

the CATALYST

Summer 2015

What's YOUR issue?

THE FEDERAL ELECTION — YOUR VOICE, YOUR CHOICE

Some issues to consider in October

BAD WORD OF THE DAY

The problem with precarious employment

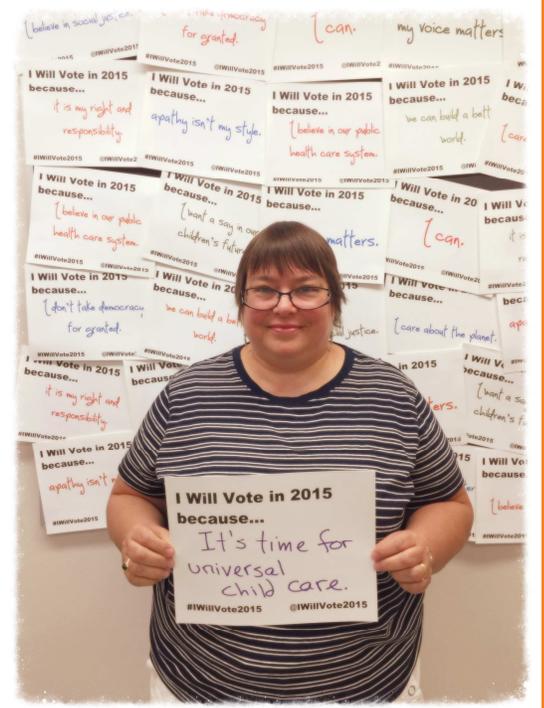
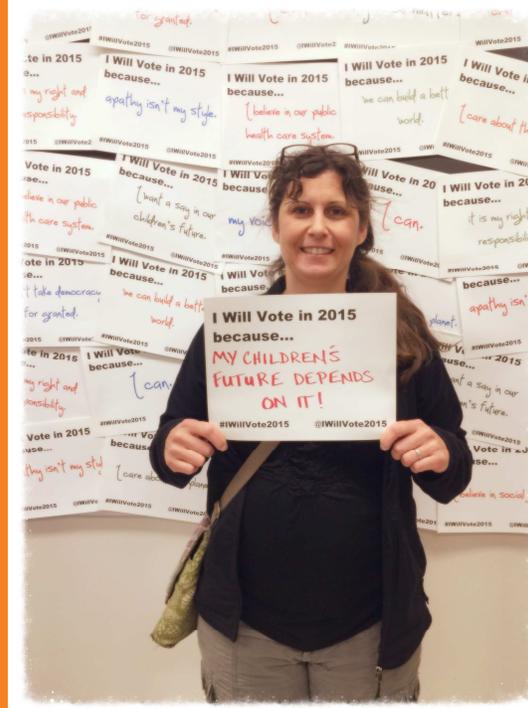
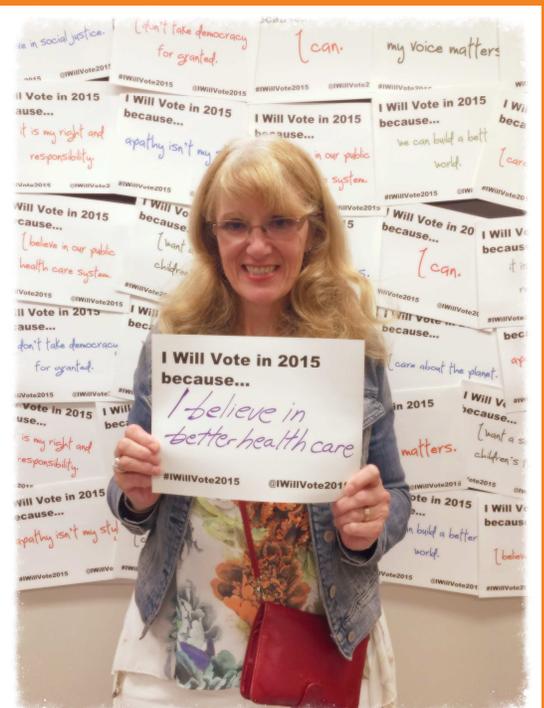
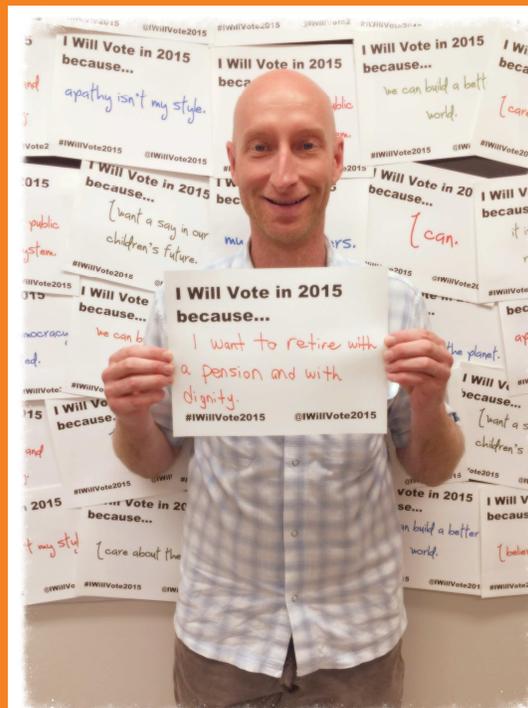
MY CUPE STORY

