

Advocate

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

Vol. 27 No. 3, Summer 2024

**HANDYDART
DRIVERS STRIKE**

**Make it
count on
October 19**

UNIDOP

**LABOUR DAY
HIGHLIGHTS**

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THE ADVOCATE

In this edition

Welcome to the Fall 2024 edition of the Advocate! October 19 is election day in British Columbia, and we are here to share information on how you can vote, why you should vote, and who it is that will support workers and seniors over the next four years (P.S. It's not the Conservatives). Striking HandyDART workers rally for better working conditions, and we celebrate the UN International Day of Older Persons and Labour Day as well as acknowledge the loss of two great union activists. Please enjoy this members only edition of The Advocate.

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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.

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Labour Day: A senior's perspective on progress and the path forward

By Sam Wiese, BC FORUM President

I find myself writing these words to all of you on the eve of Labour Day, reflecting on what we have accomplished since Labour Day 2023 and how much there is yet to do. The obvious and, in my mind, most important task we have over the next few weeks is to protect the progress we've made since June 29, 2017, when a non-confidence vote overturned the Liberal government, and John Horgan became our premier. Since that time, we have seen so many improvements to the legislated acts which dictate how we work and live in our beautiful province. I abhor the slightest thought of the immediate U-turn Rustad and the BC Conservatives would take.

As someone who has lived through numerous political shifts, I cannot help but feel a deep sense of appreciation for how far we've come over these last few years. The advancements in healthcare, the protection of workers' rights, and the improvements in social services have all had a direct impact on the lives of British Columbians, especially for seniors like us. The implementation of policies that prioritize the welfare of citizens has given many of us a renewed sense of hope and security in our later years.

Take healthcare, for instance. Under NDP leadership, we've witnessed significant strides in reducing wait times, increasing accessibility, and ensuring that our most vulnerable are cared for. Yes, there is still way more to be accomplished but I've already seen firsthand the difference these changes have made—not only for myself but for countless others in our communities who rely on these essential services. The thought of these gains being reversed is not just concerning, it's terrifying, and Rustad has openly stated, and appears to boast about,



his plan to slash the healthcare budget by millions.

Equally important is the progress in housing and affordability. The measures taken to address the housing crisis have been long overdue. Many of us seniors have seen our neighbourhoods change dramatically, with skyrocketing housing costs making it difficult for younger generations to stay in the communities where they grew up. The current government has worked to tackle these challenges, but there is still much to be done. The idea that this progress could be undone by a government that prioritizes corporate interests over people is unacceptable.

Beyond these immediate concerns, it's the values and principles behind the policies that matter most. The shift we've seen since 2017 represents a commitment to fairness, equity, and a belief that government can and should play a role in improving the lives of its

citizens. It's about recognizing that we are all part of a shared community, and that our government has a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us.

The Labour Day holiday reminds us of the power of collective action, of the progress that can be made when people come together with a common purpose. It's a day that honors the contributions of workers and highlights the importance of ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live with dignity. As we reflect on how far we've come, we must also recognize the threats that lie ahead.

It's easy to take progress for granted, especially when it seems like a natural extension of where we are today. But history has shown us time and again that progress is fragile, and that the gains we've made can be lost if we are not vigilant. The upcoming weeks will be crucial in determining the future of our province. We must stand firm in our commitment to protecting the progress we've made, and we must ensure that the next generation inherits a province that is more just, more compassionate, and more prosperous than the one we grew up in.

This issue of *The Advocate* has been produced exclusively for BC FORUM members, and includes the "Check the Record" fact sheet from the BC Federation of Labour. There are many issues that are specific to BC Seniors, we know what they are, we live them every day.

As your president, I urge every member to remember that the choices we make today will impact not only us but also our children and grandchildren. Let's continue the work we've started, protect the progress we've made, and keep moving forward toward a brighter future for all.

UN International Day of Older Persons

By Agnes Jackman, BC FORUM Director, HSA

Once again, the October 1st United Nations International Day of Older Persons approaches. The 2024 theme for the UNIDOP is "Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide".

