

Advocate

Official news magazine of the B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members (BC FORUM)

Vol. 26 No. 1, Spring 2023



Meet your new BCFED

SPOTLIGHT ON BLACK LEADERSHIP

BC FORUM AGM Save the date

Remembering
the BC FORUM's
own Ray Haynes

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The Advocate is published by the B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members. BC FORUM – supported by WE Consulting and Benefits and affiliated with the B.C. Federation of Labour – is dedicated to representing the interests of members and their families, continuing into retirement the relationship they enjoyed with the union movement.

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In this edition

Welcome to 2023! We are excited to feature the new leaders of the BC Federation of Labour who are representing the change we want to see, to spotlight Black leaders in our movement in honour of Black History Month, and as always, offer news and information that is important to seniors. We also sadly say goodbye to a giant in labour and BC FORUM's own Ray Haynes.

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WE FIGHT FOR FAIRNESS

Firsts and lasts – the fight continues

By Sam Wiese, BC FORUM President

As I write this greeting towards the end of February, it seems a bit early to talk about spring. However, by the time many of you are reading this warmer, sunnier days will be upon us. Once again the first new shoots of seasonal growth will poke their heads from the cold ground. We in the BC union movement are also experiencing some firsts as you will read in the pieces about the new leadership of our Federation of Labour. Thanks are in order to both our BCFED President and Secretary Treasurer for breaking new ground and helping to crack the “glass ceiling”, which has held back way too many for far too long.

There have been many other ground breaking events since our winter edition of the Advocate. While not all we had hoped for in the fight to maintain fully public healthcare, premiers accepted what the Trudeau government said was its “best offer”. It promises a significant increase to annual federal transfer payments to the provinces — \$17.3 billion over the next decade — which includes an immediate \$2-billion injection to tackle the crisis in pediatric hospitals and emergency rooms, and address ongoing wait times for surgeries.

Beyond that, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau set out a separate \$25-billion fund over 10 years for bilateral deals to be negotiated with each province to address the four federal priorities: family health services, health work-

ers and reducing backlogs, mental health and substance use services, and modernizing the health care system

While this appears to be a significant first step in the fight to fix our ailing public healthcare system, it is not necessarily so. In a new report, *No Strings Attached: Canada's health care deal lacks key conditions*, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' (CCPA) Senior Economist, David Macdonald, points out that provinces and territories will only be required to spend 58 cents of every dollar on actual healthcare. In the preamble to his report MacDonald very succinctly points out: “The federal government can, and should, increase funding to the healthcare system – but that money shouldn't have strings attached, it should have chains that ensure new health care money is actually spent on improving health care.”

If you haven't seen this CCPA report I encourage you to take a few minutes to read it at: The Monitor: No strings attached at monitormag.ca. It is quite evident that we will need to maintain, and likely increase, pressure on our provincial legislators to ensure money meant for public healthcare is spent on just that.

Speaking of pressuring provincial legislators to “do the right thing”, it is with great joy that I just received news from our BCFED president that

the provincial government is delivering a budget increase of nearly \$12 million dollars over three years to strengthen employment standards protection. There is a massive backlog of worker complaints at the Employment Standards Branch and this increase will definitely assist in decreasing, and hopefully clearing, the backlog.

The budget increase has been needed for some time to help undo the destruction done by the BC Liberals. It must be noted that this increase to the budget of the Employment Standards Branch was in no small part a result of pressure placed by the united voices of the people, in particular the Employment Standards Coalition. (bcemploymentstandardscoalition.com).

The united voices of many have also been significant in promoting Bill C-228 through its stages at the federal level, which I address in my article on page 14 of this edition. Proof positive in the “power of the people”.

So, where should we place that power next? In the coming months, (cont. on page 11)

SAVE THE DATE

BC FORUM would like to invite members to our first Annual General Meeting since the pandemic began three years ago.

Please hold **JUNE 28, 2023** in your calendars.

Location is still to be determined. Stay tuned for regular mail, email and/or for updates our website at bcforum.ca for more details as they become available.

Acknowledgement of territory

We respectfully acknowledge that the BC FORUM office is located on unceded lands of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), səliłwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nations.

Introducing long term care standards

By Sam Wiese, BC FORUM President

I was quite excited on January 31, 2023, when the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health, and the Honourable Kamal Khera, Minister of Seniors, issued the following statement (truncated for our purposes):

"Every senior in Canada deserves to live in dignity, safety, comfort and respect, regardless of where they live. The Government of Canada is committed to meeting the needs of seniors, including helping to ensure they can access the safe, quality health care they need and deserve.