How (and why) an average member became a labour activist

PENSIONS

The path to a dignified retirement

Member profiles and more



EDITORIAL POLICY



The content of The Catalyst newsletter is determined by the CUPE 2424 Communications Committee and is drawn from our members, staff, and volunteers.

Where an article has a by-line, the views are those of the author and not necessarily the views of CUPE 2424. We also understand that views expressed here in The Catalyst do not necessarily reflect the views of all 2424 members.

We have reserved the right to edit the contents of The Catalyst for libel, length, and clarity.

We encourage your feedback about what you find in the following pages but kindly ask that you keep it respectful and constructive. You can reach us at cupe2424@carleton.ca.

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Message from the President

Small things often give me great pleasure. A couple of nights ago, I had the first ripe cherry tomatoes from a plant on my patio. As I write this, I believe there will be four ready for my supper tonight. This is a very small thing but it brings me a lot of joy. It is Friday and Environment Canada says that Saturday and Sunday will be sunny and 30 degrees. The outdoor swimming pool is open at my apartment building, which also brings me joy.

Summer is a natural time for all us to find a little bit of happiness; a vacation, perhaps camping or a road trip, a day at the beach, time in the garden, a BBQ with friends, the perfect steak or just a really good hot dog.

CUPE 2424 is spreading a little joy over the summer at Carleton. The lead-up to our annual BBQ on June 24 was tinged with angst for our Social Committee with a long-range forecast predicting heavy rain, but the skies cleared in the end and we had a perfect summer day by the canal. Even though we ran out of salads too early, I hope that the gathering of friends and colleagues under the summer sky still afforded everyone a bit of pleasure.

As well, to celebrate the end of summer, CUPE 2424

will be holding an ice cream social on August 28, so hold that date.