Population ageing is a major global trend reshaping societies worldwide. Life expectancy at birth now exceeds 75 years in half of the world's countries, 25 years longer than in 1950. By 2030, older persons are projected to outnumber youth globally, with this increase most rapid in developing countries. The UN event, held in New York, will bring together experts to discuss policies, legislation, and practices that strengthen care and support systems for older persons. It will highlight the urgent need to expand training and educational opportunities in geriatrics and gerontology, address the global shortage of care workers, and recognize the diverse contributions of caregivers. You can watch the proceeding on YouTube by searching UNIDOP or, if you are an energetic early bird, you can register to participate at <https://bit.ly/register-unidop2024>.

About UNIDOP

On December 14, 1990, the United Nations General Assembly recognized October 1st as the International day of Older Persons. This day was observed for the first time on October 1st, 1991. The day is celebrated annually to recognize the contributions of older persons and to examine issues that affect our lives.

Here are some suggestions as to how one can acknowledge and celebrate the UNIDOP.



Photo credit to Jaddy Liu via Unsplash

Educate yourself

Learn about issues facing older persons and how you can help make a difference in their lives. A good source of information can be found online on the UN site for "The Decade of Healthy Aging" (2021 to 2030). There are several other websites such as

- BC Federation of Retired Union Members: bcforum.ca
- Office of the Senior's Advocate: www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca
- The National Institute on Ageing: niageing.ca
- Canadian Coalition Against Ageism (CCAA): ccaageism.ca
- Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC: coscobe.org
- Congress of Union Retirees of Canada: unionretiree.ca
- National Pensioners Federation: nationalpensionersfederation.ca

Volunteer

Offer your time to assist older persons in your community through local programs or organizations. Another option is the personal one-to-one approach by supporting a senior you know who could do with your caring assistance.

Raise awareness

Use social media to share information about the importance of this day and the contributions of older persons.

Advocate for rights

Engage in advocacy efforts to promote policies that protect the rights and well-being of older individuals.

Host events

Organize community events, such as health fairs, workshops, or social gatherings to celebrate and support older persons. If time is too short to organize anything for this year, start planning for October 1, 2025!

Share with others

If you take part in activities for IDOP, We would love to know! Send along your photos and a brief explanation so that we might share them in our next edition of The Advocate and on our website.

Agnes Jackman is BC FORUM Board of Directors Member for Health Sciences Association of BC, BC FORUM Representative to VDLC and the BC Health Coalition, BC FORUM Delegate to the Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC (COSCO), and COSCO Member-at-Large

HandyDART strike! Labour stands in solidarity with ATU members on the line



HandyDART drivers began their legal strike action with a rally on September 3.

Hundreds of HandyDART workers, represented by Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) 1724 and president Joe McAnn, were supported in walking the line by the solidarity of ATU International and the B.C. labour movement.

ATU Canada President John Di Nino, ATU International President John Costa, BCFED President Sussanne Skidmore, BCFED affiliated unions such as ILWU, PSAC, BCGEU, CUPE BC, HSA, the NWDLC and our own BC FORUM President Sam Wiese, were there to show support.

HandyDART riders, those whose clients depend on HandyDART services, community and union representatives alike fed the positivity with energetic union rallying calls and heartfelt words of support.

You can do your part by sending a letter to Transdev, the multinational corporation that runs HandyDART. Complete the form online at www.bit.ly/handydartfaircontract

To find out more about the issues facing HandyDART drivers, check out the Summer 2023 edition of The Advocate: bcforum.ca/2023/06/advocate-summer-2023/



Above: Sam Wiese and John Di Nino

Below: Sussanne Skidmore and John Di Nino



Sad news: Farewell to two great activists

It is with great sadness that we share news of the passing of two great union activists.

Jessie Uppal

From the USW, shared with kind permission of Scott Lunny, Director, USW District 3.

Regretfully and with great sadness we are informing you that USW staff representative, Jessie Uppal, has passed away. We were informed that Jessie passed away peacefully at her home in Vancouver.

Jessie has been a valued member of the USW staff in District 3 for over a decade. Prior to that she worked, as a USW member, for many years for the British Columbia Federation of Labour. She was a lifelong New Democrat, including time working for the BC NDP government in the 1990s.



