

WINDSOR STRONG!

Number 6

June 23, 2020.

Newsbulletin of the COVID-19 Committee of Unifor Local 195



Many Workers to Lose E.I. Entitlement Weeks Due to CERB 100% Clawback!

By Linda Poho

One major issue that we have been addressing to the government is how E.I. and CERB are handled. Here is the scenario on how you either get E.I. or get CERB due to COVID.

If one opens a **brand new claim** after March 15/2020 you are put on CERB. In this scenario you can collect up to 24 weeks of CERB (early in June the government announced an 8 week extension) and not burn any of your E.I. entitlement weeks.

After collecting 24 weeks of CERB you are supposed to be transferred to regular E.I. benefits.

However, if you had **reactivated an existing claim** or were already off with a claim you are automatically docked one E.I. entitlement week for every week you receive a payment. Once you use up all your E.I. entitlement weeks, you can then apply for CERB **if it is before** the October 2nd, 2020 expiry date.

This system is unfair and of concern for a few reasons. Firstly, it is not fair for one person to have to use up their entitlement weeks and the other to not have. From March 15/2020 to May 24/2020 one would have used up 10 of their entitlement weeks. This scenario leaves them in a worse situation than



Windsor West MP, Brian Masse, with Syncreon Plant Committeeperson, Linda Poho, at the press conference convened at Unifor 195 to raise CERB and E.I. concerns.

when COVID started compared to someone who has just collected CERB.

Production in the Syncreon plant is directly geared to JIT (just in time) arrangements with FCA (Windsor Assembly Plant). If the mini-van production stops (retooling, inventory adjustments, low sales, etc.) then our plant will immediately stop work as well. Over the last few years the majority of Syncreon workers have faced such short-term layoffs. As a result, most have had to make E.I. claims.

With the auto industry having been very unstable for the last couple of years, most workers in this sector

have claims. Although there was recently an extension of the proposed cancellation of the 3rd shift scheduled for June 22nd to now, July 10th, hundreds of FCA workers and their suppliers will be similarly situated. Many will need those 10 or more entitlement weeks lost due to COVID.

The week-for-week penalty forced on many of us in this situation is patently unfair.

Those weeks could mean the difference between being able to pay the rent or mortgage, feed their families and pay the bills. Some may be stuck and going on Ontario Works.

Continued on page....2 Poho

Continued from page....1 Poho

Loss of the third shift for FCA workers and the feeder plants was serious enough BEFORE this pandemic. However, the jobs that might have fallen open for FCA workers may have evaporated.

We have emailed many politicians several times: Prime Minister **Trudeau**, NDP leader **Jagmeet Singh**, Conservative Party **Andrew Scheer**, **Carla Qualtrough**, Minister of Employment, **Irek Kusmierczyk**, **Brian Masse** MP Windsor West, Unifor National President **Jerry Dias** and our own Unifor **COVID Taskforce**.

Brian Masse replied and on Friday June 12/2020 held a Media Conference addressing our concerns. On May 19/2020 Unifor sent a detailed letter to Minister Qualtrough on how to fix the many E.I. issues. Unifor has also created a petition to fix E.I. Our demand is very simple. We are asking the government to re-instate all E.I. Entitlement Weeks lost due to COVID.

Please help our voices be heard by signing the Petition and making the call at unifor.org "Fix E.I. before it's too late".

DAY OF ACTION

The CERB is about to run out.
We must fix EI, before it's too late.

MAKE THE CALL.

Call Minister Qualtrough's office direct.
And tell her your story.
TODAY!
BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

unifor.org/fixEI

Text of Unifor 195 President's Presentation to June 12th Press Conference

Hello everyone,

My name is **Emile Nabbout**, I am the president of Unifor Local 195 and we represent people of many sectors of our economy. Our press conference today is to call on our federal government to fix the E.I. system. Before I begin, I want to thank the media outlets for their quick response to our press conference. Also, I want to acknowledge many local Unifor presidents joining us today:

John Dagnolo, President Local 200.
Dave Cassidy, President Local 444.
Jodi Nesbit, President Local 240. **Jack Robinson**, Unifor Area Director.

We also have many other representatives from our workplaces and local union leaders.

Today, I really want to thank our federal MPs, representing our area, for responding to our invitation to this press conference. We have **Brian Masse**, MP

Windsor West and **Chris Lewis**, MP from Essex.

Our Union has highlighted a significant problem with E.I. claims and has identified flaws in the system which have impacted the workers in this area and across Canada. We have been writing to our government to address these issues appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

Continued next page....

Nabbout.....Continued

However, the union does recognize the work our government has done on income support by introducing the CERB. But the CERB has affected workers that have E.I claims prior to March 15 and the employees who qualify for SUB (Supplemental Unemployment Benefit).

Workers with pre-existing claims, prior to March 15, were forced to re-open the claim to get the benefit from E.I. Due to the COVID crisis, this has depleted their E.I. entitlement. But workers applying after March 15 were

automatically switched to CERB, without depleting their E.I. entitlement.