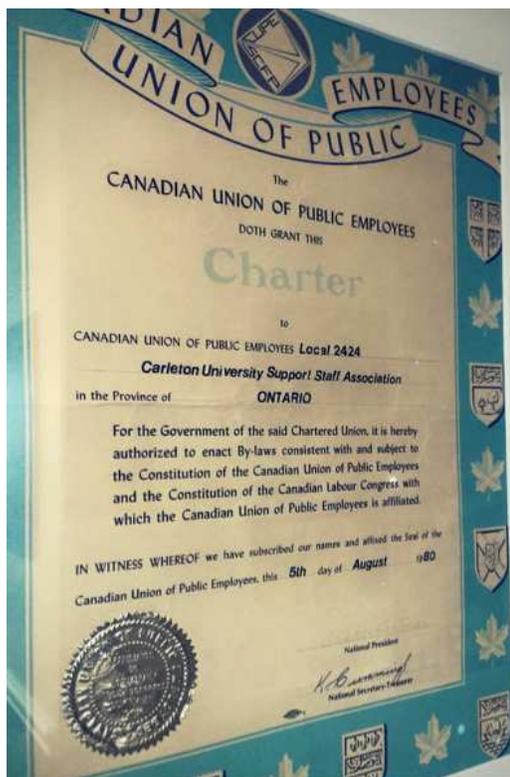
Although it seems a little early to be thinking about winter holidays, soon, our Communications and Social Committees will start working on our second annual Children's Holiday Party. Last year was a huge, joyful success. Being in the presence of children, especially during the holidays, brings everyone a lot of joy.

There is great strength to be found in our community and not only are we joyful together, we hold each other up in difficult times. Our Zone Officers and members of the Grievance Committee deserve a special shout-out for their dedication to members who find themselves in a place that is not particularly joyful.

Our next Lunch and Learn sessions will be dealing with Conflict Resolution, offered on two separate dates, August 12 and 20. Each session will be different. You can attend one, or both. I encourage you to register for these sessions early because space will be limited and each session will only be offered once.

I hope that all of you find joy in the small pleasures of every day. Have a wonderful summer!

In solidarity,
Pam Griffin-Hody, President



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CUPE 2424

Our charter was signed on August 5, 1980. That's when CUPE 2424 became affiliated with the national branch of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Canadian Labour Congress.

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF SOLIDARITY

#Solidarity #BetterChoice
#StrengtheningOurCollectiveVoice

my CUPE STORY

BY JERRETT CLARK

My name is Jerrett Clark and this is the story of how, and why, I came to be a Union volunteer and eventually became a labour activist.

I volunteered as Chair of the Communications Committee in 2013 to get some experience and develop skills in a communications role having started my Communication Studies degree a couple of years earlier. I did not consider myself to be a labour activist. To me, “activist” was a bad word loaded with negative connotations. “Activist” evoked images of protesters and Wall Street occupiers. I was not involved in the labour movement nor did I really know much about Unions, including our own. Like so many people, I only became interested or engaged every few years when our Collective Agreement expired and was up for negotiation. And I am not proud to admit that like so many people, I actually held some biases when it came to Unions and their reputations; that they were disruptive, sometimes corrupt, mostly concerned about money, and often just looking out for their own interests.

I wanted to do a good job in my role as Chair though and a big part of that was doing my research, learning

about the issues, connecting with people and organizations in the labour movement, and participating fully on 2424’s Executive Board (the Chair of the Communications Committee is also a member of the Executive Board).

Over time and with greater involvement, I began to gain a different perspective on 2424’s role in our workplace, and the greater role of Unions more generally. I began to see the incredible amount of time and effort given by 2424 volunteers without any recognition or compensation, strictly for the greater good of the membership. I began to understand that Unions in general are, and have always been, some of the world’s most powerful advocates for social justice. Both unionized and non-unionized workers can thank Unions for better working conditions, better health and safety in the workplace, greater gender and racial equality, the two-day weekend, the eight-hour work day, paid holidays, and so much more. It was clear that my experience with CUPE 2424 was inconsistent with the characterizations of Unions perpetuated by so many governments and corporations. My experience did not match up with the messages about Unions that were always being

repeated and reinforced by many of the people standing at the podiums.

I now consider myself to be an activist. Activism does not have to be about rallies or protests. Everyone has the freedom and ability to engage in their own particular brand of activism, whether it be a blog or a simple Facebook post. Activism can be a letter to your Member of Parliament. Activism can be a boycott of a product or service, person or place on the foundation of your own principles. Activism can be a conversation with friends about contentious issues. Your vote alone can be a protest. Activism can be volunteering for your Union.

