

# WORKERS UNDER 30

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## Record Number of Job Losses in July:

### *Green Public Energy and Green Jobs Could Make Future Bright for Young Workers*

By Andrew Brett, OFL Workers Under 30 Representative

Canada lost a whopping 55,000 jobs in July—the biggest monthly decline in 17 years. The news sent shock waves through economic circles and put recession fears back on the agenda. According to Statistics Canada, more than half of the jobs lost were in the manufacturing sector and hit Central Canada hardest. Ontario lost 41,000 factory jobs.

“This is really bad news for young workers,” said Andrew Brett, young worker representative with the Ontario Federation of Labour. “The decent, unionized jobs that our parents were able to count on are disappearing, so young workers today are having a harder time keeping their heads above water.”

Statistics Canada reported that many youth had “dropped out” of the labour market. “Too many youth are finding themselves in precarious, part-time jobs and many have had to turn to temporary agencies just for a steady pay cheque,” said Brett. “Youth are therefore constantly in a state of flux, shifting from job to job and workplace to workplace. This makes it harder for them to get the health and safety training they need, and

### **OFL Workers Under 30 Aggregate Meeting**

**Sunday, September 14 from 11:00 am to 4:30 pm  
25 Cecil Street**

The Ontario Federation of Labour's Workers Under 30 Committee invites your union's young workers committee to meet with us on September 14. By meeting together, we hope to share ideas, plan strategies and bring a young worker perspective to all aspects of the labour movement. For more information contact Pam Frache ([pfrache@ofl.ca](mailto:pfrache@ofl.ca) or 1-800-668-9138).

it makes it harder for them to get organized to improve their working conditions.”

“If the Ontario government would commit itself to an audacious plan for public green energy, public transit and green infrastructure renewal, we could create union jobs and save the planet at the same time,” said Brett. “That why the good jobs summit in November and the December rally to stop climate change are such important events for young workers.”

## Wage Earner Protection Act—A Victory for Workers

By Matt Dumas,  
Canadian Office and Professional Employees

Unfortunately, with the economy slowing down, plant closures, layoffs and businesses closing their doors with no notice, many hard-working employees are left waiting near the back of the line to collect their unpaid wages.

The Federal Government has implemented the Wage Earner Protection Program as a result of Bill C-12 passing in the legislature and obtaining Royal Assent. Thanks to Bill C-12, those workers who did not receive their wages are the first in line to collect what is owed to them.

Prior to Bill C-12, the creditors and lending firms that lent money to the closing company would have first dibs on collecting their share of the money owed. Thankfully, workers with bills, mortgages or rent to pay now have the priority over the banks and large lending firms with insurance policies to cover their losses.

In a perfect world, we would not need a program like this. However, the world we live in is far from perfect. Thanks to the hard work by the Canadian labour movement, we now have some more legislative security for Canada's working people.

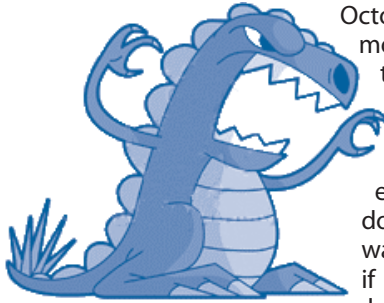


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## CLC and CFS take on "Gapzilla"

By Erin Harrison, CLC Youth Representative



October has been defined as the month of "Gapzilla"—the month to highlight the inequalities post-secondary graduate women face in Canada today. Presently, Canadian women earn only 70.5 cents of every dollar earned by men—and the wage gap actually increases if you have a post-secondary degree! For women with a post-

secondary degree, the gap increases to 68 cents.

To highlight these inequalities the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian Federation of Students will be hosting a series of "bake sales" on campuses across Canada, selling baked goods to female students for \$0.68 and \$1.00 to male students. All the proceeds will go to a local women's shelter, or a women's resource centre in the area. The bake sales will be used to distribute information about the Women's Economic Equality Campaign including: "Gapzilla" fact sheets, campaign pamphlets, and curriculum for women's studies programs. To encourage media attention and more visibility we will be adding an element of culture to each event! For more information visit the 'World Day for Decent Work' website at: [www.wddw.org](http://www.wddw.org).

For more information and to download the teach-in material and fact sheets, please visit the Canadian Labour Congress's Women's Economic Equality Campaign website at: [www.onceandforall.ca](http://www.onceandforall.ca).