"We welcome today's release of complementary, independent long-term care (LTC) standards from the Health Standards Organization (HSO) and CSA Group and thank them for



their dedicated work to complete the development of LTC standards. These standards are an important step in helping to ensure quality care for

seniors and will raise the bar for safe and respectful care in LTC homes across Canada.

"Together, these standards provide guidance for delivering services that are safe, reliable, and most importantly centred on residents' needs. They aim to foster a healthy and competent workforce, create safer physical environments, and promote a culture of quality improvement and learning across LTC homes.

"Both standards were shaped by the needs and diverse perspectives of thousands of Canadians across the country, including LTC residents, family members, caregivers, and health partners.

"The development of those standards complements our collaborative



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A tribute to Ray Haynes

By Sam Wiese, BC FORUM President, and the BCFED

work with provinces and territories to help support improvements in LTC.

"The Government of Canada is also committed to doing more to support seniors across the country. We know Canadians want to age closer to home and family, but also expect LTC to be safe, if it is needed. In the coming months, we will move forward with consultations and engagement with stakeholders and Canadians on the Safe LTC Act.

"As well, to ensure that decisions continue to reflect the needs of seniors, in October 2022 the Government of Canada mandated the National Seniors Council (NSC) to serve as an expert panel to examine measures, including a potential aging at home benefit, to further support Canadians who wish to age within the comfort of their own homes."

The mandate letters for the Minister of Health and the Minister of Seniors include a commitment to work with provinces and territories to improve infection prevention and control measures in LTC homes, develop national standards and a Safe LTC Act to help ensure seniors get the care they deserve. As long-term care falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction, any legislation will be designed in a manner that reflects jurisdictional responsibilities.

While it's important to note that the Long-Term Care Standards are not mandatory standards, they are an important first step to developing the Safe LTC Act, one of the better health-care initiatives under the Supply and Confidence Agreement entered into by the NDP and Liberal parties in March 2022.

The full statement can be found at: Statement by Ministers Duclos and Khera on Long-Term Care Standards - [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)

A copy of the standards (CAN/HSO 21001:2023) is available for free download from the Health Standards Organization web page healthstandards.org

BC FORUM lost a long standing and devoted member in Brother Ray Haynes, our regional representative to the Sunshine Coast Labour Council. He was a mentor in my earlier years of union activism, an ally during my growth, and a friend throughout.

Below we share with you a press release honouring Ray issued by the BCFED on February 21, 2023.

legal oppression of unions was widespread and often violent. But he didn't let that keep him from quickly learning the ropes of organizing, and rising through the ranks of labour leadership.

He took the reins at the BCFED during years of social, political and labour upheaval. He rose to that challenge, not only in BC but well outside our borders. He made our Federation a voice on issues like the Vietnam war,

nuclear testing and the California grape boycott. Facing off against the Socred government, he wrestled their draconian Mediation Commission Act to a stalemate until it could be repealed in 1972 by the new David Barrett government — a crowning victory as leader of the BCFED.

Nothing could have been more fitting for our 60th convention than to be blessed with the chance to honour Ray and hear from him one last time. The warmth and magnitude of delegates' cheering and their multiple ovations said a lot about his legacy — not to mention his undiminished ability to bring a thousand people to their feet.

Ray Haynes inspired us then, and he continues to inspire us today. Our deepest condolences to Ray's family and his many friends. And to Ray Haynes, our endless gratitude for sharing your dedication and solidarity with the workers of British Columbia and beyond throughout your life. We will miss you.

Find out more at bcfed.ca/news/releases/bcfed-pays-tribute-memory-ray-haynes and labourheritagecentre.ca/ray-haynes/



Left: Ray Haynes circa 1970 Photo: On the Ledge. Use by kind permission of the BC Labour Heritage Centre. Right: Ray and Sam Wiese at the 60th BCFED convention. Photo Josh Berson. Use by kind permission of the BCFED

BCFED pays tribute to the memory of Ray Haynes

Union members throughout BC are grieving the loss of long-time labour activist and leader Ray Haynes, president of the BCFED from 1966 to 1973. The BCFED today released the following statement from president Sussanne Skidmore and secretary-treasurer Hermender Singh-Kailley:

For seven decades, unions in BC have been able to count on Ray Haynes' passion, leadership and courage — not to mention his warmth and humour. Many of us are hurting at the thought he won't be here any more to give us his advice and, at times, gentle prodding.