My work for 2424 has opened my eyes to the true nature and value of our Union in the workplace, and the broader labour movement in society. Unfortunately, a lot of people still view the labour movement and even their own Union with indifference or skepticism. If you are one of the skeptics, perhaps my story and the issues presented between the pages of this Catalyst – issues being tackled by Unions across the country and the world – might give you pause to think twice.

CUPE 2424 ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Date: August 28, 2015

Time: 11:30am — 1:30pm

Location: Tory Quad

Come and celebrate the
end of summer with
friends and colleagues,
and of course some
frozen treats!

Member Profile

Claire MacArthur, Departmental and Graduate
Administrator
Department of Health Sciences

My responsibilities encompass a range of administrative duties including academic timetabling, calendar changes, departmental purchasing, managing the departmental budget, and providing support to the Chair and faculty members. My favourite part of my job is meeting with and advising prospective and current graduate students for the Masters of Science in Health: Science, Technology and Policy program.

Working in an interdisciplinary and collaborative department, I enjoy getting to know our students who come from a variety of academic backgrounds. I care about the needs of our students and always do my best to provide professional, attentive, and positive service to our students. Whether they are in the process of applying to our graduate programs, actively seeking and applying for grants and funds, in need of assistance with registration, or preparing for their capstone research project, it gives me great fulfillment to help and contribute to their success in our programs.

Above and beyond my regular continuing position with the Department of Health Sciences, I am fortunate to be an active CUPE 2424 member as I participate every year at the Ontario Division CUPE Convention as a youth facilitator with the CUPE Youth Camp. In my previous employment, I was a daycare teacher and, as such, I have a place in my heart for children and youth, and I am delighted to be able to continue to work with youth at yearly conventions. They are the leaders of the future, and giving them the opportunity to learn about social

justice,
equality, and
workers'
rights will
ensure a
strong and
bright future
for all!



Claire MacArthur, Department of Health Sciences

Pensions – The Path to a Dignified Retirement

BY PAM GRIFFIN-HODY

At Carleton, our pension plan is perhaps the most important of all the benefits that we enjoy, yet we rarely give our pensions enough thought.

The Carleton pension plan is a good one and Continuing Employees at Carleton who make contributions are fortunate. CUPE 2424 members are among the only four out of ten Canadians who actually have a workplace pension plan.

We also know that there has been a lot of discussion about pension plans over the past few years, much of it to do with the solvency and going concern special payments that universities (among others) are required to make.

The University Pensions Project

The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations

(OCUFA) have brought together interested stakeholders from university administrations, faculty associations and Unions to discuss a framework for a multi-employer, Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan (JSPP) for Ontario universities. The goal of the University Pensions Project is to create a voluntary option that would provide a secure retirement future for members by providing a defined benefit pension, and also be a financially secure plan for the long-term. Over the next few months, interested parties will provide input and recommendations into four key areas of that framework: benefits and features, actuarial and finance, governance, and corporate structure. This is a voluntary process designed to gauge interest in a JSPP. Carleton has not expressed an interest in forgoing their current plan in favour of a multi-employer plan. In the eventuality that this does occur in the future, however, current plan members must be consulted. As well, it is important to know that under law, when a single-employer pension plan converts to a JSPP, the benefits you have already accrued in your plan cannot be reduced. Once in a JSPP, the benefits that members earned in their old plan are guaranteed.

Expanding the Canada Pension Plan

With a growing number of Canadians in precarious work situations and many working multiple jobs just to make ends meet, significant numbers of workers are unable to put

Did You Know... All about Pensions?

Both CUPE 2424 and the University talk a lot about pensions. Here is a quick guide to what all the talk is about:

Defined Contribution:

When your pension is calculated based on assets within your individual retirement plan account. Employees pay a set contribution rate, and Carleton as an employer contributes to the pension plan as well. In return, members accumulate savings. Upon retirement, members can then convert these savings into retirement income through the purchase of an annuity. The income you receive at retirement with a defined contribution plan is not predetermined. This type of plan provides much less security for the employee, and much less obligation by the employer.

