



President Rebeck speaks in solidarity with post-secondary students against Pallister Government legislation to increase tuition fees at the Canadian Federation of Students' Day of Action.

## Fighting for the services Manitoba families count on

It's been a busy fall for Manitoba's labour movement as we continue to fight back against the Pallister Government's cuts to health care and other front-line services. Sticking up for working Manitobans and the services they depend on continues to be a main focus of our movement.

Shamefully, the ERs at the Victoria, Concordia, and Seven Oaks Hospitals have either been or will be closed, along with the Urgent Care Centre at the Misericordia. We're hearing from Manitoba's dedicated health care workers that they are truly worried about how these major disruptions to health care will affect their ability to provide quality patient care.

It seems that every day more stories of layoffs and workers carrying even heavier workloads are reported by the media. Our government should be listening to workers on the front-lines, and to patients and their families, but they're not. It seems that Pallister is only focused on the bottom line, and isn't stopping to consider the people being hurt by his cuts.

As President of the MFL, I've been proud to attend many rallies and protests organized by affiliate unions and community organizations to voice our opposition and stand up for working families throughout our province. Rallies at the St. Boniface Hospital, the Health Sciences Centre and on the front steps of the Legislature have drawn large crowds of union members from all sectors, united in their call to respect the front-lines and to put patient care first.



KEVIN REBECK

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## Fighting for services, cont'd

Manitoba's labour movement has been a strong supporter of the need for Manitoba's minimum wage to be a living wage. No one who works full-time should have to live in poverty, but that's exactly what's happening to thousands of Manitobans right now because our minimum wage is a poverty wage. That's why the MFL partnered with Make Poverty History Manitoba to host a rally at the Legislature to call on the Pallister Government to recognize that \$15 is Fair and commit to making our minimum wage a living wage. MFL affiliates came out in support of this call to action, and together we'll keep up the pressure on government to make sure that low income workers are paid fairly.

In October, the Partnership to Defend Public Services, a coalition of more than two dozen public sector unions, took the next step in its legal challenge against the Pallister Government's unconstitutional wage freeze legislation by filing a comprehensive package of evidence in support of its injunction request with the Court of Queen's Bench. We will continue to keep you up to date on this important case as it moves forward.

Finally, we were happy to see UCTE Local 50600 of the PSAC get a fair deal with the Winnipeg Airport Authority after over two months on strike. Also, USW Local 4297, whose members work at PTI Inc. are back at work after negotiating a fair deal with their employer. They were locked out for over four weeks.

Brothers and sisters - I want to thank all of you for your courage and dedication in these challenging times. The road ahead will not be easy, but together, we will make sure that working people's voices are heard.

In solidarity,

**Kevin Rebeck**

President, Manitoba Federation of Labour



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**[1]** President Rebeck speaks at the \$15 is Fair rally for a living wage at the Manitoba Legislature. **[2]** President Rebeck with 2017 Governor General Leadership Conference participants Basia Sokal, Michelle McHale, Greg McFarlane, and Phil Krachuk. **[3]** President Rebeck joins CUPE Manitoba health workers at a rally to Stop the Cuts outside the Health Sciences Centre. **[4]** MGEU President and MFL VP Michelle Gawronsky speaks at the Care Comes First rally. **[5]** President Rebeck and MFL Executive Director Anna Rothney take part in ATU Local 1505's rally for transit safety at Winnipeg City Hall.

# MFL speaks up for working people at legislative committees

This fall, the Pallister Government used its majority in the legislature to ram through the passage of five bills, which the NDP Opposition had successfully held-over from the spring. President Rebeck attended standing committee meetings on these bills to register opposition on behalf of working people. A summary of the impacts each bill will have on Manitobans can be found below.

- The Fisheries Amendment Act removes Manitoba from the single desk of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, putting good paying jobs at the FFMC as well as northern fishing jobs at risk.

