” Crothall said. China Bulletin is a non-profit group in Hong Kong that advocates for independent collective bargaining and other legal protections for workers in mainland China.

**New Zealand’s First Union** said the nation’s banks should use “sky high” profits to increase wages and decrease demands on staff. “New Zealand’s big four banks make billions off their New Zealand customer base, and they should lead from the front in their work practices,” First union retail and finance secretary Maxine Gay said. “Instead, the banks are systematically creating stress for workers who are subjected to completely unrealistic sales targets.” The union cited KPMG’s annual Financial Institutions Performance Survey which showed bank profits grew by 8.6 per cent to \$4 billion last year, and the union says that means banks have “ample room” to improve conditions for employees. “The scale of profits among the big four banks needs to be questioned by New

Zealanders, who are constantly sold the story, today included, that mega profits are a good news story for the New Zealand economy,” Gay said. ANZ Bank New Zealand was the biggest New Zealand incorporated bank, with assets of \$117 billion. It achieved a profit of \$1.37 billion last year; almost double that of nearest rival Westpac New Zealand.

**The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)** marked International Women’s Day, March 8, by calling on media organisations and public authorities to confront violence against women and to take action to achieve safer working environments. “In addition to numerous cases of discriminations in the workplace including the gender pay gap and the glass ceiling, women journalists are subject to specific violence because they are women. Numerous cases of intimidation, sexual harassment and physical attacks have been reported. We cannot tolerate that those cases are perpetrated in total impunity,” said Zuliana Lainez, head of the IFJ working group on violence against women journalists. The IFJ urged media companies to adopt policies to stop sexual harassment and provide specific safety training for women on how to handle physical attacks and threats when working in the



Woman's Day Rally in Washington, DC. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from DC Protest.

field. Additionally, the IFJ asks unions to keep a database of violence against women journalists and report them to the IFJ gender council for further action. For the first time, the IFJ will raise these issues and others impacting women and women journalists at the UN Meeting on the status of women later this year.

### Public Services International

(PSI), a global trade union, called on European Union leaders to implement a broad-based financial transactions tax (Robin Hood Tax) “in order to fund vital public services and decent jobs necessary to end poverty and inequality, support sustainable development and address climate change.” The European Commission has projected that 34 billion Euro would be raised each year by a comprehensive financial transactions tax (FTT). In an open letter to French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, PSI General Secretary Rosa Pavanelli urged them to support policies that will no longer exempt derivatives from taxation. “As the trading of derivatives represents the bulk of market transactions, to do otherwise will cause a major loss in tax revenues, and will further increase risks of financial instability due



to speculation and the avoidance of taxation,” she said. She added that five years of crisis “have clearly shown how strongly the financial lobby seeks to avoid the regulation of financial markets” and said the current system continues to have “a dramatic negative impact” on workers and people in many European communities.

## NATIONAL & POLITICAL EVENTS

### Canadian workers worry that

issues surrounding the skills gap will continue in 2014, according to the Randstad Canada Labour Trends Study 2014. The study polled 2,076 Canadian employees and managers and reported the top three concerns include lack of skilled trades workers, outsourcing of jobs or increased numbers of international workers and a lack of overall skilled workers. But 91.2 per cent of those surveyed cited issues involving skills training as their top concern. “What we are seeing here is reflective of what we’ve seen in the field throughout the past year — organizations in the industrial and technical sectors are struggling to find highly skilled candidates,” said Randstad Canada president Tom Turpin. “This is especially true in the West, where oil & gas projects are booming, and in Quebec where we see growth in the IT and aerospace fields”. Almost 45 per cent of Canadians see the skilled trades as one of the top three industries for job opportunities in 2014. “There is still a lot to be done to change negative perceptions around skilled trades. Everyone, from organizations to schools,



Robin Hood Campaign in France. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from Oxfam International.

governments and placement agencies like us, need to do more to promote careers in skilled trades,” said Turpin.

**Canada’s economy fell during** the first quarter which was marked by job losses and trade deficits. According to Statistics Canada, employment fell by 7,000 in February, the second decline in three months, and the trade deficit in January was the 23rd reported in the last 25 months. Employment numbers showed a 50,700 drop in government workers while private companies added only 35,200 jobs. The Bank of Canada said it will keep the key lending rate at 1 per cent, citing weak exports and investment. “Future growth, if it is to last, needs to draw more support from business fixed investments and exports,” Bank of Canada Deputy Governor John Murray said in a speech. “The household sector is now largely played out.”