Ray Haynes dove into the labour movement at a time when outright

New leaders of BC Federation of Labour

By Rob Cottingham, BCFED Director of Communications

Last November's BC Federation of Labour (BCFED) Convention saw two history-making moments with the acclamation of a new president and secretary-treasurer.

Sussanne Skidmore is the first out and queer president to lead the BCFED. And Hermender Singh Kailley, the new secretary-treasurer, is the first South Asian person to hold either of the two leading roles at the federation.

"Working people in British Columbia are confronting extraordinary challenges and opportunities. And we're facing them with extraordinary solidarity and unity," Sussanne said at the time. "We're honoured by the confidence this convention has placed in us."

"My union taught me to fight for workers' rights, and that's the fight I'm bringing to the BCFED," Hermender added. "Working people need a strong, united voice now more than ever."

Sussanne sees BC FORUM's work as closely paralleling that of the BCFED and its affiliates. "Solidarity doesn't end at some arbitrary age, or the moment you clock out of your last shift," she says. "A worker is a worker. And you should feel you're part of our movement for life."

Hermender agrees. "Whether you're retired or a worker nearing retirement, you deserve a strong voice speaking for you — and a route for staying active in the labour movement. That way, we can all make the most of the experience and knowledge that union members have gained over the years."

Sussanne Skidmore: Lifelong commitment to labour and political activism

Sussanne started her professional career as a financial assistance worker, and then a training analyst with the Ministry of Justice. Having spent a year as a UFCW 1518 member at a grocery store during



Sussanne Skidmore © BCFED - Photo Josh Berson



Sussanne Skidmore and Hermender Kailley accept nominations for president and secretary-treasurer. Photo: Josh Berson. Used with kind permission of the BCFED

high school, she joined the BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU) in 1997.

Early on, she saw the way unions can level the playing field for working people. She became her local's shop steward, and went on to hold nearly every elected position in the BCGEU, rising to the position of the union's executive vice president and serving as vice president of the North Central Labour Council.

She developed an appetite for activism outside the workplace as well,

taking on social justice and human rights issues. Active in both the provincial and federal New Democratic Party, she was the BC NDP candidate in the 2013 provincial election in Nechako Lakes, earning a respectable share of the vote in a heavily Liberal riding. She deepened her involvement with the NDP, eventually becoming treasurer of Canada's NDP — and a good friend of leader Jagmeet Singh — and vice-president of the provincial party.

With the election of John Horgan's new government, BC labour history came to a crossroads. Sussanne saw that moment as an historic opportunity to strengthen the province's union movement. Together, she and Laird Cronk ran for the leadership of the BCFED, and were acclaimed at the federation's 2018 convention.

The two of them formed a remarkable partnership, setting themselves an ambitious agenda of strengthening unity and solidarity in the labour

movement while they pressed successfully for progressive change through the provincial NDP government.

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sussanne presided over the administrative side of the BCFED as it became a (temporarily) virtual organization almost overnight. As secretary-treasurer, she also had to keep a close eye on BCFED finances as pandemic-related layoffs were cutting into union dues and the federation's income.

It was a measure of her and Cronk's success in navigating those challenges that they were re-elected by acclamation at the 2020 convention — the federation's first to be held completely online. In the summer of 2022, when Laird announced he would retire at the end of his term, Sussanne decided to join the race to succeed him. She was acclaimed as the BCFED president on November 24, 2022.

When not camping somewhere in BC, Sussanne lives in New Westminster with her partner Lisa Langevin, an electrician and union rep.

Hermender Singh Kailley: From the stage, to the docks, to labour leadership

It's probably for the best that Hermender never wrote that essay.

When he was in grade 11, the social studies teacher at his East Vancouver high school gave him an ultimatum: If he wanted to pass the course, he'd have to either write an essay... or spend a few hours working on a provincial election campaign.

The result: a teenage Hermender showed up at a Lower Mainland NDP campaign office, and started volunteering on what turned out to be a winning campaign. It was his first experience with progressive politics



Hermender Singh Kailley © BCFED - Photo Josh Berson

and the power of organization, and it planted the seeds for his later activism.

After high school, Hermender became an event technician — and while he loved the work, he hated the poor wages and working conditions he and his fellow workers had to endure. He joined them in organizing under the banner of IATSE Local 118. Negotiations weren't easy, but they paid off with wage increases of up to 22 per cent.