Now, as most of you are aware, FCA has made the announcement to eliminate the third shift, which will result in a significant number of workers being laid off at the Windsor Assembly Plant as well as in specific feeder plants, including Syncreon, Flex-n-Gate and many more.

Thousands of those workers are going to lose their jobs and already will have burned their E.I. weeks of entitlement or be left with only a few weeks to collect because of the COVID-19 crisis

shutdown. Workers should not be treated differently because they had to be off work due to COVID.

What we are asking is to have the Federal Government run COVID-19 benefits consecutively. not concurrently.

Our understanding is that this issue does not require legislative change and doesn't require Parliament to vote. It can be done immediately with a stroke of a pen.

Our question today, will our federal MPs in Windsor and Essex be willing to take our voice, the voice of our workers, to Ottawa and get this fixed?

Executive Board Members Show Appreciation to many of our Members working during COVID Pandemic

Gates



The following 195 plants were visited between May 26 and June 22.

Catalent	May 26
Gates	May 29
Brinks	June 1
FCA Security	June 3
Jamison	June 8
Team	
GSO/PAINT	June 9
ER St Denis	June 10
Colonial Tools	June 11
Nickleson Tools	June 12
Morrice	
Transportation	June 12
Vets cab	June 22



Our Local 195 officers have been going to our workplaces to show appreciation to our members.

Over the last few weeks, the fulltime officers of the Local took the initiative to visit the workplaces that have worked, without interruption, during the COVID-19 crisis.

We felt that this small gesture of bringing coffee and muffins to the members, and acknowledging their hard work through this crisis, was well-received by many.

We are going to continue engaging our members in the next few months and maintaining this outreach and dialogue throughout the year.

So far, we have visited over 10 of our workplaces. Several more visits are scheduled in the coming weeks.

Recognizing close to half our Unifor 195 Members in facilities deemed essential during COVID crisis

Team Industrial



Catalent



Jamieson



Colonial Tool



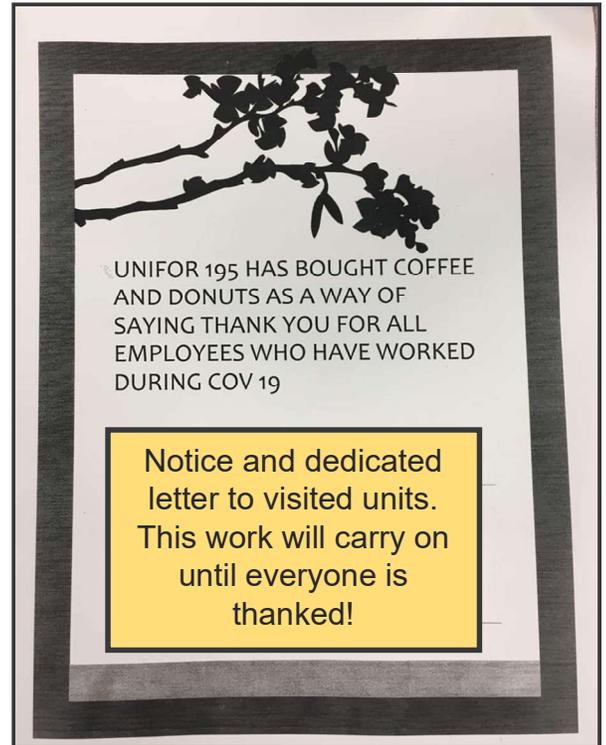
Veteran Cab



Taking a break with staff and Executive Board members. Many drivers took the time to install plastic barriers for their passengers, respect the

disinfecting protocols and go the extra mile to ensure Winsorites had transportation...even when Transit Windsor was shut down by the Mayor.

Appreciation for FCA Security Unit



UNEMPLOYED HELP CENTRE OFFERS SPECIAL HELP

Brother **Mike Malott**, who volunteers regularly at the UHC is reaching out to Unifor 195 members who may find themselves facing difficulties making ends meet in this period. Often the impact of COVID and all the changes are viewed **IN THE BIG PICTURE**. For example, number infected, number who have died, number laid off, number on EI and so on.

Mike is working at the individual impact level, at the level of families who do not have the resources for food, for basic necessities. The **Unemployed Help Centre** has been helping hundreds of Windsor and Essex County members who are in such difficult situations. He was present at the joint project which found 260 members in the drive-thru receiving food packages at the Labour Centre, just helping out with his daughter **Jada**.

Mike called this week to make sure our members know that the UHC has food cartons for those who are facing the current squeeze. This includes those who do not have transportation.

Mike reminded us that any member needing help can call UHC at **519-944-9400** and they will arrange to have a volunteer **DELIVER** the food supplies to your home.

Those with transportation can visit the Unemployed Help Centre at 6955 Cantelon Drive off Lauzon Road. Their hours are from 11 am until 2 pm Monday/Wednesday/Friday. You need only to bring I.D. for their records.



Unifor Local 195 **COVID Newsbulletin** is getting great reviews. Come and join us as Emile and others are looking toward morphing our **Emergency Response Newbulletin** into a regular Newsletter for our members. This will require reporters. Want to learn to report, write or join in the work? We are looking at a collective, committee project. Let us know if you feel you would like to contribute.

