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September 17, 2018

To: Toronto Unifor Locals on Actions of the TYRLC

Members,

When Unifor disaffiliated from the Canadian Labour Congress in January of 2018, we immediately shared our principled stance with our locals and the broader labour movement that workers in Canada have the right to belong to a union of their choosing. The Canadian Labour Congress is failing to provide unionized workers with that choice, and now we see that the Toronto and York Region Labour Council has chosen the same path.

When your union took that stance to oppose the failed enforcement of Article 4, we encouraged you to continue your relationship with your labour councils. Much of the work of our unions happens in our communities, and labour councils can be an important space for advocacy and organizing.

It has become clear however, that Unifor is unable to continue that connection with President John Cartwright and the Toronto and York Region Labour Council. Since Unifor's disaffiliation, Unifor labour council delegates have engaged in a sustained effort to participate in the Council, but lately the TYRLC executive has disparaged and insulted our union instead of fulfilling their mandate of forging solidarity across unions and communities.

On Tuesday September 11, workers at the Fairmont Royal York voted on joining Unifor, the largest union representing hotel workers in Canada. Just days before this vote, Cartwright, as President of the Labour Council, wrote to these workers attempting to push them to vote against joining our union. This letter contained multiple inaccuracies and is an inexcusable overreach, a blatant attempt to interfere in the democratic process and to influence a choice between one TYRLC affiliate and another.

In the immediate aftermath of Unifor's disaffiliation, Cartwright penned his [Open Letter to the Labour Movement](#), which again completely disregarded the importance of Unifor's stance, and took cheap shots at our union. Unifor members are blocked from participation on committees and the executive board, and we have seen no decision made on their status at the Council.

Despite these actions, we continued to collaborate and attempted to work together for a celebratory labour day in Toronto. But, in a move that can only be described as petty, the TYRLC Executive chose to repeat last year's parade line-up to prevent our union from marching in front for our 5-year anniversary when it was our turn, and deliberately placed us last.

The accumulation of these actions paints a clear picture about the position of Cartwright and the TYRLC Executive. They chose to take a side in what should be a free vote for members choosing to join Unifor, and they have outwardly disparaged our union.

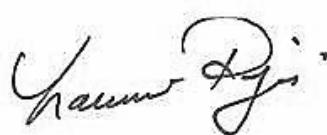
We cannot continue to encourage your participation in this Council. The time has come for Unifor local unions to cease participation and funding of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council. Hopefully this relationships can be repaired, but that day will not come until respect can be shown on both sides.

If you have any questions about this process, or are looking for ways to continue your activism in the city, please contact Josephine Petcher, Unifor Toronto Area Director at Josephine.Petcher@unifor.org or email politicalaction@unifor.org. Our union remains focused on the challenges that lay ahead and will continue to be active in Toronto and in all Unifor communities. All members are encouraged to join in the exciting work that Local Union Task Force organizers are coordinating through ongoing campaigns and Unifor Area Councils.

In solidarity,



Jerry Dias
National President



Naureen Rizvi
Unifor Ontario Regional Director

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