

# COMMUNIQUE



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## Gig Workers Making History Together *Unions come together in support of gig workers*

Media Release

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TORONTO – Hearings continued in Toronto today in which the results could be a defining moment for gig economy workers in Canada.

The misclassification of gig workers as independent contractors instead of dependent contractors or employees is being fought by Foodora couriers at the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB).

“Gig economy workers have been too vulnerable for too long,” says Jan Simpson, CUPW national president. “The Board has the opportunity to make things right and set a precedent for gig workers around the world. It’s time to put worker rights first.”

In May of this year, Foodora couriers and drivers announced their plans to unionize with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). In July, CUPW filed for union certification with the OLRB. A vote was held in August but the results remain sealed as contested issues are now being discussed with the Board.

Foodora couriers, along with their allies and supporters gathered outside the OLRB before the hearings began, showing that the labour movement is strong and united in its fight for workers.

Many of those allies were Uber drivers, who this summer announced their plans to unionize with the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), but have not yet filed an application for certification with the Board.

“If it wasn’t for the Foodsters, we wouldn’t be here,” says Ejaz Butt, an Uber driver who helped start his union drive. “Under the Constitution, we knew we had rights, but it was their perseverance that inspired us to push forward, and I hope we can now do the same for others.”

Companies like Foodora and Uber promise flexibility to couriers, saying that they’re independent contractors - their own boss. In doing so, they avoid paying for even the most basic employment benefits like employment insurance, or CPP/OPP premiums. The couriers and drivers argue that they are dependent contractors since the companies control much of their work and administer discipline like any other boss.

“The labour movement is coming together today to fight injustice, and stands behind Foodora couriers and Uber drivers in their fight to unionize so they can bargain with their employer for decent work,” says Chris Buckley, President of the Ontario Federation of Labour. “The OLRB has a responsibility to the workers of Ontario to end the misclassification of gig workers and stop employers from dodging their responsibilities.”

Whatever the outcome of today’s hearing, one thing is certain: the movement to unionize gig workers is only growing.

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