Jessie was a co-worker, colleague and friend. She will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by everyone that knew her.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends during this difficult time.

Borys Lessy

On July 29, 2024 Brother Borys Lessy of UA Local 170 succumbed to cancer. Borys, known for his stalwart support of “workers on the shop floor”, was a leader in the successful transition of jobs for his fellow CAIMAW members when Western Canada Steel shut down in the late 1980’s. Only after his work to have retraining secured for others did Borys address his own needs and enroll in the plumbing program at BCIT. As a Red Seal ticketed plumber his strong union beliefs, wisdom and true caring nature took him along the path to his final position as Business Manager, Metal Trades Division UA 170, from which he retired just last year. Our hearts go out to his loved ones. Brother, you will be missed.

UNITED STEELWORKERS SOAR STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

Who are we?

We are 10,000 strong, retired steelworkers and partners, organized in 34 local chapters across Canada.

What do we do?

We work collaboratively with other seniors’ groups to improve our communities and engage in political and educational activities to enhance the well-being of our members.

Can you join?

Yes, if you can agree with and support the guiding principles and programs of SOAR. Annual dues are reasonable at \$12 for individual membership and \$15 for a couple.

Ready to join?

Contact District 3 SOAR Coordinator Brian Harder at 604-341-6382 or visit usw.ca/soar.



How you can vote on October 19

The following information has been compiled from the Elections BC website.

Elections BC is encouraging voters to get ready for the provincial election scheduled for October 19 by making sure their voter registration is up to date. They can do this by visiting elections.bc.ca/register or calling 1-800-661-8683.

Elections BC has mailed voter registration notices to residents across the province. These list the voters registered at the recipient address and ask the residents of that address to register or update their information as necessary.

The notices also list the voter's new electoral district. There will be 93 electoral districts for the 2024 provincial election, up from 87 from 2020. To find your electoral district enter your residential address at My District 2024 (elections.bc.ca).

Register to vote

To register to vote in British Columbia, you must be:

- a Canadian citizen,
- 18 or older,
- a B.C. resident for the past six months, and
- not disqualified from voting.

If you meet these criteria, registration is easy! You can register or update your information:

- by phone at 1-800-661-8683 (Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
- online at eregister.electionsbcc.gov.bc.ca/ovr/welcome.aspx#
- by mail, fax or email by completing and submitting the application to update or register to vote that is available from Elections BC or Service BC locations.
- in person at a registration drive or at the Elections BC office at #100 – 1112 Fort St, Victoria, BC, V8V 3K8.



Registering in advance has many benefits. Registered voters will receive important updates from Elections BC after an election is called, including information about where, when and how to vote. It also makes the voting process faster and easier.

How to vote

B.C.'s next provincial election is scheduled for Saturday, October 19, 2024. Changes to B.C.'s election legislation in 2019 and 2023 mean new voting processes and technology will be used to administer the election.

Networked laptops will be used to look up voters and cross them off the voters list, instead of paper lists. This reduces line-ups, makes the voting process more efficient and helps voters vote at any voting place.

Electronic tabulators will be used to count paper ballots. Tabulators are accurate, secure and efficient. They help us report results quickly on election night.

These changes mean that almost all ballots in the election will be counted on election night. There used to be a delay of up to 2 weeks to complete the manual, paper-based checks that were required. The new voting process

and the networked laptops allow us to perform these integrity checks much faster—almost in real-time.

The new voting processes also help us provide better service to voters voting outside of their electoral district as well as voters with disabilities.

Accessible voting

Elections BC wants elections to be accessible to all voters, no matter what their needs are, and have services for voters with disabilities or underlying health conditions to help them vote.

To find out if you qualify and what services are offered visit: elections.bc.ca/2024-provincial-election/outreach-and-education/voting-accessibility/

Vote by mail

Voting by mail is available to all voters. There are no special eligibility requirements.

Vote-by-mail package requests can be made online, by phone or in-person at a district electoral office.

