

National Office
205 Placer Court
Toronto, Ontario M2H 3H9



Bureau national
205 Placer Court
Toronto (Ontario) M2H 3H9

Jerry Dias
National President
Président national

Renaud Gagné
Quebec Director
Directeur québécois

Robert J. Orr
National Secretary-Treasurer
Secrétaire-trésorier national

December 12, 2018

premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Subject: Budget cuts to French-language services

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing today to express our profound disagreement with the measures announced yesterday by your government, which will have the effect of cancelling a planned Francophone university in Toronto and folding the office of the French Language Services Commissioner into the provincial ombudsman's office.

Unifor is Canada's largest private-sector union, with more than 315,000 members working in every region across the country. Many of our members are from French-speaking communities that, as you surely know, have had to fight to win respect for the French language and ensure its survival. May I remind you that the French are one of the founding peoples of Canada. Given that we live on a continent dominated by the English language, it is important to understand that maintaining the vitality and survival of French constitutes a daily struggle. In view of these circumstances, any withdrawal of services to Francophone communities threatens a balance that is already extremely precarious.

Our concerns are all the more justified considering that the announcement of your measures comes at a time when the linguistic rights of Francophones in Canada are under attack by an increasingly popular – not to say populist – movement. We have seen this repeatedly, whether in New Brunswick, with the People's Alliance of New Brunswick political party, and that province's Conservative premier Blaine Higgs, who has called into question French-language services, or in Alberta. This movement is gathering steam. And that is cause for concern.

I would also like to point out that, during a meeting of the Unifor Quebec Council, our members voted unanimously in favour of an emergency resolution that I have enclosed and that clearly expresses our profound disagreement with the measures imposed by your government.

For all these reasons, we request that you immediately suspend the cuts that you have announced. I sincerely hope that your government will have the wisdom to reverse these decisions.

Thank you for your attention, Premier Ford.

Sincerely,



JERRY DIAS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

RG/JD/ mb/sd cope343

c.c. Renaud Gagné, Quebec Director
 Members of the Quebec Council Executive
 Assistants to the Quebec Director
 National Representatives in Quebec
 Unifor local unions in Quebec

Enc. Emergency Resolution in Support of Franco-Ontarians

**Emergency Resolution
in Support of Franco-Ontarians**

- WHEREAS** Canada has two official languages, French and English;
- WHEREAS** On November 15, 2018, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced drastic cuts in services to Franco-Ontarians;
- WHEREAS** The announced cuts include cancelling a planned French-language university, thereby depriving a large number of young French-speaking Ontarians of access to higher education in their community and in their native language;
- WHEREAS** Under the announced measures, the office of the French Language Services Commissioner will also be abolished;
- WHEREAS** Premier Ford has declared that Franco-Ontarians are just one minority among others;
- WHEREAS** The action taken by the Ford government looks much more like an anti-Francophone action than an economic decision;
- WHEREAS** Mr. Carol Jobin, president of the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, has issued a call for mobilization;
- LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT** Unifor's Quebec Council recommend that Unifor gives its full support to Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario;
- LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Unifor's Quebec Council request that Unifor's National President, Jerry Dias, write a letter to Premier Ford denouncing these measures, which constitute an insult to all Franco-Ontarians.

**Submitted by Local 698
Adopted by the 10th Unifor Quebec Council**