## Shaping the Agenda: Women's Political Action

Sheraton Centre Hotel, 123 Queen Street West, Toronto  
October 5-7, 2008

The Ontario Federation of Labour will hold a women's conference October 5-7, 2008 at the Sheraton Centre Hotel at 123 Queen Street West, Toronto. The conference will begin in the afternoon on Sunday, October 5, and wrap up with a Queen's Park MPP lobby in support of union card certification legislation on Tuesday, October 7. The theme of the conference is: Shaping the Agenda: Women's Political Action.

## Pan-Canadian Women's Economic Equality Campaign Launched

By Erin Harrison, CLC Youth Representative

On March 8, 2008 (International Women's Day) the Canadian Labour Congress started a much anticipated year long Women's Economic Equality Campaign that hosted a series of "teach-ins" across Canada at a wide variety of labour IWD events. Each month thereafter, issues pertaining to the inequalities women suffer in Canada were highlighted at various events and through numerous media releases. A highlight included Child



Care rallies held in communities across Canada asking for more access to affordable, quality child care spaces. Child care postcards grading provinces and the federal government on affordability, accessibility and quality were distributed in the media release.

## Harper government moves to deport young workers refusing to engage in illegal activities

By Andrew Brett,  
OFL Workers Under 30 Representative

Soldiers, many of whom are young workers, in the US military have been seeking refugee status in Canada for refusing to participate in the illegal occupation of Iraq. The United Nations has declared the US-led invasion of Iraq illegal under international law, and there is growing evidence that the US is engaged in human rights abuses and torture practices that violate Geneva Conventions.

Over two-thirds of Canadians believe that US Iraq War Resisters should be allowed to stay in Canada—including a majority in every province. The Canadian Parliament passed a motion in June 2008 calling on the government to let war resisters stay and to immediately stop deportations. But Prime Minister Stephen Harper is thumbing his nose at Canadian democracy and is refusing to implement the decision. Twenty-nine year old war resister Jeremy Hinzman, his partner Nga, son Liam and newborn Meghan face deportation September 23.

Some 47 million Americans have no health care in the US, unemployment is rising, and post-secondary education is too expensive for many families. Consequently, many young people turn to the US military for employment, health benefits, and education—never believing

their government would take them into an illegal war.

Call your Member of Parliament and demand that US Iraq War Resisters be allowed to stay. For information about the campaign and the September 13 National Day of Action visit: [www.resisters.ca](http://www.resisters.ca).

## drop fees not bombs!

What would you do with \$490 billion?  
Stephen Harper plans to spend it on the military over the next 20 years, and on Canada's war in Afghanistan.  
Six new warships will cost \$4.5 billion. The same amount could eliminate all tuition fees in Canada.  
Four strategic airlift airplanes will cost \$2 billion. The same amount could provide a \$4,000 grant to every student in Canada.

Join students across the GTA for a student feeder march to the city wide anti war demonstration at Queen's Park. Drop fees, not bombs! Fund education, not war!

### end the war in Afghanistan, bring the troops home now!

The war in Afghanistan is not about fighting terrorism, spreading democracy or defending women's rights. It's about propping up an unpopular, pro-US government that is dominated by warlords and drug lords. It's about keeping the country safe for Western corporations to suck oil and gas from the Caspian Sea region. It's about Canada playing its part in George Bush's "war on terror".

And it's about time we stopped it!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18: MEET AT 12 NOON  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO STUDENTS' UNION  
12 HART HOUSE CIRCLE • UoT CAMPUS

Organised by Toronto Students Against War • [www.nowar.ca](http://www.nowar.ca)

## Card Certification: Youth Need Equal Rights to Unionize

By Adele Stroud, OFL 2008 Program Coordinator

For over a century, Canadians have been organizing into unions as a vehicle to pull themselves out of low wage ghettos, increase their pay and benefits, and better their standard of living. In the year 2008, we find labour laws which discriminate against youth, women, racialized workers, newcomers, and workers with disabilities.

### Automatic Card-Certification

Automatic card-certification is a process where workers sign union membership cards to show they want a union. This system was used for over 40 years in Ontario. Where the percentage of employees signing cards was between 40% and 55%, a secret ballot vote was held. But where a clear majority of employees (56%+) signed cards, the Ontario Labour Relations Board could certify the union as the bargaining agent for those employees without a secret ballot vote.