Elections BC must receive your completed vote-by-mail package no
(cont. on page 10)

CHECK THE RECORD. MAKE THE CHOICE.



This October, vote for workers

This document was produced for BCFED affiliated members and not for public distribution.
* Note from BC FORUM: This statement was produced before BCUP merged with the BC Conservatives, however, they remain the same bad actions and policies.

Here's the record.

HOUSING FOR WORKING FAMILIES — OR PROTECTING RICH SPECULATORS?

BCNDP

- Building thousands of new homes with BC Builds.
[Source: [Government of BC News Release](#)]
- Returned more than 20,000 rental units to the market in Metro Vancouver through the Speculation and Vacancy Tax.
[Source: [Government of BC News Release](#)]
- Protected rent control so tenants don't get shock rent hikes
[Source: [Government of BC News Release](#)]

BC Conservatives

- Voted against the Speculation and Vacancy Tax (Bill 45 2018)
[Source: [Legislature of BC recorded votes](#)]
- Voted against restrictions on AirBnB and short-term rentals (Bill 35, 2023)
[Source: [Legislature of BC recorded votes](#)]

BCUP

- Voted against the Speculation and Vacancy Tax (Bill 45 2018)
[Source: [Legislature of BC recorded votes](#)]
- Voted against restrictions on AirBnB and short-term rentals (Bill 35, 2023)
[Source: [Legislature of BC recorded votes](#)]
- Opposed rent control measures
[Source: [Nicola Wealth Real Estate Panel](#)]

INVESTING IN PUBLIC HEALTH CARE — OR PRIVATIZING IT?

BCNDP

- Ended 20 years of privatization, bringing more than 4,000 hospital workers back into the public sector
[Source: [HEU](#)]
- Attracted more than 700 new family doctors to BC between 2023 and 2024
[Source: [CBC](#)]

BC Conservatives

- Leader was part of government that tore up contract with hospital and care home workers, leading to massive layoffs and privatization
[Source: [The Tyee](#)]
- Still pushing for more for-profit health care
[Source: [Kelowna Capital News](#)]

BCUP

- Fired thousands of health care workers — mostly women — through the contracting out of hospital services. "Those workers were invited to reapply for their jobs at half the wages by the corporations that won lucrative service contracts"
[Source: [HEU](#)]
- Want more for-profit health care
[Source: [This is VANCOLOUR](#)]

SAVING YOU MONEY — OR COSTING YOUR FAMILY MORE?

BCNDP

- Ended bridge tolls, saving families an estimated \$1,500 every year
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]
- Scrapped MSP premiums, a tax cut that's saving people \$900 and saving families \$1,800 every year
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]
- Delivered reforms to fix public auto insurance, saving drivers 20% on average
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]

BC Conservatives

- Part of the BC Liberal government that introduced tolls on the Port Mann bridge
[Source: [Langley Advance Times](#)]
- Part of the BC Liberal government that routinely increased MSP premiums
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]
- Opposed to ICBC reforms
[Source: [Vic News](#), [BC Conservatives](#)]

BCUP

- Put in bridge tolls for crossing the Fraser River, costing families an average \$1,500 every year
[Source: [Langley Advance Times](#)]
- Part of the BC Liberal government that routinely increased MSP premiums
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]
- Against eliminating bridge tolls
[Source: [Daily Hive](#)]

FIGHTING FOR WORKERS — OR BIG CORPORATIONS?

BCNDP

- Delivered higher wages for workers by raising the minimum wage to \$17.40
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]
- Passed a law to guarantee the minimum wage keeps up with inflation – every year
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]

BC Conservatives

- Were part of the Christy Clark government that froze the minimum wage for 10 years
[Source: [Georgia Straight](#)]
- Opposed increase in minimum wage
[Source: [Burns Lake Lakes District News](#)]
- Voted against removing barriers to workers who want to join a union (Bill 10 2022)
[Source: [Legislative Assembly of BC](#)]

BCUP

- Against minimum wage increases
[Source: [BC Liberal leadership debate](#)]
- Hospital contracting out led to lower wages and no pensions for hospital workers
[Source: [HEU Report](#)]
- Brought in massive tax cuts for corporations and wealthy individuals, paid for by slashing services for working people
[Source: [The Tyee](#)]

SAFER WORKPLACES — OR RISKING YOUR SAFETY?

