

June 16, 2023

Patty Coates
President
Ontario Federation of Labour
15 Gervais Drive, Suite 202
North York, ON M3C 1Y8

Dear Patty,

It's with mixed feelings that we write this letter as you prepare to finish your tenure as President of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL).

For decades, you were an energetic and committed Member of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, leading your Members to greater strength and unity in District 17 – Simcoe, as President of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board Education Assistants and Early Childhood Educators.

We all watched your many accomplishments throughout this time, including negotiating five collective agreements with significant gains for your Members, adding Early Childhood Educators to your Bargaining Unit, working with other Provincial leaders on the Provincial Negotiations Advisory Work Group, and working towards achieving a Pay Equity agreement for your Bargaining Unit.

We then watched as your talents led you to become President of the Barrie and District Labour Council, where your wise and pragmatic stewardship helped the Council expand its membership and influence. There's not a single person in the Barrie-area labour movement that hasn't been impacted by your leadership, either directly or through the long-lasting changes you helped usher in across the District.

In 2015, you admirably stepped up and began advocating on behalf of all workers in Ontario as Secretary-Treasurer of the OFL, and in 2019, you made history as the first woman President of the OFL. No one could have predicted the many battles that would play out over your Presidency, including the pandemic and the Ford government's continued attacks on workers' rights and the rights of all citizens in Ontario, but you handled every fight with grace and fortitude.

You have set a shining example for young women and girls across this province, for everyone who has for so long not seen themselves among the traditional holders of power. You have helped break down barriers for women and girls across Ontario and Canada, and you always showed great courage and tenacity when dismantling long-standing inequity issues within the labour movement.

During this time, you also showed the rest of the country and our allies across the globe what true labour unity means as you represented Ontario workers on the Canadian Labour Council and women workers as part of the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women.

Thanks to you, there are many young activists and workers who now see themselves in our movement. They know they belong. They know there's a place for them, and not just as a member of the labour movement but as a leader. They know that it's their passion, ideas, and voices that will bring us forward and help future generations climb even higher than our own.

Your influence will last for generations, so it's with a heavy heart that we say goodbye. Your dedication and relentless efforts to seek better outcomes for workers in Ontario, in Canada, and globally, is and always will be deeply enshrined in the labour and social justice movements.

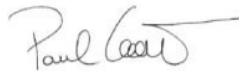
We know you will continue to achieve amazing things after you retire this November, and wherever your journey takes you next, we know you will always be there for the workers of Ontario. We are proud and honoured to say that your journey began with our Federation.

We wish you much joy and rest for your retirement and look forward to our paths crossing many more times.

Yours in solidarity



Karen Littlewood,
President



Paul Caccamo,
Vice-President



Martha Hradowy,
Vice-President



Jeff Denys,
Treasurer



Hayssam Hulays,
Executive Officer



Malini Leahy,
Executive Officer



Colin Matthew,
Executive Officer