### Ontario's Card-Certification History

Automatic card certification was enshrined into Ontario law in the post-war Labour Relations Act in 1950 by the Conservatives. Successive Conservatives, Liberals, and NDP Provincial governments supported the 'card majority' system of certification.

But after being elected into office in 1995, the Harris/Eves Conservative government abolished the majority card-certification process. Workers were forced to vote even if 100%

of employees signed union cards. The effect was to give a green light to employers to intimidate, coerce, or even fire employees who wanted to join a union. As a result, many employees who want to have unions have been denied their rights.

In 2004, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty introduced Bill 144, restoring automatic card-certification, but only in the construction sector. While this is a crucial step forward, automatic card certification must be extended to all workers. Workers in retail, home care, hospitality and other sectors (where so much of the work is part-time or precarious) are prevented from working together through unions to improve their working conditions. Youth in particular need a fair process to join unions.

### What Ontario Youth Need

It is vital that the law fulfill its obligation to protect and safeguard the right to freedom of choice to join a union for **ALL** workers. Without this, the standard of living in Ontario is gravely threatened. Over 250,000 good, unionized jobs have disappeared in Ontario. This means young workers — and many older ones — face uncertain futures. By extending card certification we can make existing jobs better, and give vulnerable workers a voice.

We want our democratic right to join a union restored. The government must act to re-establish Ontario workers' rights to automatic card-certification. For more information visit: [www.ofl.ca](http://www.ofl.ca) or [www.labourcouncil.ca](http://www.labourcouncil.ca).

## Youth at Risk: Precarious Employment

By Adele Stroud,  
OFL 2008 Program Coordinator

Over the past 20 years, changes in the workplace have left thousands of Canadian youth at risk. As the nature of employment has changed, it has become increasingly difficult for working youth to earn living wages. In Ontario, the largest and most significant shift in the nature of employment is the drastic and continuous rise in precarious employment.

Precarious work is a term used to describe non-standard employment which is poorly paid, insecure, unprotected, and offers few (if any) benefits. Precarious work is often associated with part-time employment, self-employment, fixed-term/contract employment, or temporary employment. With less training or work experience, Canada's youth are severely overrepresented within these types of jobs.

Temporary employment agencies are perhaps the worst type of precarious employment and, in fact, temporary workers in Ontario earn 40% less

than their permanent counterparts! Unfortunately, current labour legislation is not geared toward non-standard employment. Countless legal loopholes exist that keep thousands of Canadian youth vulnerable to poverty, abuse, injury, and exploitation.

As the Workers' Action Centre has reported, some employment agencies demand hefty 'placement fees' from workers; deny them legal entitlements

such as public holiday, vacation, or termination pay; and throw up financial barriers to deter employers from hiring workers full-time. In addition, temporary workers have reported systematic human rights violations that include biased questions in the application process and discriminatory assignment selection.

Another large hurdle that precarious employees must face is lack of union representation. Because workers are isolated and are constantly moving, it is difficult for workers to take action to improve their immediate circumstances. Having representation available could help these 'at risk' workers come together and work towards improving their employment standards, benefits, and conditions.

Temporary workers are treated like second-class employees. With the large percentages of youth involved in this type of work, we must join together to push for proper labour legislation that covers all employees—even those in precarious employment. For more information visit: [www.workersactioncentre.org](http://www.workersactioncentre.org).

### ISABEL: A CASE STUDY

**Isabel worked in a garment shop for 14 to 15 hours a day, five or six days a week, over a four year period. During this time, her first seven hour shift was paid directly by the company. Her second, consecutive seven hour shift was paid by the company's own temporary agency on a separate payroll to avoid paying overtime. Over a four year period, Isabel lost over \$64,000 in unpaid overtime, over \$5,000 in unpaid public holiday pay, and close to \$12,000 in unpaid vacation pay. As shocking as this may sound—this is 100% legal.**

# Health and Safety Matters

Know Your Rights visit: [www.ofl.ca](http://www.ofl.ca) ■ [www.worksafety.ca](http://www.worksafety.ca) ■ [www.workRights.ca](http://www.workRights.ca)

By Andrew Brett, OFL Workers Under 30 Representative

## RCMP investigate death of 15-year-old Manitoba worker

A Manitoba company could be fined up to \$175,000 after a 15-year-old underage worker was buried alive in hot asphalt this past summer.

On July 25, Andrew James was killed when a load of asphalt was dumped on top of him. Manitoba laws prohibit workers less than 16 years of age from working on construction sites, including road paving.

