

3261 Bargaining Bulletin

CUPE 3261

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Preparing For Collective Bargaining and Looking at Bill 124

Hello CUPE 3261 Members! 2020 is shaping up to be a very busy year for the Local. The Full-Time/Part-Time and Casual Collective Bargaining Agreements are both set to expire on June 31st of this year, as well as UofT Press Part-Time and Retail in October, and 89 Chestnut in December. Bargaining is the number one priority of the Union right now, and we know that this round is going to be tough. We've been preparing since the Fall, and our Full-Time/Part-Time and Casual Negotiating Committees which you elected in December are also going for a week of training this month. As the summer slowly approaches we want to make sure you know what's going on, because it's crucial that in this round of bargaining all of our members are on the same page. Unfortunately, what makes this round of bargaining different than the last is Bill 124 — a new law that severely weakens our ability to fairly bargain.

What is Bill 124?

Bill 124, the so-called "Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act," is a new law in Ontario passed by Ford's Conservative government in November 2019, despite widespread opposition led by unions like CUPE. The law sets limits on salary and compensation increases for all public sector workers for the next three years, including university and college employees like us.

How will Bill 124 affect bargaining?

The bill critically reduces our ability to negotiate salaries and other forms of compensation, including benefits. It limits all salary and compensation entitlements to a 1% increase per year. Not only does this mean our wages can't increase by more than 1% per year, it also means that if we receive a 0.25% increase in benefits (for example), then our wage increase would be limited to 0.75%.

What can we do?

We believe Bill 124 is a violation of the Charter rights of every worker in Ontario, and CUPE Ontario has already launched a legal challenge against it. Unfortunately, this can and will take years to settle. For now, Bill 124 is provincial law, and there is little we can do at this time but negotiate under its terms. This is going to be a tough round of bargaining, but you can be sure we'll be looking for every opportunity to gain other forms of compensation from the University.

Looking Ahead, and What We Need From You

We know that this situation is unfair, and that our wages — like most public-sector front-line workers — have lagged behind inflation for the last 10 years. But for now we need your help in looking ahead and finding out what we *can* achieve this round of bargaining. Strengthening seniority? Improving advancement opportunities? Improved health and safety? Despite the limitations, we will still be fighting for a contract that improves the working conditions of all of our members. Your representatives on the negotiating committees will be developing their own proposals in the coming months, and surveys are soon going to be made available to all members so that we can hear your ideas. We appreciate your support in this round of bargaining, and we need it — because there is no successful bargaining without it!

Upcoming GMM!

Join us at the next General Membership Meeting on **Saturday, February 22nd**, in the **Sandford Fleming Building, Room #1101** from **10AM to 12PM**. The meeting's agenda will include voting on the proposed bargaining budget, and an executive board report on Bill 124. We hope to see you there! As always we'll bring the coffee and donuts.

Stay connected

We will be working hard to keep members informed through every step of the negotiation process, and it's crucial that you're able to receive these updates. If you have not already, make sure to sign up for our email list at 3261.cupe.ca/email. Post this bulletin and futures ones in your workplace, tell your co-workers, and if you find you're missing our notices make sure to talk to your shop steward or contact the union office.

