

November 8, 2022

## Worker Power Wins

After an unprecedented and inspiring mobilization of the labour movement, CUPE Education workers in the province of Ontario have successfully defended their right to strike!

### Recap

Education workers represented by CUPE (OSBCU) in Ontario – 55,000 workers including custodians, administrative workers, EAs, ECEs and more – have been negotiating for improvements, after a decade of shrinking wages and other worsening conditions.

More info on their conditions and demands: <https://39000isnotenough.ca/>

They voted 96.5% to strike, and later filed notice to strike on November 2. The Ford government immediately retaliated with legislation to outlaw the strike and impose a contract. The legislation, Bill 28, invoked the notwithstanding clause, so that even though it violated the workers' *Charter* rights, it could not be challenged in the courts.

### Labour Fights Back

OSBCU knew they had to resist the legislation and began protest rallies. Ford used this tactic on some of the lowest-paid education workers in the province, and the labour movement responded in support of the OSBCU members.

In just three days of organized rallies, and amid talk of support for a general strike, thousands of workers turned out to support the education workers on picket lines and did online actions. The Ford government is repealing that bill, and CUPE Ontario and OSBCU have declared victory.

The OSBCU will now go back to bargaining with their right to strike!

### A Victory to Build On

This victory is just the beginning. We must keep building our power as workers. The government

needs to know that the labour movement is watching carefully for a good outcome from OSBCU's contract negotiations, and that they overstepped with their anti-worker agenda.

The last few days have energized and galvanized the movement, with our leaders and members standing together like never before, and with strong public support.

This is everybody's fight. If Ford and Lecce had successfully imposed a contract in this way on the CUPE education workers, it would have become part of their playbook for all workers. Other premiers would take notice and consider it viable to do the same. But it went the other way, and the workers won this battle.

Worker power gets results, and it's so important for members to get involved. We'll be headed to the bargaining table again in 2023, and each of us must get involved and remember the lessons of this fight.

As we've seen, our right to strike is only as effective as our readiness to defend it.

In solidarity,

Jan Simpson  
National President

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