Eventually, a career change beckoned and Hermender became a dock worker, joining the ILWU Local 502 in 2004. Volunteering on the political action, grievance and credentials committees gave him a deep understanding of the issues facing the local's members. In 2018, he joined Local 502's executive board. The next year, he became secretary-treasurer, serving as well on the executive board of the New Westminster and District Labour Council.

A first-generation Canadian born to Punjabi parents, Hermender experi-

enced plenty of racism as a kid. He responded by trying to be as "un-Punjabi" as possible, and went by the name Hermen Kailley for decades.

But, he says, the labour movement's celebration of diversity and inclusion offered a sharp and hopeful contrast with his childhood experiences. He found himself with the space and support to champion progressive causes such as liveable wages, a good quality of life, safe and healthy workplaces and dignity in retirement.

In the summer of 2022, he joined Sussanne and launched his campaign to become the BCFED's secretary-treasurer. His election by acclamation led to one of the convention's most electrifying moments. In his acceptance speech, he announced that he was reclaiming his name; having run as Hermen Kailley, he would now be known as Hermender Singh Kailley.

Hermender, his wife Samantha and his four children make their home in South Vancouver.

Black leadership past & present: A legacy

By Aliza Nevarie, Advocate Editor

Warren Williams is president of the largest CUPE local in British Columbia, CUPE Local 15. He leads a membership of over 7000 drawn from 7 different sectors and 20 employers, including the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Parks Board, Vancouver School Board, cultural centres, universities and colleges such as Emily Carr and Vancouver Community College, community centres, and the healthcare sector. This complex and diverse membership are represented by an 18-member executive board, half of whom are racialized workers.

Warren is carrying on a family legacy of union leadership. His uncles Lee and Roy Williams were both union activists on the railways, working for CNR and CPR respectively.

North America's first Black union, the Order of the Sleeping Car Porters, was founded in Winnipeg, Warren's hometown. The OSCP came to be in response to discriminatory pay and working conditions by the Canadian National Railway (CNR), and exclusion from the Canadian Brotherhood of Railroad Employees, who only represented the interest of their white members.

Over the years, the OSCP and eventually also the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) representing Black porters employed by Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), made significant improvements to the working lives of Black railway porters, including wage increases, vacation time, overtime pay, and access to reserved berths to sleep. However, access to promotions was still out of reach, due to continued and persistent racism, and in spite of the enactment of the Canadian Fair Employment Practices Act of 1953.



Warren William ©CUPE 15



Warren Williams at CUPE BC convention ©CUPE BC



American Pullman Porter date unknown

It wasn't until 1963, after years of petitioning and advocacy by the Williams brothers and their fellow activists, that Prime Minister Pearson ordered the railway amalgamate the two collective agreements, creating one union and providing opportunities for advancement.

Lee Williams eventually became a Sleeping Car Conductor and later On Board Service Manager, both holding the highest level of authority on the railway. He also became president of the amalgamated union, a testament to his ability to lead and inspire.

For Warren, activism and social justice are family values, instilled in him during his childhood in Winnipeg and throughout his life. Growing up in the North End of the city, which was the poorest neighbourhood, he witnessed and experienced a lot of racism, something that still defines the city to this day.

Despite his uncles' experiences and continued discrimination on the railway, Warren began a career on the trains, eventually working his way up to the railway's most prestigious position, Dining Car Steward.

It was the railway that ultimately brought Warren to Vancouver in the late 70's. For Warren, Vancouver provided opportunity as a chef and a place to settle down and start a family. However, his innate leadership qualities and love of people drew him to working with youth as a counsellor and mentor, and eventually with the Vancouver School Board as an emergent intervention worker and for 15 years as an indigenous support worker.

After many years of activism in CUPE 15, Warren was elected as presi-

Spotlighting those in our community

By Judy Phipps, BCGEU Executive Vice President

Judy grew up in Burnaby and now resides on the unceded traditional territories of the Qayqayt First Nation, colonially known as the City of New Westminster.

Before becoming an EVP of the BCGEU, she worked at BCIT (British Columbia Institute of Technology) for some 24 years, which included working with students who had disabilities, and as an Administrative Assistant (support staff) to the Associate Dean of Broadcast and Media Communications, as well as Digital Arts. It was while working here that Judy became a BCGEU Shop Steward, which ultimately brought about her activism and the power of voice!