Defined Benefit:

When your pension is calculated using a formula based on the number of years of service and earnings. The income you receive at retirement under the Defined Benefit Pension Plan is predetermined. You can estimate, in advance, what your pension will be. The Canada Pension Plan is a type of defined benefit plan.

Hybrid Plan:

You may have heard this term if you attended our recent Lunch and Learn session on pensions. Carleton's pension plan is hybrid between a Defined Contribution plan and a Defined Benefit plan, which gives members the best of both worlds. Employees who retire when the financial markets are great and interest rates are high may receive more than the Defined Benefit Minimum amount. When the market is bad and interest rates are low we still have a Defined Minimum Benefit to rely on.

money into RRSPs. Of the four out of ten Canadians who have a workplace pension plan, most of these are tied to higher-wage, full-time, continuing jobs with larger employers. Pensions are an issue of collective concern, especially since equity-seeking groups such as women, racial minorities, Aboriginal workers, workers with disabilities, and LGBTTI workers still experience systemic discrimination that limits their access to those jobs with pensions. Except for any personal savings or RRSPs into which some workers are able to contribute, the only retirement income many people can expect is from the CPP.

Both Workplace pension plans and the CPP are tied to employment. All Canadian workers, no matter what kind of job and whether it is temporary, full-time, or part-time, pay into the CPP as do their Employers. This means that the CPP is transportable – not just from Employer to

Employer but at every workplace in Canada. For every job that you have had since 18 years-of-age, you have paid into the CPP.

CUPE and the labour movement have been fighting to expand the CPP, proposed through a modest increase in contributions. Seven provincial governments agree. The federal government does not. Not only does the federal government not support an expansion of the CPP, they raised the eligibility age for Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement from



65 to 67 for most Canadians.

Expanding the CPP is the best way to ensure retirement security for all Canadians.

Special Payments:

When plans are in a deficit position (the gap between the assets currently in the plan and the funds needed to meet the plan's obligations to its members) in either or both the solvency and going concern, special payments must be made to the plan. These payments became higher after the market fall in 2008-09.

JSPP:

Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan. This is a plan where both employers and plan members are responsible for decision making and contributions. If the plan becomes underfunded, both the employer and plan members are jointly responsible for funding deficits. However, when there are surpluses, members have a role in determining whether contributions should be reduced or benefits should be improved.

Solvency:

This looks at what it would cost if the Employer closes and the plan has to be wound up. It is a figure that looks at how much the plan needs to have in order to pay out current and future pensioners without any new money coming into the plan.

Going Concern:

This is a comparison of the plan's assets and liabilities assuming that the plan continues indefinitely.

SEPP:

Single Employer Pension Plan. This is what Carleton has – the pension plan for one employer.

CUPE 2424

LUNCH & LEARN SERIES



Conflict Resolution

Presented by Peter Bishop, LLB

Peter Bishop is an Ottawa mediator, lawyer, conflict practitioner. He is also an instructor in the Graduate Diploma Program in Conflict Resolution, Carleton University.

How can you deal with workplace conflict? In these sessions, you will develop skills you can use to respond to conflict and have effective conflict conversations with colleagues.

Please feel free to attend both sessions or just one.

Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2015

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Location: 5050 Minto Centre

RSVP by August 7, 2015 to
cupe2424@carleton.ca

Date: Thursday, August 20, 2015

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Location: 103 Steacie Building

RSVP by August 17, 2015 to
cupe2424@carleton.ca

Space is limited. A light lunch will be provided.

Please provide any dietary requirements with your RSVP.

Bad Word of the Day

BY LESLIE MACDONALD-HICKS

Precarious [pri-kair-ee-uh s] adjective

1. dependent on circumstances beyond one's control; uncertain; unstable; insecure 2. dependent on the will or pleasure of another; liable to be withdrawn or lost at the will of another 3. exposed to or involving danger; dangerous; perilous 4. having insufficient, little, or no foundation

You are probably familiar with the word “precarious” and maybe even the phrase “precarious employment”, meaning work that is unstable, unprotected, and typically underpaid. Did you know that more people are facing precarious work situations now than during the recession in 2008? Worse still, did you know that precarious employment is expected to increase in the coming years? If you have children between 17-25 years-of-age, then you already know the difficulties that they face just finding gainful, full-time employment, let alone a career with benefits and pensions.