BCNDP

- Strengthened child labour laws and protected young people from doing dangerous jobs
[Source: [CBC News](#)]
- Protected asbestos workers with stricter laws and controls for asbestos abatement
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]
- Introduced laws and reforms improving workers' compensation
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]

BC Conservatives

- Were part of the government that slashed benefits for injured workers
[Source: [Workers' Compensation Board, Workers Compensation System Review](#)]
- Voted against ensuring BC workers have five days of paid sick leave (Bill 13 2021)
[Source: [Legislative Assembly of BC](#)]

BCUP

- Slashed benefits to injured workers and made it harder for them to get help
[Source: [Workers' Compensation Board, Workers Compensation System Review](#)]
- Weakened child labour protections, allowing 12-year-olds to work in most jobs
[Source: [CCPA-BC](#)]
- Voted against ensuring BC workers have five days of paid sick leave, and opposed to increasing it
[Source: Kevin Falcon [BC Liberal leadership debate](#)]

BETTER SCHOOLS OR OVER-CROWDED CLASSROOMS?

BCNDP

- Hired more than 4,000 teachers
- Invested \$7.3 billion in K-12 to fund more EAs in classrooms and better support for students with special needs
- Committed \$3.1 billion for new, expanded and upgraded schools and playgrounds
Source (three preceding bullets): [BC Budget 2022-23](#)
- Helped keep kids safe by banning protests on school property.
[Source: [Government of BC](#)]

BC Conservatives

- Opposed funding to build and upgrade new schools across the province
[Source: [Legislature of BC Votes - Budget 2022-23](#)]
- Opposed a plan to protect students from protesters on school property (Bill 22 2024)
[Source: [Legislature of BC Votes](#)]
- Will make class sizes even bigger in BC schools by recklessly removing portables without building new schools
[Source: [CTV News Vancouver](#)]

BCUP

- Eliminated 3,500 teaching positions and made class sizes increase while waging a 14-year battle with teachers in the courts (which they lost).
[Source: [Vancouver Sun](#)]
- Closed 190 schools when in government
[Source: [Vancouver Sun](#)]

This document was produced for BCFED affiliated members and not for public distribution.



Make your choice.
This October, vote for workers.

CheckTheRecord.ca

VOTING

(cont. from page 7)

earlier than September 21 and no later than 8 p.m. (Pacific time) on Saturday, October 19, 2024. Packages that arrive early or late cannot be counted.

Ballots listing the candidates for the provincial general election will be available after candidate nominations close. If you request a vote-by-mail package on or before September 28, 2024, you will receive a write-in ballot with a blank space to write the name of a candidate or political party. If you request a package after September 28, 2024, your ballot will list the candidates for your electoral district.

Vote at any district electoral office

Once the election is called you will be able to vote at any district electoral office in the province. The election is scheduled to be called on Saturday, September 21, 2024. District electoral

offices are being identified and will be published on the Elections BC website when available.

Voting in the district electoral office will be available from when the election is called until 4 p.m. on Final Voting Day (October 19, 2024).

Vote in advance

There will be six days of advance voting during B.C.'s next provincial election. Advance voting will be available October 10-13 and October 15-16, 2024 (advance voting will be closed Monday, October 14, for Thanksgiving). Advance voting places are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time.

You don't need a special reason to vote at advance voting – it's an option for all eligible voters. If you haven't registered before, or your information is out of date, you may register or update when you vote.

Vote on Final Voting Day

Final Voting Day for the 2024 Provincial General Election is scheduled for Saturday, October 19, 2024. Voting places will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Pacific time). Voting places are being confirmed and will be published when available at elections.bc.ca/2024-provincial-election/ways-to-vote.

Vote anywhere

During the election, voting places will be listed on Elections BC's website, on Where to Vote cards sent to registered voters, and published in community newspapers throughout B.C. You can also call Elections BC during an election to find out where to vote.

B.C. has a "vote anywhere" model, which means you may vote at any voting place.