She was asked to sit on the BCIT Anti-Racism Working Group to promote change and policy, ensuring equity and inclusion for all who attended their campuses. But she didn't stop there. To fulfill one of the initiatives of the working group, she produced a video where two BCIT Alumni were interviewed to discuss their lived experiences in relation to anti-racism. And, with this video she created a partnership between her own department and BCIT's Diversity Circles in which the video was shared with the BCIT Community via webinars and further discussion and



Judy Phipps courtesy of Judy - Judy is wearing a T-shirt she and Stijn Daenen designed in recognition of Black Excellence



Judy Phipps at the 60th BCFED convention. ©BCFED. Photo Josh Berson

learning took place. For recognition of her work, Judy received the 2021 BCIT Inclusivity Award. The video can be watched here: commons.bcit.ca/news/2021/03/moving-forward-lets-talk-anti-racism/. She encourages you to watch this, learn and reflect. Judy has the following words to share directly with BC FORUM members, our families and friends:

"I was elected in June 2021 at BCGEU's Convention and am the first Black woman elected to the Executive Vice President seat in the history of the BCGEU. This was an extremely proud and humbling moment for me. This role has brought about many opportunities for me to use my voice in the union and our community. It has enabled me to speak out using my lived experiences to make change, as it relates to equity, diversity, inclusion and racism. The equitable treatment of all people is very important to me, fairness for all goes beyond my members.

In reflecting on Black History Month, please educate yourself. Invest some time learning about Black culture, Black historians and the contributions they've made to our society. Recognize them! Learning is lifelong and there are many contributions made by the Black community that have gone unnoticed. It's time to notice!"

dent in 2015, and is still going strong. Time and experience have gifted Warren wisdom and resilience. For Warren, In the fight against racism, still present and still persistent, one must not only advocate, agitate and fight, but also look inside and examine one's one prejudices.

If there is a Williams legacy, it is about recognition, for the labour of Black people, and the tremendous contributions of Black art and culture to Canadian life. In his own words:

"Food, music, clothing, language, sports, our Canadian Bill of Rights, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and

the Canadian Human Rights Act have all been influenced by Black Leaders across Canada who stood up, and in doing so, made life better for all Canadians.

Black History Month is a time for all of us to celebrate the many contributions if Black culture that have enhanced our society."

Delivering Community Power

By Marion Pollack, BC FORUM Director, CUPW

As seniors we may require a number of supports to age in place. One of these supports could be the letter carrier you see every day. A recent report from the National Institute of Ageing (NIA) has confirmed what postal workers have known for a very long time; your letter carrier could provide daily check in service for seniors and other vulnerable people.

This type of service is performed by letter carriers in other countries and has helped seniors stay in their homes, and provides peace of mind to the families and relatives of many seniors.

As part of its Delivering Community Power campaign the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has been advocating for such a program for many years. Now, this new study from the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) underscores the importance of implementing this as one more way to allow seniors to age in place.

Special delivery: how Canadian postal workers can help people age in place

The following section is a press release from the NIA. The full report can be found at nia-ryerson.ca, search: special delivery.

TORONTO, Jan. 27, 2023 —

Supporting Canada's growing population of older adults looking to live in their own homes and communities for as long as possible will require new ways of thinking about how to efficiently deliver home and community care services. One option Canada should further consider is turning to an organization that already knows a thing or two about making home visits: Canada Post.

Today the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) releases Special Delivery: How Canadian Postal Workers Could Better Enable Ageing in the Right Place,



a new policy report in its groundbreaking Ageing in the Right Place research series. The report looks to other jurisdictions where postal workers have been offering home supports for older adults for close to a decade — including Japan, France and the UK Channel Island of Jersey — to consider why and how this kind of service could be implemented in Canada.

Regular home visits for older adults can address several challenges that may prevent them from ageing in the right place, including social isolation and better managing health conditions that may worsen without regular monitoring. Postal workers are uniquely suited to offer these supportive visits: they travel door-to-door, even in rural and remote regions; their union has already proposed expanding their offerings to include community supports; a federal review has recommended implementing this as a way to make Canada Post more financially viable, and surveys show postal workers are one of the most trusted professions in Canada.

“With growing health care worker shortages and fewer family members and friends available to provide care and support for their loved ones as they

age, we need to look at other sources of potential support to better enable older Canadians age in the right place,” says Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Health Policy Research for the NIA. “Regular visits by postal workers could become a key preventive and supportive measure in Canada to allow for the early identification of health issues and facilitate the necessary care and support that can potentially allow more older Canadians to age with confidence in their own homes for as long as possible.

Postal services around the world have already begun experimenting with delivering at-home services and supports, ranging from brief check-ins to providing remote monitoring to rentals of supportive tech devices. This white paper examines three locations where these supports are offered in varying forms: Japan, France and Jersey.