- The Red Tape Reduction and Government Efficiency Act is a Harper-style omnibus piece of legislation that cuts protections for Manitoba families related to health, water quality, our environment, and public funds. It also erases taxpayer protections related to Public-Private Partnerships, allowing private interests to make big profits at the public's expense.

- The Elections Amendment Act makes our democracy less accessible by making it harder for a number of marginalized Manitobans to vote in provincial elections.

- The Local Vehicles for Hire Act offloads responsibility for taxi and so-called ride-sharing services to municipalities without appropriate consideration of health and safety protections and ensuring a level playing field in the marketplace.

- The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act removes longstanding protections for students to keep Manitoba's post-secondary education affordable and will open the door to even higher costs for education by deregulating course-related fees.

President Rebeck spoke passionately to each bill, highlighting the impacts they will have on workers, young people, and marginalized populations throughout our province.

Unfortunately, the concerns raised by the hundreds of presenters to these bills, including many in the labour movement, were disregarded, and the Pallister Government passed the bills into law anyway.

This government continues to refuse to listen to Manitobans, instead forging ahead on its own in making life more difficult for working families in our province.



Manitoba Federation of Labour Women's Committee

## MEMORIAL LUNCH

The MFL Women's Committee Memorial Lunch is held annually in honour of 14 women who were killed at École Polytechnique in Montreal on December 6th, 1989, and all women who have been victims of violence.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6 | 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM  
HOTEL FORT GARRY

**Guest Speaker:** Nahanni Fontaine, MLA for St. Johns, NDP Critic for Justice and Spokesperson for the Status of Women and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

**Tickets:** \$30 (To purchase your ticket, please call 204-947-1400)

The Women's Committee will be accepting donations of toiletries (such as soap, shampoo and toothpaste) for Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Inc. Shelter for women and children in Winnipeg.





## HEALTH & SAFETY CONFERENCE

### Health & Safety Conference a success

This year's MFL Health & Safety Conference drew over 130 activists from MFL affiliated unions from across the province, eager to enhance their health & safety knowledge and skills.

Keynote speaker Troy Winter, Senior Health & Safety Officer with CUPE National, gave a special address about violence prevention and what more needs to be done to keep workers safe from the growing threat of violence in the workplace.

MFL President Rebeck and Flin Flon MLA and NDP labour critic, Tom Lindsey, also addressed delegates, speaking about the need to protect Manitoba's Health & Safety laws from Pallister's pledge to eliminate two existing regulations for every one new regulation.



President Rebeck addresses the 2017 MFL Health & Safety Conference.

### AI Cerilli Scholarship winner

MGEU Local 61 member Emily Anderson was awarded the AI Cerilli Scholarship at the September meeting of the MFL Executive Council. Emily is enrolled at the Asper School of business and began her Bachelor of Commerce this year. Her career goal is to become a labour lawyer.



President Rebeck, Emily Anderson, MGEU President Gawronsky, Curt Martel.

Emily was awarded the scholarship by President Rebeck, MGEU President and MFL Executive VP Michelle Gawronsky, and Young Members Committee Chair Curt Martel.

The award is a \$500 scholarship presented annually by the MFL Young Members Committee to a member of an MFL affiliated union enrolled in continuing or post-secondary education.

Recipients of the scholarship demonstrate a significant record of activism in the labour movement and a commitment to continuing labour activism into the future.

We wish Emily all the best in her studies.

AI Cerilli is a long-time activist in Manitoba's labour movement. Stay tuned for details for the 2018 AI Cerilli Scholarship.

### Ontario to join Manitoba in recognizing rights to domestic violence leave in law

The MFL congratulates the Ontario Federation of Labour, its affiliated unions and many allies within the feminist movement on their hard fought campaign to establish paid domestic violence leave, modelled after Manitoba's first-in-Canada law. The Ontario government recently committed to mirroring Manitoba's five days of paid domestic violence leave, which will provide important job protection and income security to victims of domestic violence.

Let us celebrate this victory and lend our support to activists campaigning for paid domestic violence leave in other provinces and territories, as well as within Canada's Labour Code.