Strong. Proud. United.

HEU: A powerful team to have on your side.

HEU is the union of choice for B.C. health care workers.



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 @HospEmpUnion

 heu.org



Labour Day highlights

Involvement in Labour Day activities doesn't have to be restrictive as was demonstrated by BC FORUM's Sam Wiese who had the BC FORUM information and display table set up closest to the playground so she was able to keep an eye on her grandson playing with the hundreds of other children who came with their families to celebrate. All day long the sheer enjoyment seen on the children's faces was testament to the fact that organized labour does so much for so many more than just "the worker". Imagine a world in which Labour Day was everyday!

Clockwise from top left:

- 1) Agnes Jackman, BC FORUM Director, HSA; Lori Travis, President, SOAR Chapter 3-14.
- 2) The People of Steel: Dayna Sykes, USW District 3, Education Officer; Scott Lunny, President, USW District 3; Lori Travis, President SOAR Chap. 3-14
- 3) Retired and still strong: Leona Kingston, PSAC-AU; Bob Kingston, PSAC-AU President; Lori Travis, USW; Sam Wiese, Patti Ducharme, PSAC NEVP.
- 4) Kane Tse, President, HSA & Karen Ranaletta, President, CUPE BC, visit the tent with Sam Wiese,
- 5) PSAC through the generations – 40 years of activism: Sam Wiese, Shane Pollack, Jamey Mills and Jennifer Horsely.



From the Office of the Seniors Advocate

The following are a few highlights from the BC Seniors Advocate, Dan Levitt and relevant BC Government press releases. For full details search Seniors Advocate – Government of British Columbia (seniorsadvocatebc.ca)

Seniors' Forgotten Rights

On July 4, 2024 the OSA posted its report Forgotten Rights; Seniors Not Afforded Rent Protection and urged the provincial government to act quickly and enforce the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) to protect the 30,000 B.C. seniors in retirement homes from illegal rent increases and evictions.

The report; which can be read in full at www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/forgotten-rights-seniors-not-afforded-equal-rent-protection; makes two recommendations:

- The government take immediate steps to ensure the RTB (Board) consistently enforces the RTA in recognizing seniors living rental units are covered by the RTA as are any service fees they pay that are a requirement to rent their unit.
- The government review the practices, capacity and expertise of the RTB to address the issues raised in this report regarding the intimidation and vulnerability many seniors feel when trying to address legitimate residential tenancy issues with both the RTB and landlords.

The following week, on July 11th, a follow up release by the OSA was issued which read, in part:

“On July 4, my office released a report calling on the provincial government to enforce the rent and service cost protections in the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) for seniors in independent living facing often exorbitant fee increases.

“I am very pleased to have received written confirmation that the B.C. government agrees seniors



independent living units are subject to the RTA. It also recognizes that both rent and mandatory service fees are subject to annual limits on rent increases, which need to be enforced consistently.

A letter from the Ministry of Housing states:

“...services or facilities that the tenant is required to receive and that they cannot opt out of would form part of the tenancy agreement. In these cases, the costs associated with the services and facilities would be captured under 'rent' and would be subject to the rent increase provisions under the RTA, even if the services and facilities and their costs are set out under a separate agreement. Similarly, these services and facilities could only be terminated or restricted in accordance with the RTA.”

“The RTB is updating its policy guidelines to clarify that independent living is covered by the RTA, even in residences where independent living and assisted living units are co-located. In addition, we welcome your Office’s suggestions on how to best educate and communicate with seniors in independent living and housing providers about their rights and responsibilities under the RTA.”

“I was also pleased to see that the ministry will take steps to implement my recommendation to improve the RTB complaint process to reduce intimidation and vulnerability faced by many seniors when raising legitimate tenancy issues.”

OSA 2023/24 Annual Report Released

The 2023/24 fiscal year was one of transition for the Office of the Seniors Advocate as Canada’s first seniors advocate, Isobel Mackenzie, retired after setting up the office in 2014. Read the OSA 2022-2023 Annual Report for highlights of our activities in the past year and details about projects that are currently underway.