“The three programs discussed in this report include different combinations of services, but all have shown substantial success in better enabling ageing in place while also increasing revenue for the postal services involved,” said Spencer Naylor, NIA Junior Research Fellow and lead author of the report. “Canada doesn’t have to start from scratch: we can draw on their experiences to develop a similar program that will meet this country’s unique needs.”

About the Ageing in the Right Place Research Series

This ground-breaking research series presents a practical framework to understand the concept of Ageing in the Right Place (AIRP) and what is required to make it work, and highlights existing best practices and new opportunities that can reduce unnecessary long-term care home admissions and better support the implementation of successful AIRP policies and programs across Canada and beyond.

(cont. from page 3)

BC FORUM will maintain its commitment to join forces with the BCFED in the battles to right the wrongs. We will support campaigns to increase paid sick days from 5 to 10; fight against the misclassification of employees as “independent workers” and look into the ever increasing “gig economy”. We will add our voice to the call to modernize WCB and reawaken that institution to the true compensation needs of injured workers. And, as ever, we will fight for a truly public healthcare system that meets the needs of all.

By no means is that where we leave off. In the next couple of months your BC FORUM board of directors and regional representatives will be looking to develop a strategic plan for the next couple of years. We will look to the BC Seniors Advocate report:

“BC Seniors Falling Further Behind” dated September 2022, to determine actions we can take to move forward the recommendations in that report. By taking the time to review the report and giving us your input you will not only be helping to plan future actions, you can be assured the BC FORUM is meeting the needs of its membership. The report can be found at: seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/falling-further-behind-income-and-affordability-gaps-of-b-c-seniors/

I have spoken a lot about firsts and new things; however, I must also acknowledge lasts. In particular, the passing of two long standing BC FORUM members.

Brother Terry Green, BC FORUM Representative to the South Okanagan Labour Council passed away on December 9, 2022. Our deepest

condolences to all family and friends and our sincerest thanks for his dedication to the labour movement and the continued support he provided BC FORUM.

We also mourn Brother Ray Haynes, BC FORUM Representative to the Sunshine Coast Labour Council. I knew Ray well and rather than try to give a tribute that would end up in me telling stories of how he affected my life, we have republished an article from the BC Federation of Labour. Again, heartfelt condolences to all family and friends.

My apologies that this is not exactly the upbeat note on which I would wish to close, however we must all take the time to thank those that devote time out of their lives in support of a better world for all. So to all activists past present and future, thank you.

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From the office of the Seniors Advocate

The following are a few highlights of news from the BC Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie. Full details can be found under the News tag on the website [Document seniorsadvocatebc.ca](https://seniorsadvocatebc.ca)

OSA Information and Referral Line

Do you have questions about seniors services in B.C.? Call our information and referral line to speak with our knowledgeable staff about health care, housing, income supports, transportation and community supports. Contact us at 1-877-952-3181 or info@seniorsadvocatebc.ca.

Home Support Review

In February, the Office of the Seniors Advocate will release a second comprehensive review of British Columbia's Home Support program. The report includes results from a survey of public home support clients in the province and their family caregivers.

Free Income Tax Clinics

Do you need help with your tax return? If you have a modest income and a simple tax situation, volunteers at a free tax clinic may be able to complete your tax return for you. Search for free tax clinics in your community on the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website. Tax clinics for 2023 will be added continuously over the next few months. The income tax filing deadline for most Canadians is April 30.

Seeking Your Opinion on Cancer Care for B.C. Seniors

The Cancer and Aging Research Engagement team is seeking feedback on improving cancer care for older adults in B.C. The team is surveying anyone who has/had cancer as a senior (65+) or cared for a senior with cancer in either a personal or professional capacity. This project is a collaboration

with the UBC School of Nursing and BC Cancer. For questions, contact kristen.haase@ubc.ca or call 604-827-0979.

Free Safety Workshops

The Council of Seniors Citizens of BC is offering a series of free online workshops through their Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute on seniors' safety throughout February. Workshops cover important topics for older adults such as falls prevention, frauds and scams, emergency preparedness and more.

