

For immediate release

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CUPE MARKS NOVEMBER 20th, TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

WINNIPEG – November 20th is a day to remember those killed because of the hatred or fear of transgender people. It is also a time to consider how we can all act to eliminate the harassment and discrimination trans people face.

Transgender people face intense and often overlapping challenges, including: high levels of transphobic violence, threats, discrimination and misunderstanding, police harassment and discrimination in the health care and justice systems.

"Violence and discrimination towards trans people are a daily reality," said Kelly Moist, President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Manitoba. "This is not acceptable, and we must all act with understanding, acceptance and compassion to change this reality."

CUPE recognises the gendered and racial attitudes that can hurt trans people. These attitudes have deep roots in sexism, homophobia, colonialism and enslavement.

"Trans rights are human rights," added Moist. "Trans people struggle for the same rights many of us take for granted – a safe place to live and work, safe interactions with others, free expression of their sense of self, and access to safe public services, identity documents, and their chosen name."

For more than a decade, CUPE has been a leader among Canadian unions in championing trans rights. CUPE negotiates and enforces contract language protecting trans rights, educates members, raises public awareness about transphobia, supports research, and lobbies for legislative change and improved access to health care.

Concluded Moist: "We can celebrate the federal government's decision to approve the inclusion of gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Criminal Code*. It is up to all of us, on November 20th and every day, to build workplaces, communities and a world that are free of all forms of violence and discrimination."

The Canadian Union of Public Employees is Canada's largest union representing more than a half-million members. In Manitoba, CUPE represents approximately 25,000 members working in health care facilities, personal care homes, school divisions, municipal services, social services, child care centres, public utilities, libraries and family emergency services.

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