The report is available at: www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/current-issues/osa-2023-24-annual-report-released.

Seniors Housing Strategy

The Vancouver City Council has unanimously approved a comprehensive Seniors Housing Strategy to address the urgent need for more housing options and supports for older adults. This strategy marks Vancouver’s first dedicated effort to address the unique housing needs of its ageing population.

Find out more at www.shapeyourcity.ca/seniors-housing.

New homes for seniors around B.C.

Seniors in Saanich are moving into 100 new affordable rental homes with the completion of the Linwood Court redevelopment. Linwood Court homes are for seniors 55 and older with low to moderate incomes who can live independently. The new building is designed so that residents can age in place.

Seniors and young people in Terrace will benefit from a new mixed-use

development under construction that will include 43 affordable rental homes and a Foundry centre.

People in Richmond are one step closer to accessing new long-term care (LTC) beds and community support services with the posting of a request for proposals (RFP) for a construction manager for the new Richmond Lions Manor-Fentiman campus of care. It is expected the construction manager will be chosen by fall 2024 and construction is anticipated to begin in 2026.

Seniors in the Comox Valley now have access to an innovative long-term care home, Providence Living at The Views, as residents begin moving in on Monday, July 8, 2024.

Providence Living at The Views, located at 211 Rodello St., Comox, is Canada's first public, non-profit long-term care home based on the concepts of a dementia village: a small-scale community designed to promote a

sense of belonging and purpose for residents through autonomy and community engagement.

“As the population of B.C. ages rapidly, our government is dedicated to ensuring that seniors are well supported within their communities,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “By investing in transformative long-term care homes, we are putting seniors’ needs at the forefront and working to help maintain their independence.”

B.C. supports seniors aging at home with virtual service

Seniors will be supported to stay in their homes longer with a new virtual service that provides some of the essential support of a long-term care facility in their own home.

The Long-term Care at Home program (LTC@Home) equips seniors’ homes with technology for virtual care

and monitoring, customized to an individual’s needs and monitored by a care team who checks in if an alert is received. It also includes respite care to help alleviate family caregiver burn-out, extending their ability to care for a loved one in the home longer.

Free Fitness Programming

Registration will be opening soon for Choose to Move and ActivAge, two free physical activity programs for seniors with online and in-person options, led by trained staff from the BC Recreation and Parks Association. The programs are designed for those who identify as older adults living across B.C. and are currently physically inactive. Get involved to learn more about fitness, meet new friends, and make a positive healthy lifestyle change.

Find out more: www.bcrpa.bc.ca/everything-else/activage-choose-to-move.

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From the federal Minister for Seniors

The following are extracts from the newsletter of new Minister for Seniors, Steven MacKinnon. For complete and regular updates sign up at Canada.ca, search: updates from the Minister of Seniors

Introducing new Minister for Seniors Steven MacKinnon

"The world is an uncertain place these days. But few things are more certain than our need to care for one another. As Minister of Seniors, it is my job to make sure that the seniors who built this country and have given so much to our communities can age on their terms, with dignity and choice."

Caution phishing campaigns!

Cyber criminals use phishing to steal personal and financial information by

using emails, text messages, phone calls, social media or voice messages to appear to be from a recognizable institution or company, such as your bank. Government benefit payment dates are common times for phishing campaigns. Remember, Canada Revenue Agency will never ask for a payment via text message. Learn more via the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre's phishing webpage: antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/scams-fraudes/phishing-hameconnage-eng.

Aging at Home

The National Seniors Council's final report on aging at home is now available. Supporting Canadians Aging at Home: Ensuring Quality of Life as We Age provides insights into the services, supports, strategies and solutions to

age at home in Canada with dignity and choice. Read and share: www.canada.ca/en/national-seniors-council/programs/publications-reports/aging-home.

Dementia awareness

Approximately 750,000 Canadians live with Alzheimer's disease and dementia, with many more undiagnosed. You can learn more about dementia, prevention and help: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/dementia.

Boosting Old Age Security

Starting in October, OAS and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments are increasing by 1.3% for the remainder of 2024!