COVID-19 & Flu Shots

The Province is continuing to roll out COVID-19 booster shots. Everyone five years and older is encouraged to get a booster six months following their last dose. Adults 18+ and high-risk youth aged 12-17 can receive a new bivalent vaccine. Vaccination invitations are available through the Province's Get Vaccinated System. People six months and older are eligible for free flu shots and free enhanced vaccines are available to seniors. You can also book your flu shot through the Get Vaccinated System. COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests Free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests are available to people of all ages at B.C. pharmacies. No ID is required. If you are concerned about exposure to COVID-19, please consider asking people you will be in close contact with to take a rapid test before your visit.

Long-Term Care update

Most provincial visiting restrictions have been lifted at long-term care facilities in B.C. however guests should check with individual care homes before visiting. Non-essential visitors must continue to provide proof of vaccination and a negative rapid antigen test, which may be taken at home up to 48 hours before the visit, or on arrival at the facility. Updated documentation on provincial rules and restrictions is now available online.

Monitoring Seniors Services

In December, the Office of the Seniors Advocate released the 8th edition of the annual Monitoring Seniors Services report. The report focused on 2021/22 data on services available to seniors in the areas of health care, housing, transportation, community supports and safety.

Volunteer Opportunities - OSA Long-Term Care Survey

While the OSA Long-Term Care Survey is well underway, there will still be many volunteer opportunities available across the province between January and March. Sign up to become a volunteer surveyor and engage with residents in meaningful conversations about their quality of life in long-term care homes. Are you fluent in German, Italian, Korean, Punjabi, Cantonese, or Mandarin? We are looking for bilingual surveyors to interview residents in their preferred language.

Canada Housing Benefit

The one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit from the federal government aims to help low income renters with the cost of their monthly rent. This new benefit is tax-free and provides a one time payment of \$500 to eligible applicants.

New Parliamentary Secretary

Premier David Eby has appointed MLA Harwinder Sandhu as the new Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care. She is the MLA for Vernon-Monashee and brings experience as a registered nurse and patient care coordinator to the role. OSA looks forward to working with her as she tackles the many urgent issues facing B.C. seniors. Thanks to former Parliamentary Secretary Mable Elmore for her work and we wish her well in her new appointment.

From Minister of Seniors Kamal Khera

The following is the latest update from the Honourable Kamal Khera, Minister of Seniors.

What a start to the New Year it has been! January proved to be a busy month, full of announcements, meetings and planning for the year ahead!

On January 31, Minister Duclos and I were pleased to welcome the publication of long-term care standards developed by the CSA Group and the Health Standards Organization (HSO). It was an important day and another milestone in the effort to improve the quality of care provided to residents and families in LTC. Every senior in Canada deserves to live in dignity, safety and comfort, regardless of which province or territory they call home.

As we enter February, we also prepare to celebrate and commemorate Black History Month. This is a time to honour the legacy of Black Canadians, past and present, and to recognize the significant contributions they have and continue to make to our country. Find out more about how we fund many Black Canadian organizations and communities through the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

We know that one of the top issues is the challenges that seniors continue to face with global inflation, which is raising the costs of basic necessities. Over the past year our government introduced concrete, targeted measures to help Canadian seniors who need it most. Our Government has doubled the GST which put an average of an additional \$225 in

the pockets of Canadian seniors, and delivering a \$500 one-time top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit to support low-income renters.

As Minister of Seniors, I am committed to ensuring that seniors from coast to coast to coast have access to the supports they need. Additionally, as tax season is approaching, I encourage you to take the time to read about what you could claim on your income tax and benefit return and the benefits and credits available to seniors as well as information on free income tax clinics you can visit to help you file your taxes.

For complete and regular updates from the Minister of Seniors you can sign up for the newsletter on line at - Canada.ca search: updates from the Minister of Seniors

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RETIRE BETTER WORK UNION

Retirees are the foundation of everything we do.

FEEL THE POWER



GOOD NEWS

The power of the people scores a win

By Sam Wiese, BC FORUM President

If ever you felt that the “power of the people” and the effects of lobbying were insignificant, you need only look to the path taken by Bill C-228 to set those doubts to rest.

On February 3, 2022 during the first session of the 44th Parliament, Conservative MP Marilyn Gladu introduced a private members' bill, Bill C-228-An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act and the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985 Short title: Pension Protection Act Bill. During a period in which private members' bills rarely get past second reading in the House of Commons, Bill c-228 not only did so, but did swiftly and by a vote of 323 to 1 (with the individual voting nay later said he was mistaken) at second reading on June 22, 2022.

