



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Human Rights Day recognizes diversity around the world

Since 1950 – when the United Nations declared December 10th as International Human Rights Day – activists around the globe use this day as a reminder of the immense work still required to secure human rights protections for all citizens of the world.

In far too many countries, people are oppressed, incarcerated, marginalized and discriminated against because of their skin colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, and culture. Some are even killed.

In Canada, the labour movement and allies successfully lobbied for changes to the federally run Temporary Foreign Worker program, which finally granted workers the right to legally immigrate. But there's still much work to be done as many temporary foreign workers still experience harsh treatment, working for substandard wages in often deplorable working conditions.

Some of Canada's other human rights infringements include: our immigration detention scheme, denial of health care for refugees, and two-tier citizenship rights, which frequently leads to poverty, exploitation and the ongoing threat of deportation.

And although Canada has been a trailblazer for LGBTTI rights, including a federal law granting same-sex marriage, there's inconsistent recognition and health care access for transgender citizens across the country.

But we have come a long way since New Brunswick's John Peters Humphrey drafted the blueprint for what became the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, which was adopted on December 10, 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly – something of which all Canadians can be proud.

As Canadians, some of our fundamental human rights include freedom of expression, association and opinion; participation in government; social equality; and no discrimination based on gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

HEU's five equity standing committees and the union's Global Justice and Peace subcommittee recognize the importance of continuing to educate members around human rights issues and advocate for protections against all forms of discrimination – at home and abroad.

Their work particularly focuses on people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrant workers, women, and LGBTTI members.

December 10, 2015