## NEWS FROM CANADA’S UNIONS

**With both sides far apart, a** federal mediator was able to help unionized container truck drivers at Port Metro Vancouver reach a tentative agreement March 6 with the Vancouver Container Truckers’ Association. Their union,

Unifor, recommended the workers vote for the pact which was later approved. As part of the deal, the workers agreed to a 60-day truce while mediator Vince Ready conducted an independent review of the key issues including wages, working conditions and wait times at port terminals. Both labour and management representatives had urged Federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt to appoint Ready, a well-respected mediator. He mediated the 2001 transit strike in Vancouver and helped the B.C. teachers reach a deal in their 2005 strike. Unifor is concerned about long line-ups and wait times, which it says are costing its drivers money. Workers are demanding increased pay rates and want the rates standardized and enforced across the trucking sector to put an end to under-cutting.

**The Nova Scotia Government** and General Employees Union announced March 3 that it will file a legal challenge to the province’s Essential Home-Support Services Act, Bill 30, a new law passed March 1 aimed at preventing strikes in the home-care sector. The law targeted 420 home-care workers in the Halifax area who returned to work after the law was passed, ending a brief two-day walkout. Union President Joan Jessome said the government is violating workers’ rights to bargain collectively and



NSGEU President Joan Jessome at a rally. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from GregorAshNDP.

is unfairly targeting the Halifax home care workers. Unions in Saskatchewan challenged a similar law which is now before the Supreme Court of Canada. A decision is expected in May. “We’ll wait to see what happens with Saskatchewan as we move forward with ours,” Jessome said. The Canadian Union of Public Employees Nova Scotia, which is also named in Bill 30, was considering legal options as well, said union leader Danny Cavanagh. Nova Scotia Federation of Labour head Rick Clarke charged the law is more about provincial finances. “This tells us that there’s a very tight fiscal position coming out of this government that I think is going to have a negative impact... on those that receive the services provided by public sector workers,” said Clarke.



Announcing the agreement to resume operations at Port Metro Vancouver. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from BC Gov Photos.

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**James P. Hoffa**  
General President,  
Teamsters

## KOREA PACT SHOWS THE FALSE PROMISES OF 'FREE' TRADE

North American workers know all too well the high price of unfair trade. But while the 20-year-old NAFTA deal is the focus of much of the blame, it is hardly the only reason why millions of middle-class jobs have evaporated in recent years.

I agree completely with Canadian Labour Congress President Ken Georgetti when he said the trade deal with South Korea signed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper on March 11 was negotiated behind closed doors and that it could further hollow out Canada's industrial sector.

The U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS) is coming up on its two-year anniversary later this week. Supporters promised it would create 70,000 U.S. jobs from increased exports, but the reality is much different. In fact, the most recent administration numbers crunched by Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch shows a \$518 million drop in net exports to Korea. Overall, more than 40,000 U.S. workers are now out of work due to the agreement.

What makes anyone think the same thing won't happen to Canadian workers?

KORUS doesn't get the headlines NAFTA does or even the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) does. But those losses are real. It is the most recent example of the kind of damage trade deals that don't take workers' interests into consideration can do.

For example, U.S. trade data released

at the end of 2013 shows there has been a decline in U.S. exports to Korea, a rise in imports from Korea and an increase in the U.S. trade deficit since KORUS took effect. Specifically, it shows that in 20 of the 21 months since the trade deal was implemented, exports have fallen below the average monthly level in the year before the deal; monthly exports to Korea since KORUS are 12 percent lower than before it took effect; and the monthly trade deficit with Korea has soared by 49 percent.

Those numbers are shocking, considering the U.S. International Trade Commission estimated the trade agreement would increase U.S. exports by as much as \$11 billion once it is phased in. But during the first year in place, exports actually fell by \$3.5 billion.

It is because of numbers like these that the Teamsters are wary of future trade deals. No one is against trade per se; we're just against unfair trade. Given that U.S. and Canadian workers are being kept in the dark when it comes to the TPP, that's a big reason for concern. If it is such a good deal, as supporters claim, why not release the details so everyone can take a look? What's the big secret?

Here is what Public Citizen's Global Watch has to say about the TPP:

"Although it is called a 'free trade' agreement, the TPP is not mainly about trade. Of TPP's 29 draft chapters, only five deal with traditional trade issues. One chapter would provide incentives to off-shore jobs to low-wage countries. Many would impose limits on government policies that we rely on in our daily lives for safe food, a clean environment, and more." Clearly, our domestic federal, provincial and local policies would be required to comply with TPP rules.

The TPP would even elevate individual foreign firms to equal status with sovereign nations, empowering them to privately enforce new rights and privileges, provided by the pact, by dragging governments to foreign tribunals to demand taxpayer compensation over policies that they claim undermine their expected future profits.