Wishing everyone good health and smooth sailing going forward

Message from our President

Greetings Sisters & Brothers, I hope my message finds you well and healthy. It appears that this pandemic has started to ease out and the government's shutdown order has begun to be lifted and businesses have started to reopen.

The return of our members to their respective workplaces has been quite challenging, however, our union leaders and the joint health and safety committees are continuing to work through these issues as they come up.

The progress has been good in some workplaces and difficult at others, but at the end of the day, I believe there is a high level of commitment and determination by the employers and workers to get the situation under control.

We remain connected with our community and other labour issues. On June 5th we joined hospital workers demonstrating at Windsor Regional (Tecumseh Road), marching to demand the COVID-19 pandemic pay be given to ALL hospital employees.

As President of this local union, I want to say thank you to those who have participated and offered support and volunteered their time to assist our members and support our community. It has been inspiring to see so many of our members coming and helping out on many different fronts.

Demand to Fix E.I System.

On June 12, we invited Federal M.P.s to join us along with media groups to get our message heard. We asked for a stronger E.I. system to benefit more workers, and help stabilize the economy against future shocks.

I really want to thank our Federal MPs, representing our area for responding to our invitation to this press conference. We had in attendance, **Brian Masse**, from Windsor West and **Chris Lewis** from Essex.

Also, I want to acknowledge many Unifor presidents, that attended: **John D'Agnolo**, President local 200, **Dave Cassidy**, President local 444, **Jodi Nesbit**,



President local 240 and **Jack Robinson**, Unifor Area Director.

We also had many other representatives from our workplaces and local union leaders including our **Syncreon shop committee**. We thank all of these union leaders for their commitment in fighting to correct the inequities in the CERB and the problems with E.I..

I would like to remind our members that Local 195 is here for you. If you feel you are struggling with any issue, please reach out to us. We hope everyone remains safe and healthy in these challenging times.

In solidarity,

Emile Nabbout

President, Unifor local 195



Press Conference at Labour Centre (June 12) was well attended by MPs, Labour, and reporters

WTF - Let's be Reasonable!

Opinion!



Each of our workplaces has its own history, particularities and culture! Kendan, where I worked for close to two decades, is an interesting case.

In the nineties we fought to end the refusal of the company to hire **ANY** women in production! It was only on the eve of a public Human Rights hearing that management was “persuaded” to end this anachronistic prejudice.

Much of what we accept as workers is a consequence of past hours of struggles on the fronts of health and safety and of our plant committees sorting out what, in practice, we now consider our rights as workers.

Most of what we take for



granted has required long and difficult struggles by organized workers.

It took many protracted fights at Kendan to get rid of carcinogenic chemicals and circulate the air around CNCs clouded in coolant mist and temperatures which rose over 32 Celsius in the summer months. We even had to fight for permission to wear pants and

make our own coffee!

We are in new territory with COVID-19

COVID has given rise to many rules that are a real challenge to fulfill. How do you practice “social distancing” when passing along a narrow walkway? Many of us simply cannot wear a true N95 mask (myself included) for more than about 40 minutes.

We have reports of members getting headaches from even the non-surgical-grade masks. The atmosphere of social shaming, judging others and massive “blame game” accusing, which is so apparent in the US does not help in trying to sort matters out.



Be reasonable applies to everyone, particularly those entrusted with enforcing and interpreting new COVID-inspired rules and dictates.

Companies are new territory and have their own concerns, as do those responsible for our schools and colleges, with potential **LEGAL** consequences as well. Opinions differ as to how to interpret appropriate protection against a pathogen which cannot be seen without an electron microscope!

However, some initial precautions appear critical as experience builds. Nursing homes and elder-care facilities **MUST** be kept COVID-free. Migrant workers housed in abysmally-crowded quarters deserves special attention as do meat processing facilities where lack of social distancing poses huge risks.

Large public indoor gatherings, nightclubs or places where there are crowds singing, dancing, shouting, etc. are being described as **superspreader** situations.

COVID-19 has not finished its first wave! Talk of a “second wave” is

probably premature as this virus is still spreading inexorably from infected regions to unaffected regions within countries and between countries. Its impact ranges from mild to fatal with age and underlying conditions being statistically the most critical factors.

SPEAK OUT if you are having troubles at work. No one should be sent home because they cannot handle a mask when a face shield will accomplish the same need.

A sister at **Syncreon** reported getting headaches which lasted long after her shift. At this facility, one needs a doctor's note to replace a mask with a shield. No mask below N95 will protect you completely. Wearing the mask is a socially-responsible action to prevent viral transmission from coughing, yelling, breathing hard, sneezing, etc. and exposing others to non-symptomatic viruses.

Thus it is suggested **BE REASONABLE**. Less judging, more practical solutions.



Dr. Bonnie Henry

The best health advice has come from B.C.'s Public Health Officer, **Dr. Bonnie Henry**, whose calm demeanor and reasoned advice has borne incredible results. Her COVID updates on **You Tube** are worth checking out.

One should not suffer in silence as we work through this unexplored safety and regulatory territory occasioned by the pandemic.

Bob Cruise - Editor