



**Canadian Union of
Public Employees**

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- Nurses & Paramedical
Units
- Service Units

City of Toronto
- Full-Time
- Long-Term Care Homes
& Services Part-Time
- Recreation Workers
Part-Time
- Unit B Part-Time

*Toronto Community
Housing Corporation*

**SERVING OUR
MEMBERS
SINCE
1942**

April 15, 2013

**CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
SECRETARIAT SECTION**

Mayor Rob Ford, Chair, and
Members of the Executive Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

2013 APR 19 P 5:42

Dear Mayor Ford:

**RE: Executive Committee Meeting 30 (Special)
Item EX30.1 – New Casino and Convention Development in Toronto**

My name is Nancy Murphy, and I am the First Vice President of CUPE Local 79. I am submitting this deputation to highlight concerns raised by Local 79 members working in Toronto Public Health.

It is clear from a public health perspective that a casino is the wrong choice for Toronto. Toronto's Medical Officer of Health has published two well-documented reports showing this to be the case. And our members who work in public health are very concerned that a casino will make the communities they serve more vulnerable, and will increase poor health triggered by problem gambling.

In response to a member survey Local 79 conducted on the issue, one of our members said a casino would negatively impact their work because it would bring, and I quote, "increased homelessness, poverty, addiction, decreased physical health, increased dysfunctional relationships, increased depression and mental health problems."

According to Dr. McKeown, a casino in Toronto could double the rate of problem gamblers. In fact, Toronto Public Health's report estimates that the amount of people negatively impacted by problem gambling is likely three to four times higher than the amount of actual problem gamblers. We need to consider the impact not just on the individual gambler, but their family, their children.

Toronto Public Health spends considerable time and resources promoting healthy families through its various programs. So it is extremely concerning to find reports from other jurisdictions that sound alarms about the welfare of children in a problem gambler's household, starting with child poverty and leading to other health-threatening behaviors such as substance abuse, emotional problems and learning disorders.

Research also shows that youth, seniors, lower-income individuals and newcomers are all more vulnerable to problem gambling. I'd like to share another Local 79 member survey comment:

"I work primarily with at-risk clients and populations such as new immigrants, refugees, drug users, marginalized and homeless people, single parents, abused women and teen parents. I fail to see how having a casino would help these people."

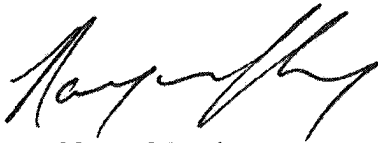
You may ask why Local 79 would oppose a casino given that it might create a greater need for services Local 79 members provide. There are two reasons for this:

- Our members serve City residents and communities with their best interests at heart.
- We want them to be healthy and stay healthy.

The services our members provide are already stretched due to budget cuts. We are not keeping pace with our growing population. And the MOH's report cites studies that give a daunting range to the annual cost of problem gambling to social services, including health services – anywhere from \$6,000 to \$50,000 for each problem gambler. If the gambling rate doubles, that's a \$66M to \$550M dollar cost, every year. That is a huge financial burden for the city and its services to bear.

There is so much evidence in front of us showing that a casino will hurt our City. It's time for all of us to say No.

Yours truly,



Nancy Murphy
First Vice-President
CUPE Local 79