## Transpavé: First employer to be criminally convicted in young worker death

In April 2008, concrete block manufacturer Transpavé pleaded guilty to criminal charges relating to the October 2005 death of a 23 year old worker. This company is the first to be charged under the federal Bill C-45 known as the "Corporate Killing Law".

The young worker was killed by a machine that stacks concrete blocks, which the workers' compensation board had told the company to repair. Thanks to the work of union occupational health and safety committees, under Bill C-45, a corporation or its representatives may be charged with criminal negligence as a result of a workplace accident.

## Every Day: 42 Young Workers killed or injured on the job

Nearly 10 years ago, David Ellis was working at a bakery to save money for university. But the 18 year old from Burlington, Ontario was killed the second day on the job. He was trying to clean an industrial mixer. And he wasn't properly trained to do so. Since then, David's father Rob has been spreading the word about young worker health and safety.

According to David's father, 150,000

workers under the age of 24 are injured every year. In Ontario, 42 young workers are killed or injured on the job every day.

"I speak to over 100,000 young people a year across North America and the majority of them still say to us that they're getting burned and cut on a regular basis," Rob said in an interview with the Waterloo Record. "And over 50% of them still never receive any orientation or training on the job."

Of course, it's not just young people who are at risk. But they are particularly vulnerable, because they're more likely to be new to the job, do physically demanding work, take risks and often don't know their rights.

"They don't always realize it's OK to ask questions and no one can ever be fired for refusing to do something they feel is unsafe," said Waterloo region public health nurse Colleen Cooper. "Employers have to provide safety training—it's the law."

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| September 1:     | <b>Labour Day</b>  |
| September 13:    | <b>Pan-Canadian Day of Action to let Iraq War Resisters Stay</b> <a href="http://www.resisters.ca">www.resisters.ca</a>  |
| September 14:    | <b>OFL Workers Under 30 Aggregate Meeting</b>  |
| September 26-27: | <b>Campus Activist Assembly (Toronto)</b> <a href="http://www.cfsontario.ca">www.cfsontario.ca</a>                       |
| September 27:    | <b>Ontario Health Coalition Day of Action</b> <a href="http://www.web.net/ohc/">www.web.net/ohc/</a>                     |
| September 28:    | <b>OCAC Pro-Choice Rally Against Bill C-484</b> (416-969-8463)   |
| October 5-7:     | <b>OFL Women's Conference</b> <a href="http://www.ofl.ca">www.ofl.ca</a>   |
| October 18:      | <b>Pan-Canadian Day of Action for Troops out of Afghanistan</b> <a href="http://www.acp-cpa.ca">www.acp-cpa.ca</a>       |
| October 29:      | <b>CLC &amp; CFS Gapzilla</b> <a href="http://www.onceandforall.ca">www.onceandforall.ca</a>                             |
| November 5:      | <b>Drop Fees: CFS Ontario Day of Action</b> <a href="http://www.cfsontario.ca">www.cfsontario.ca</a>                     |
| November 15:     | <b>Youth Union Movement Conference</b> <a href="http://www.labourcouncil.ca">www.labourcouncil.ca</a>                    |
| November 22:     | <b>Good Jobs Summit (Toronto)</b> <a href="http://www.labourcouncil.ca">www.labourcouncil.ca</a>                         |
| December 6:      | <b>Pan-Canadian Day of Mourning and Action Against Violence Against Women</b> <a href="http://www.ofl.ca">www.ofl.ca</a> |
| December 6:      | <b>International Day of Action to Stop Climate Change</b>  |
| December 10:     | <b>International Human Rights Day</b> (60th anniversary)   |



ALL OUT! NOV 5 DROP FEES

EDUCATION IS A RIGHT!

Join students across Ontario in a province-wide

# STUDENT DAY OF ACTION

to build the campaign against tuition fees

GET INVOLVED! VISIT: [DROPFEEES.CA](http://DROPFEEES.CA)

ONTARIO CAMPUS ACTIVIST ASSEMBLY SEPTEMBER 26-27 TORONTO

AN HISTORIC ASSEMBLY OF CAMPUS ACTIVISTS FROM ACROSS ONTARIO

- Connect with campus activists from your region and decide on next steps for the student movement.
- Discuss issues such as education, workers' rights, war, racism, corporatisation and poverty.
- Learn new strategies, tactics and skills to activate your campus.

Contact your local students' union office for more details. [www.cfsontario.ca](http://www.cfsontario.ca)

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