

April 17, 2021

The CUPE 3906 Executive Committee is strongly opposed to the Ford regime's decision to try to police their way out of a pandemic which they have utterly failed to control. At a time when daily cases are in the thousands and people are dying in our hospitals almost by the hour of Covid-19, the Government has decided to further punish poor, racialized, and working-class people in this province, who have already borne the brunt of the pandemic, by further empowering police to harass and brutalize them.

For over a year now the labour movement, the medical community, and various civil society organizations have been calling for paid sick leave for all workers and additional measures to protect them from the spread of Covid-19 in their workplaces. Instead of heeding these sensible calls, Ford has once again decided to side with the province's big corporations in staunchly opposing paid sick leave.

Not only will these new measures not work, because they avoid the root of the issue, but they will give racist cops yet another excuse to pull people over arbitrarily. The recent history of carding in this province is all the evidence anyone should need to recognize that when cops are given an enhanced ability or directive to pull people over arbitrarily, they will always disproportionately target black, Indigenous, and other racialized people. Not only should we not be giving them extra power, we should be working immediately towards the abolition of policing, replacing cops with genuine community safety mechanisms rooted in anti-oppression and mutual aid.

It is time once again for the labour movement to reflect on the role of policing in our society more broadly, and to recognize that any policy or regulation that enhances the power of police is inherently an attack on the working-class and its disproportionately racialized, gendered, queer, and disabled members. That includes police unions, which serve only to protect cops from accountability. The CUPE 3906 Executive once again reiterates its support for calls to remove police officers, prison guards, and spies from the labour movement, including our councils, federations, and unions.

It's not too late for the Ford Government to relent. Bring in a statutory minimum of seven permanent paid sick days per year for all workers, and a minimum of fourteen paid sick days per year during pandemics. Hold big employers truly accountable when outbreaks occur in their workplaces. Genuinely and effectively prioritize in the ongoing vaccine rollout those most exposed to the ravages of Covid-19, including frontline workers, racialized and Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, sex workers, and many others in the working-class.

If the Ford Government isn't willing to retract these enhanced police powers and do these bare minimum things to support working people, workers across the province should be prepared to strike.

In solidarity,

The CUPE 3906 Executive Committee