For more information about paid domestic violence leave in Manitoba, please visit: [http://mfl.ca/your\\_rights/domestic\\_violence\\_leave.html](http://mfl.ca/your_rights/domestic_violence_leave.html)

**1/3** of working **Canadians** have experienced domestic violence.

**SPREAD THE WORD.**

Any Manitoban who's experiencing domestic violence now has the right to take leave from work and get help, without fear of losing their job.

It's the law.

MFL.ca



## Taking the politics out of pensions

In a new CCPA Manitoba report on Manitoba's public-sector pensions (Pensions in Manitoba: What's Working, What's Not), author Hugh Mackenzie dispels many myths about public and private sector pensions.

Mackenzie takes us through a brief history of OAS/GIS and CPP. Today the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board oversees a largely successful CPP, managing its asset base of \$280B, one of the largest sovereign wealth funds on the planet. He notes that OAS/GIS has dramatically reduced the senior poverty rate in Canada.

Unfortunately, the workplace pension system has failed to meet the expectations of policy makers. This failure is due in part to the inability and/or refusal of private sector employers to meet the needs of their employees and in part to structural changes in the economy that undermine the rationale for single employer sponsored pension plans.

In contrast, public sector employers have largely fulfilled their commitment to provide sufficient income for retirees. But increasing pressure from the private sector is threatening the viability of public sector pensions, and that could have derogatory effects on the economy over all. The main threat is in the push to convert Defined Benefit (DB) pension plans to Defined Contribution (DC) plans.

### **Defined Benefit (DB) vs Defined Contribution (DC) Pension Plans**

Both the employer and employee contribute to a DB pension plan which pays an employee a set monthly amount upon retirement, guaranteed for life or the joint lives of the member and spouse.

Under a DC pension plan the employer and the employee make contributions to the employee's account during employment, but there is no guaranteed retirement benefit. Once the account is depleted, no further payment is made.

In other words, a pensioner can outlive a DC pension, making them much riskier than DB plans.

Mackenzie explains that DC plans have higher fees, lower returns and more risk than DB plans. The overwhelming advantage of DB plans comes from pooling longevity risk and asset risk. In other words, DB plans are better placed to protect pensioners regardless of how long they live and DB plans can maintain a stable mix of assets that protect against market volatility. DC plans and even more so, self-directed RRSPs, do far worse at protecting pensioners' interests.

If your pension strategy is simply to invest in RRSPs through an investment firm, by the time you retire an estimated 45 per cent of your savings will have been paid to mutual fund managers. Canada has the highest mutual fund fees in the world.

### **Private Sector Workers Losing Ground**

Given the superior performance of DB plans, it is unfortunate that so few private sector workers have access to them. According to Mackenzie, in 2015 only 26 per cent of Manitoban private sector workers had a pension and two thirds of those plans were DC plans. Only one in ten private sector workers has a DB plan.

Mackenzie's report provides compelling and detailed evidence on the need to preserve DB plans where possible and to shore up options for the millions of Canadians who are stranded without workplace pension plans of any sort. He clearly cuts through the faulty logic of undercutting public pensions in the name of saving money.

*Lynne Fernandez holds the Errol Black Chair in Labour Issues at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Manitoba*

This report was commissioned by the MFL. You can read it in full at <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/pensions-manitoba>



Wab Kinew, along with his wife Dr. Lisa Monkman, speaks to delegates in advance of voting for the leader of the Manitoba NDP. Photo: Manitoba NDP.

## Manitoba NDP choose MFL-endorsed Wab Kinew as leader

The Manitoba New Democratic Party held a leadership convention on September 16 and chose Wab Kinew as its new leader with an overwhelming majority of 74 per cent.

Kinew received a unanimous endorsement from the MFL, a very rare occurrence. His campaign focused on the need to stop Brian Pallister's cuts and to re-focus our health care system on keeping people healthy, and supporting Manitoba's health care workers to provide the very best care to patients.