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Supporting BC FORUM has never been so important

Through our unions we saw the benefits of collective action. We know our voices are strongest when we stand in solidarity. That's where BC FORUM comes in. We are the only provincial organization that represents union members who have retired or are nearing retirement. We are an integral part of the labour movement, with formal representation in leadership bodies, and we maintain strong links with provincial and national seniors' groups. Here's how you can support and benefit from BC FORUM:

Renew your membership

Look at the mailing label on this edition of the Advocate to check whether your membership is now due for renewal. If your membership is about to expire, you can renew by mailing the coupon below to BC FORUM, 110 - 4295 Canada Way, Burnaby, BC V5G 1H1; or renew online at www.bcforum.ca.

Encourage your friends to join!

Together, we can make a difference for ourselves and our families. Please encourage friends, colleagues and family members to join!

Many unions cover first year dues

BC FORUM actively welcomes union members who are 50 and better, working or retired, and the list of unions that cover the first (and some up to three years!) membership for their qualified members keeps growing! If you're not yet a member, contact your union for details. Solidarity makes us strong!



Extend the benefits of membership to your spouse

BC FORUM has always provided free \$2,500 Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance coverage to members.

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.



Your expiry date is on the mailing label. BCGEU, BCFMW, HSA, MoveUp, CEU, CUPE Locals 386, 402 and 7000; UFCW 1518, Heat and Frost, and LiUNA 1611 pay first year dues for qualified members.



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Union: _____ Date of birth:* _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

Spouse's name: _____ Spouse's birth date:* _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

Single membership:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 - 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49 - 3 years
With AD&D for spouse:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 - 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> \$64 - 3 years
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MC	Expiry _____ / _____	CVV* _____
Card number:	_____	

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Date of application: _____
DAY MONTH YEAR

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

In this B.C. election, every vote matters

By Janet Andrews, Secretary-Treasurer, NWDLC

The labour movement is all hands on deck for the upcoming provincial election, and rightly so.

The choice in the provincial election is a stark one. On one hand is continued progress on workers' issues like fair wages, strong pensions, more affordable housing, health and safety in the workplace, good benefits and a robust social safety net; on the other hand is regression of the worst sort with billions of planned cuts to healthcare, reimposed tolls, more fees, and fewer services in the name of tax cuts for the already wealthy.

Tax cuts aren't the only thing the wealthy stand to gain. Right-wing governments are always ready to outsource critical services in the name of privatization and profit. Whether it's healthcare in Ontario or education in Alberta, conservative governments have sold off public assets, land and infrastructure to enrich the wealthy few, leaving everyday Canadians with higher costs. But it doesn't have to be that way.

This October union members and retirees have the opportunity to reject the false promises of parties who protect corporate interests and the wealthy with divide and conquer tactics, who promote fear and hate to distract from harmful economic policies and ideologies specifically aimed at stripping workers of their rights, and retirees of their savings. Since the BCNDP was elected in 2017 workers have been regaining what we lost, and it is critical that this work continues.

Retirees have a unique perspective and much to offer at this critical juncture in our province. In tumultuous times it is hard to see past the noise. The impact of individual legislative or collective agreement gains



Janet Andrews by kind permission of the NWDLC

aren't always obvious in the moment. But the experience of those who have fought these fights before us, who have seen both progress and setbacks and can speak clearly and with context for both can inform our current struggle. We need you.

The time to act is now. If we want to protect pensions, continue to build back our healthcare system so there is dignity for both patients and workers, to create more affordable housing for seniors, to ensure a strong social safety net with increased supports for persons living with disabilities, everyone who is eligible must make a plan to vote. But it can't stop there.

There are many tasks in every campaign between now and election day, and everyone is welcome. Volunteers can knock on doors, make calls, help with data entry, organize, put out signs, arrange rides to polls, teach new activists or make a donation. Ensure your family and friends know the impact of their vote on our communities and on your retirement.

There is power in our solidarity, and every vote counts.

Janet Andrews is the Secretary-Treasurer of the New Westminster & District Labour Council, representing 65,000 union and BCFORUM members in 14 cities in the Metro Vancouver region.

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?