The bill then spent a few weeks under committee where it and its proposed amendments were studied. Once returned to the House of Commons (with no amendments) the third reading resulted in a unanimous vote of support on November 23, 2022. From its elevation to the Senate, holiday break, to its study by the Senate Banking, Commerce and Economy Committee (BANC), where it was passed unanimously, it was returned to the Senate on February 16, 2023. Less than a year from its original introduction in the House this bill which is so important to the security of pensions is well on its way to receiving royal assent and to becoming law.

All this would not have happened without the constant pressure being maintained by seniors and their advocates. It has been the voices of millions of elder Canadians and affiliates such as the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), National Pensioners Federation (NPF), the Canadian Federation of Pensioners (CFP), BC FORUM and thousands of senior serving community organizations diligently lobbying government that has brought Bill C-228 this far.

While we all deserve accolades, the fight is not over. We must maintain the pressure to ensure that those loud voices of the financial institutions; who forecast the doom of pensions should all the money therein be protected; do not overtake those of all who have paid into and now fight for the security of said pensions.

Bill C-228 has crossed over parliamentary party lines. Let's continue to show our senators and members of Parliament that we too shall always forego political leanings and biases to ensure Canadians deserve to retire with dignity and financial security.



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We are proud to extend this coverage to members' spouses at the low cost of \$5 per year. All you have to do is check the appropriate box when you apply or renew your membership. BC FORUM's AD&D coverage is valid until you reach age 86, the maximum age we were able to negotiate.



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Membership: ☐ Application ☐ Renewal ☐ New address

Name: _____

LAST FIRST INITIAL

[illegible]

Phone: | | | || | | | | | **E-mail:** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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Spouse's name: |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_| **Spouse's birth date:*** |_|_| DAY |_|_| MONTH |_|_| YEAR

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* Required for Accidental Death & Dismemberment group insurance coverage to age 86.
* Credit card companies now require the CVV for payment to be processed.

Time to fight for Canadian Telecom Jobs

By Denise Chisholm, BC FORUM Director, USW

& Scott Lunny, Director, USW District 3

It's been 17 years since a bitter labour dispute saw thousands of Telus workers locked out and the company deploy every union-busting tactic in the books from harassment and intimidation on the picket lines to importing thousands of scabs from across Canada and the United States. Despite the best efforts of the Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU), the 5-month dispute ended with the loss of significant contract language gained over decades with B.C. Tel.

The dispute left the TWU financially challenged and with a divided membership for years. Telus exploited the disarray they left the union in with two more concessionary rounds of bargaining. The company has exploited language from the 2005 agreement to offshore thousands of Canadian jobs. In fact, over the last six years alone, Telus has reduced its workforce by 5,000 unionized jobs leaving the union's membership at just 7,000. Members simply have had enough, and I think Telus customers and Canadians have too.

That is why, in 2014, TWU members overwhelmingly voted to join the United Steelworkers (USW) with the hope of building a stronger future for their members. As a result of the merger, USW Local 1944 was charted.

Now, following more than a year of negotiations, Telus continues to seek concessions despite making billions. Telus CEO Darren Entwistle took home nearly \$20 million in total compensation in 2021. The company has once again walked away from the negotiating table, reiterating that they have no desire to move off major



concessions including demands to shut down the B.C. Telecommunication Workers Pension Plan to new entrants to make it easier to lower contribution rates for remaining employees in the plan.

USW Local 1944 members recently rejected a final offer from Telus. Members know that they deserve better than what Telus is offering, especially during a time when the company continues to make strong profits.

These workers need your support to stand up against Telus in what will likely be escalating job action this spring.

The members are now stronger and more united than ever.

Now is the time to rise up. This is a fight for unionized Telecom Canadian jobs and to protect the proud history and legacy built by B.C. Tel workers, the TWU and all of the retirees.

Please take action by attending rallies and events to support USW Local 1944 members. If there is a strike or lockout, you will be able to attend picket lines across the province as there are Telus compounds in almost every community. Write letters to your Members of Parliament regarding the affordability of your phone, internet and TV services and your displeasure with how Telus is profiting off of you and disrespecting its unionized workers. Show your support on social media and share your stories and experiences on what you gained from supporting your union and rising up for your rights on the job.

Knowledge is power. Solidarity is strength. You may have retired from the job, but I know you haven't given up the fight. Thank you for rising up and supporting USW Local 1944 members.

New address? New e-mail address?

Please send your new address and e-mail address to BC FORUM. You can mail in the form on page 15, or you can reach us by telephone at 1.800.896.5678 (toll free) or 604.688.4565; or by email at bcforum@bcfed.ca.



Please check the expiry date on your label. Is your membership due for renewal?