Unions have been sounding the alarm about precarious work for some time. Precarious work is bad for workers, bad for the economy, and only benefits the profit margins for companies. For individuals, the lack of stable work and reliable income can mean uncertainty about everything that is tied to employment; buying food, paying bills, transportation, buying a home, having a pension or an RRSP, or saving for a child's education. In a broader context, more precarious employment means a decline in tax revenues, lower funding for provinces and municipalities, less money being spent in communities, lost training and educational opportunities in the workforce, and more stress among the working population which

can in turn have an impact the healthcare system. Precarious employment creates a vicious circle of uncertainty and insecurity for workers as they move between unemployment, employment, and back again.

At Carleton, we work in an environment with protections under our Collective Agreement but even that agreement fails to benefit everyone in the same way, particularly when it comes to non-continuing employees (casuals, terms, and replacements). Our CA with Carleton stipulates that if non-continuing employees have a break in service of more than two months (Article 11.02), then they lose their Union membership and have to go through another waiting period once (or if) they resume work to secure that membership again. So, not only are non-continuing employees at Carleton in precarious work situations but their membership in the Union, with its benefits and protections, is also precarious. Just being a Union member does not solve the problem of precarious employment. Our non-continuing employees have some benefits such as dental coverage and limited access to the free tuition benefit, but do not have access to pension or extended health benefits.

Today, even becoming a full-time, continuing employee falls short of

giving workers the benefits that other generations of unionized worker have fought for and enjoyed. Many Unions have been forced into concessions where entry-level workers are paid considerably less, receive fewer benefits, and in some cases even have a different pension plan driven more by worker contributions and less by contributions from the employer. As more of us retire, it is very possible that Union members taking our place will not have the same reliable employment or benefits under their Collective Agreement.

You might have seen or heard suggestions that precarious employment is simply part of the “new economy” and that we should just get used to it. As Union members, we need to work in solidarity with a unified voice against the corporate, political, and economic agendas that support the systematic erasure of worker rights and that foster a climate of chronic underemployment, lower wages, reduced benefits, weaker pensions, instability, and indignity in the workplace.

Precarious employment that is “dependent on circumstances beyond one's control; uncertain; unstable; insecure.” Is that really what you want for yourself, your friends and colleagues, or your family and children? We need to stand up for better jobs.

Did You Know?

Library Privileges - Article 41.01

Employees shall continue to enjoy borrowing privileges at the University Library. All employees with five (5) years continuous service as a continuing employee upon retirement, shall continue to enjoy borrowing privileges at the University Library.

If you interested in knowing more about the history of CUPE, the Canadian Labour Congress, or Canadian Labour History in general, the following two introductory books can be borrowed from our library:

The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History by Craig Heron

Working People: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Labour Movement by Desmond Morton

Member Profile

**Patricia Eisenberg, RN, Appointment Care Nurse
Health & Counselling Services**

I provide nursing care to the students and staff at Carleton University. The students are able to book appointments that suit their busy class schedules so that they do not have to wait long periods of time to see the family physician. The appointment care nurse tries to keep the doctors' appointments on time so the students can return to their classes on time.

There are usually four appointment care doctors in the office on a given day and my colleague and myself may see up to 85 patients a day. I assist the doctors with medical procedures and provide reassurance and comfort to the students who greatly appreciate holding a nurse's hand. I listen attentively to the students' mental health issues, assess the patient, and refer them to a medical doctor or counsellor as needed.

I also administer many allergy shots, immunizations, and travel vaccines. I also triage for medical emergencies such as an allergic reaction, asthmatic attack, or chest pain.