We only know about the TPP's threats thanks to leaks. The public is not allowed to see the draft TPP text. Even members of the U.S. Congress, after being denied the text for years, are now only provided limited access. Meanwhile, more than 600 official corporate "trade advisors" have special access. The TPP has been under negotiation for five years, and the politicians want to sign the deal by early 2014. Opposition to the TPP is growing in Canada, the U.S. and in many of the other countries involved.

For these and other reasons, any trade deal should have a chance to be debated before adoption. But that is not likely to happen when it comes to the TPP if the politicians get their wish. In the U.S., the Obama Administration wants a quick up-or-down vote using fast-track trade authority, but that would stop those in the House and Senate from amending the trade pact or even discussing it fully. That is no way to handle a deal that could lead to thousands of workers getting a pink slip from their employers.

When Canada and the U.S. negotiate a trade agreement, every provision should benefit working families, not big corporations. But it is clear that has not been happening. It didn't happen with NAFTA, it isn't happening with KORUS and it won't happen with TPP. People need to realize this and our leaders need to understand it.

Numbers don't lie. Canadian and U.S. workers are losing under these trade deals. A new plan of action is needed now.



Protesting the TPP. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from Cross Border Action.



**John Cartwright**  
President, Toronto  
& York Region  
Labour Council

## TIME IS NOW TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

**Minimum wage/living wage** — “*A job should lift you out of poverty, not keep you in it.*” Not many years ago, that statement would have seemed obvious to most Canadians. But in today’s economy, it has become a key question facing any government – does it believe that poverty will be addressed without fundamentally addressing the issue of poverty wages? Twice as many people work for minimum wage in Ontario as did a decade ago.

After four years of being frozen, the Ontario Premier has announced that the Minimum Wage will be raised to \$11 in June and indexed to the rate inflation after that. This is an important victory, but \$11 locks in a rate that is well below the poverty line.

In the meantime, profits of the major banks and CEO salaries have soared while too many Ontarians have been stuck in low-wage jobs. An increasing number of young people cannot afford to move out of their parent’s homes. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives estimates that in the past thirty years, the top 1% of earners gained 71% in real dollars, while the bottom 90% averaged only a 5% improvement. Workers of colour have been particularly hard hit, and the parallel growing racialization of poverty cannot be denied.

It’s a fact that most low-wage workers in Ontario are employed by wealthy corporations, not small family business. The fortunes of the Wal-Mart and McDonalds empires will not be seriously

eroded if employees gain a better wage. But the lives of hundreds of thousands of workers will be dramatically improved, as will the local economies where they spend their wages.

**It’s a Union Issue** — The labour movement does two kinds of bargaining. We negotiate directly with employers to set terms and conditions at work. And we do “political bargaining” with governments to achieve programs and policies that improve our lives. We have succeeded on some big ticket items – winning unemployment insurance, public health-care, public pensions, maternity leave... a pretty impressive list.

When unions in low-wage sectors are at the front of the struggle to raise the Minimum Wage, they can honestly say to their members that the union helped win your raise – because we do **both** contract bargaining **and** political bargaining.

Raising the minimum wage by itself does not solve the crisis of poverty or income disparity. But everyone who works in low-wage sectors knows that decent wages would make a huge difference in their lives. This is not just about fast-food franchises. People are working in non-union factories and warehouses through temp agencies for just barely over minimum wage – victims of the transformation towards a low-wage economy.

Imagine if they saw individual unions and the broad labour movement relentlessly mobilizing to raise their wage, by hiking the level of the Minimum Wage. That would earn a lot of respect for labour among the working poor, and may just open the door wider for them to join us in the future.

**Sharing Productivity Gains** — Most jobs are far more productive today because of technological change. Labour says that new wealth creation should be fairly shared by both employers and employees. In unionized workplaces, this is achieved through collective bargaining. But in non-union companies, workers’ share only increases when the minimum wage is increased, or they engage in some form of collective action.

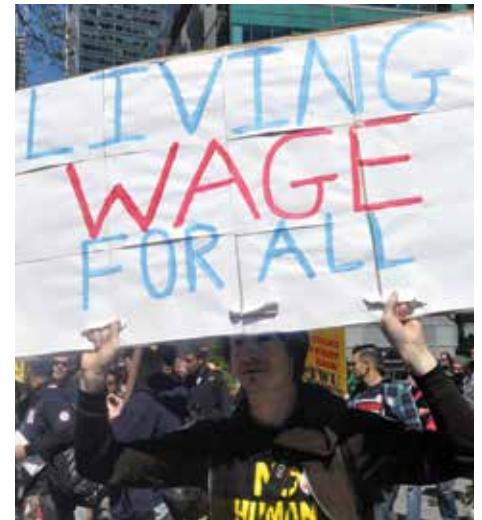
In the U.S., there are creative campaigns to drive up wages through mass

organizing outside of formal union structures, or as a first step to unionization. There are also Living Wage campaigns aimed at forcing public entities to require all their contractors to pay wages needed to raise a family. At least seven cities in Ontario have some form of living wage initiatives, with the Hamilton School Board being the first breakthrough. It’s a different concept than the Fair Wage policy that has been in place for over a century in Toronto and some other cities.

