



## Local 4948

Affiliated with CUPE and the  
Toronto & York Region Labour  
Council

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EX 8.1.23

## Toronto Public Library Workers' Union Local 4948 (CUPE)

20 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 1109, Box 2053

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Tel: 416-440-7981 FAX: 416-440-7984

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July 28, 2011

The City of Toronto Executive Committee  
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

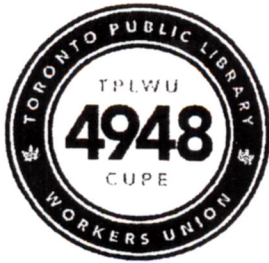
Dear Mayor Ford and Members, City of Toronto Executive  
Committee,

### RE: CORE SERVICE REVIEW

I am speaking to you as the President of the Toronto Public Library Workers Union Local 4948 representing 2400 library workers and on behalf of the almost three quarters of Toronto residents who oppose cuts to library services and the 1.25 million taxpayers who own a library card and use it regularly.

### The Threat

The proposed cuts to library services, including the closure of some library branches, the reduction of service hours and the elimination or reduction of some of the programs and outreach we provide, are cuts to services that would devastate our Toronto public libraries and are cuts that are simply not supported by the residents of Toronto.



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### Why Library Services Are Important

Public libraries provide vital services to our communities. Professional librarians guide patrons to find materials for research projects and assist patrons in accessing materials of all sorts. Residents of all ages participate in library programs that promote literacy skills and foster a love of reading and learning, including reading clubs for kids and teens, book clubs for adults and story-time for toddlers and babies. Youth, newcomers, seniors and adults access programs to develop computer literacy skills to assist with job searches and school projects. We organize and promote events across the City to foster a vibrant reading culture in the City of Toronto. These services are instrumental in developing and supporting engaged, healthy, residents and a vibrant city culture and economy. When people learn to enjoy reading and writing, they are better able to actively participate in and contribute to the City.

### Torontonians Do Not Support Cuts

We conducted a poll on July 4, 2011 to find out what the residents of Toronto would have to say about cuts to library services. We learned that three-quarters of Toronto residents disagree with the idea of closing local library branches as a way of solving the city's deficit (74%). Seven in ten Torontonians say knowing their councilor supported library branch closures would affect their vote (71%).

The cuts to City services that were outlined in the City commissioned KPMG reports, if implemented, would drastically devastate the quality, accessibility, character



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and culture of this City. You promised not to cut services and yet you have commissioned a report that outlines a series of drastic cuts to services. And yet it has been widely acknowledged over recent weeks that the "gravy" that you suggested could be cut to create cost savings, simply does not exist in the City of Toronto. Our precious city services are core, essential and mandatory, and treasured by the residents of Toronto who rely on the services we provide.

The announcement of potential cuts to library services as part of the City's cost-cutting, service-cutting Core Services Review exercise has already been met with a public outcry. Our petition has so far collected 23,267 (as of July 25<sup>th</sup>) signatures and it's been up for less than 2 weeks. The 20,000 or so people who have signed our petition so far represent only a fraction of the residents of Toronto for whom public libraries play an important role in ensuring a quality of life that all Torontonians deserve to have safeguarded.

The residents of Toronto rely on their local community branches to access programs and services. Many kids and parents access their local library branch to participate in library programs from an early age or to use the library to access library materials that help teach kids – our City's future workers, parents, artists, writers, teachers, public servants and politicians, to enjoy reading and learning.

Cuts Are Not The Solution

There is no doubt that the City of Toronto is in financial hardship. There is also no doubt that we need to identify





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real solutions to improve the financing of cities so that we can begin talking about expanding our public services and not just protecting our current levels of public services. But cutting city services is NOT a solution that the majority of Torontonians support. You asked Torontonians what they wanted during the public consultations and they told you not to cut services. Torontonians told you that public libraries are necessary for the city to be "livable and prosperous", using your own benchmarks. Torontonians told you that it was important that the City continue delivering public library services.

Public, Not Private Libraries

This is because Torontonians want the City's public libraries and programs to remain fully under public control and publicly operated and open for convenient access. Closing branches, reducing hours, or eliminating or reducing programs would result in the significant loss of a powerful educational and cultural force that opens books and opens minds for people of all ages and walks of life in our City.

We are asking you not to implement cuts to library services and instead to be proud of the fact that Toronto Public Library is among the busiest and best public libraries in the world. Cost savings by cuts to city services would have such a negative and profound effect on the quality of life for the residents of Toronto that it is incumbent on you to reconsider the path you have embarked on and to choose a different path, one that supports the residents of Toronto, understands that



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quality public city services are key to quality of life in this  
City, and therefore must be protected.

Sincerely,

Maureen O'Reilly  
President  
TPWU Local 4948