

## **National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**

**December 6, 2015**

On December 6, 2015, Unifor recognizes the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. We remember the 14 women who were singled out and murdered on this day in 1989 at the École Polytechnique.

We also remember all women who have died as a result of gender-based violence. It is unacceptable that violence against women still permeates our society. As people gather in communities across Canada to remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence and to reflect on those still living with the daily reality of violence in their lives, Unifor recommits to taking concrete action to eliminate violence against all women and girls. As part of this, we are highlighting the connection between sexism and violence. Violence against women and girls is a devastating consequence of inequality.

We have opportunities every day to examine and highlight rigid gender stereotypes in our workplaces and communities. These damaging ideas include the belief that men are intrinsically superior to women. This sexism is often amplified when it intersects with other grounds of discrimination such as race, creed, sexual orientation or disability.

Our union was founded with a commitment to equality. We denounce sexism and actively work against discriminatory actions that include gender-based violence and harassment. We have made strides at the bargaining table by negotiating anti-harassment policies, complaint procedures, right to refuse work based on harassment, harassment prevention training, and the ground-breaking, internationally-recognized, Women's Advocate program. There is still much to do.

Politically we have mobilized to defeat regressive governments such as the federal Conservatives. We have successfully pushed for legislative and policy action on gender-based violence including the inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls beginning in the next eight months; and the introduction of Bill 132 in Ontario that, among other things, strengthens Occupational Health & Safety Act tools to eradicate violence and harassment in the workplace.

As individuals in the union, we must bring this commitment to equality and elimination of sexism into our lives every day. We are united in our determination to ensure our workplaces, our communities and our nation are safe for all women and girls. Let's be united in our activism.

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