Fair Wage applies mostly to construction and generally reflects union scale. While Toronto has just increased the rates for cleaners and guards, the figures are far below poverty level. A living wage would call on every contracted job to be paid what is needed to survive with dignity.

The hard reality is that the greater number of workers with poverty wages, the greater the pressure on every other group of workers to accept lower wages and fewer benefits. Labour needs to continue focusing on this issue because our task is to improve the quality of life for workers, and our goal is a just and equitable society. Always was, always will be.

*(The Toronto and York Region Labour Council is a central Labour body that combines the strength of hundreds of local unions representing 195,000 working men and women and their families. Its mandate is to organize and advocate on issues that are vital to working people throughout the region.)*



Living Wage Rally. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from Michael Fleshman.



## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHEER AND FOUNDING MEMBER CASANDRA ROBINSON

Operation Christmas Cheer is a local organization in Ontario that provides hampers and toys for striking workers' families. These are handed out on the picket lines every year in Ontario communities. Organiser and founding member, Casandra Robinson started Operation Christmas Cheer (OCC) in 2004, as a non-profit organization. OCC's only mandate is to deliver grassroots support, cheer, food hampers and toys to picket lines in Ontario during the Holiday Season.

The seeds to initiating the program developed through various events. Casandra was employed in Winnipeg, where she and her mother, Thomasina, would assist with the Winnipeg Food Bank during the holiday season. Casandra advises that in 2004, she attended an Ottawa and District Labour Council meeting and heard the story of twelve union sisters who had been locked out

by their employer for almost a year. This had a profound impact on Casandra and was the beginning of Operation Christmas Cheer.

Casandra, with the help of Ontario District Labour Council, went into action to help these Union Sisters. Peter Boyle of USW and President of the Kingston District Labour Council jumped in and raised over \$1,800. American Income Life (AIL in Canada), with the help of AIL VP Debbie Enstedt, was able to raise sufficient funds to provide full dinners and toys for all 12 workers plus additional gift cards for 15 workers who were locked out in Dryden, Ontario.

Through hard work and dedication, those who share in community and holiday spirit can only measure the success of the program by those union families who receive the Christmas cheer.

Casandra's husband Richard, and sons

Chase and Dylan have been supporters and volunteers since day one. In the New Year, Casandra has a vision to broaden the base of OCC to a Canada-wide initiative.

In 2006, OCC started the publication Picket Line Press reporting on the year's activity.

Picket line press can be found on [www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer](http://www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer) PDF copy on website.

If you or your Union would like more information or to find out how you can support the program, contact Casandra and OCC at [www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer](http://www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer).

*Interview conducted by and written by Daryl Barnett, AIL Canadian Director of Labour Relations. Casandra is an executive member of her Local UNIFOR 247 and a Public Relations Representative for AIL in Ontario. AIL is a proud supporter of OCC.*



### AIL Supports \$14 Minimum Wage

AIL recently submitted a statement to the Ontario Government supporting an increase in the minimum wage to \$14 an hour, reported Daryl Barnett, AIL Canadian Director of Labour Relations. In the statement, AIL declared raising the minimum wage would increase disposable income which will boost the economy.

"Today more than ever, we need to protect workers as well as the long-term economic interest of Canadian business," said Barnett in the statement. "It is only logical for business to support policies that create a robust middle class, spur economic growth and create shared prosperity."

He pointed out that raising the minimum wage would particularly benefit women "as they are amongst the lowest paid." Raising the minimum wage is a "family friendly policy," Barnett said on behalf of AIL.

All of Canadian labour, the Canadian Labour Congress and federations of labour are waging a national lobby campaign on raising the minimum wage.



### Victoria Labour Council Celebrates AIL's 25th Anniversary in Canada

The Victoria Labour Council recently observed AIL's 25 years of service in Canada with a special anniversary cake, reports PR representative Steven D. Orcherton. "We were well received and I was given the opportunity to speak and thank the Council and affiliates for their support," he said.



### Baccalieu Trail District Labour Donation

Randy Stockley, AIL's Public Relations celebrating AIL's 25 years in Canada presents a donation to Darlene Oake, Secretary Treasurer of Baccalieu Trail District Labour Council.



### SEIU Strike Support

Kimberly McQuire, AIL Public Relations (3rd from left) supports SEIU workers on the picket lines in Windsor, Ontario.



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