The convention was well attended, with almost 1,000 delegates casting a vote in the leadership contest. MFL President Kevin Rebeck gave an impassioned nomination speech for Kinew as leader, focusing on issues that will make a difference for working people in Manitoba when Kinew becomes Premier.

Stopping Brian Pallister's agenda of cuts couldn't be more important. President Rebeck shared the story of a health care worker named Carlyne, who was fired after 32 years of dedicated service at the Seven Oaks Hospital because of the Pallister Government's cuts. Her job was ensuring that prescription orders got looked after, and that patient concerns were resolved. She did an important job that put patients first, and she loved what she did.

But to Brian Pallister, workers like Carlyne are expendable.

Rebeck also shared the story of Nicole, a minimum wage worker who is worried about how she's going to make ends meet, and can't understand why Brian Pallister doesn't think she deserves a living wage.

Kinew knows that no one working full time should live in poverty,

and that's why he has committed to a \$15 minimum wage.

Manitoba needs a leader that listens, and a government that cares about people like Carlyne and Nicole. Workers deserve a government that looks out for all Manitobans, not just the few at the top. Brian Pallister and his Conservative Government continue to have a single minded focus on money, and not the people impacted by their cuts and privatization schemes.

In his first two months on the job, Kinew has focused on holding the Pallister Government to account over its health care cuts, which has led to lay-offs for nurses, health care aides, and other workers who provide vital front-line services in the health care system. To reach out to the Manitobans impacted by these cuts, Kinew has announced a health care listening tour across the province.

Stay tuned for more information about how you can play a role in the health care listening tour by participating and sharing your concerns at a location near you.



President Rebeck nominates Wab Kinew to lead the Manitoba NDP. Photo: Manitoba NDP.

## Pallister Government freezes wages for thousands of security guards

Manitoba security guards didn't get the pay increase they were owed on October 1 this year. Instead, the Pallister Government froze their pay, even though provincial legislation that governs Manitoba's security guards minimum wage should have ensured their wages were increased to \$13.40-an-hour.

The legislation was a result of labour working with the former NDP government over several years to establish a security guard minimum wage that is higher than the provincial minimum wage.

Many security guards rely on minimum wage increases as the only pay raise they'll receive.

In response to this unfair attack on working people who work hard to keep us safe, in October UFCW Local 832 held a rally at the Legislature to call on the Pallister Government to reverse this unfair decision. UFCW 832 represents more than 1,700 members in the security industry.

UFCW 832 President and MFL Treasurer Jeff Traeger told the crowd that the wage freeze just doesn't make sense, because even the security employers are supportive of having a higher

legislated minimum wage. Security guards do dangerous work and they work hard to keep people and property safe. They also have considerable expenses that they have to pay for out of pocket, including licensing, training courses, and keeping their criminal record and child abuse registry checks up to date.

Having a legislated, predictable wage increase recognizes the valuable work that they do and provides a level playing field for security companies.

Security guards put themselves at risk every shift, often late at night and all alone, but Brian Pallister and his Conservatives think they should work for less.

It just isn't fair that Brian Pallister and his Conservative Government think that the work that security guards do isn't important enough to give them the wage increase that they were promised in law.

As President Traeger said "If they're not listening to the guards, and they're not listening to the employers, then who are they listening to?"



UFCW 832 President and MFL Treasurer Jeff Traeger speaks out against the Pallister Government's freeze to the security guard minimum wage at the Manitoba Legislature .

# Fighting for a Fair Future!



## Manitoba Federation of Labour Young Members Assembly

February 8 -10, 2018 // Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Union Centre // 275 Broadway

### What it's all about:

The 2018 Young Members Assembly is an opportunity for young union members to learn and share their perspectives about issues facing young workers today. Attendees will build leadership skills, network with other young union activists and build connections to help fight for a fair future here in Manitoba.

For more information, contact Greg McFarlane at 204-953-2561 or [gmcfarlane@mfl.mb.ca](mailto:gmcfarlane@mfl.mb.ca)

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