Being employed as a nurse in a university setting is a very rewarding and satisfying job. I am able to develop a therapeutic, trusting relationship with our students and staff. I see the students from the start to the finish of their programs and provide them with any healthcare they may require. The students and staff are able to open up to me and discuss any personal or medical concerns and are reassured that everything is confidential and I am here to help them.

In between patient care, I am responsible for calling drug reps for samples, answering phone calls, booking appointments, and giving medical advice. I am also responsible for ordering all medical supplies and stock room supplies for our busy clinic. I enjoy being a university nurse immensely, especially listening and caring for the students and staff so that they have a healthy body, mind, and soul to get through university. During my lunches, I am fortunate to be able to use the pool to keep myself healthy and de-stress.

Nurses care and students and staff show that they appreciate us by saying thank you.



Patricia Eisenberg, Health & Counselling Services

the

FEDERAL ELECTION

Your Vote, Your Choice

BY PAM GRIFFIN-HODY

On October 19, Canadians will have the opportunity to vote for our next federal government. The Canadian Labour Congress, Canada's largest labour organization, has raised four issues of particular importance to Canadian workers, families, and the economy; issues to consider when casting that all-important ballot in the upcoming election:

Child Care Pensions

Each of these issues affects all of us, unionized or not, with or without children, either directly or as part of the community.

Child Care - Now is the time to look more seriously at greater investment in child care which not only helps families directly but has also been shown to help the economy. In fact, it is estimated that every dollar put into public child care would equate to a 254% return in socio-economic benefits.

Health Care - Funding for our broken health care system also needs to be restored and further still, a discussion to be had about a national pharmacare program. As members of CUPE 2424 with continuing, full-time jobs and benefits, we must acknowledge the growing number of less-privileged Canadians with low-paying, part-time jobs or precarious full-time employment without benefits. A national drug plan is feasible with possible benefits to our economy and definite benefits for Canadian society.

Pensions - Pensions in the Canadian public service and private sector alike are under threat. Although a large percentage of our CUPE 2424 members are fortunate to have a workplace pension, our members in non-continuing positions are not as fortunate. They are among the 11 million Canadians who do not have a workplace pension.

Health Care Good Jobs

The Canada Pension Plan is transportable to any workplace in the country and is a defined benefit. The maximum that a Canadian can earn from CPP is just over \$12,000 a year and most people do not even qualify for the maximum amount. The Old Age Security benefit adds only about \$500 a month and starting in 2023, the age of eligibility will actually increase from 65 to 67. The time has come for a serious expansion of the Canada Pension Plan. It is portable. It is a defined benefit. Seven provinces have already agreed. All Canadians deserve to retire with dignity and stability.

Good Jobs - Nearly three quarters of the jobs created in Canada over the past six years have been precarious - part-time, temporary, or in the self-employed sector. Nearly 1 million Canadians have to work multiple jobs just to make ends meet. The impact is most apparent among younger Canadians who continue to struggle with double the national unemployment rate. Good jobs provide benefits. Good jobs have a decent wage. People with good jobs can work a single job and still make ends meet. Good jobs ensure that families have what they need. Good jobs raise all of us up.

The last time Canadians went to the ballot box in 2011, only 61% of eligible voters cast a ballot. Of voters aged 18-24, only 39% voted. Make no mistake, your vote....every vote...matters. Whether you count these issues among those that are important to you or have other issues at top of mind, the upcoming election is your chance to be heard. Your vote can help chart the course of our country toward better child care, better pensions, better health care, better jobs, and a better Canada.

Please take the time to check out the CLC's website at www.betterchoice.ca and don't forget to vote!

Did You Know?

Volunteer Service - Article 22.05 (a)

Volunteer day for community service.....1 day per year, to be taken either on one day or in two ½ day increments.

You can take this for anything you volunteer for, whether it's helping out at your child's school or volunteering in the upcoming election.

**I Will Vote in 2015
because...**

#IWillVote2015

@IWillVote2015