

# Unions need to work together against attacks, CALL conference hears

The Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers (CALL) held their annual conference in Toronto on May 31 to June 2, 2019.

CALL limits its membership to lawyers who are employed in exclusively “union-side” practices. The conference included approximately 350 union-side labour lawyers from across Canada. This represented the largest contingent of labour lawyers ever to participate in a CALL conference.



One of the themes for this year’s conference was Indigenous participation in labour in Canada. Lawyers shared new ideas as to how the labour community in Canada can work towards including Indigenous people in the collective bargaining process.

When Indigenous people have the ability to share in the wealth of the nation through the collective bargaining process will there be true equality for Indigenous people in Canada.

Another theme that permeated many of the discussions and presentations at the conference was the power of the political right sweeping across provincial governments in Canada. Unions across Canada are increasingly seen as an easy target for conservative provincial governments’ attacks when the political messaging turns to cutbacks and fiscal responsibility.

The common sentiment among the labour community is that we need to work together to ensure that Canadians continue to have access to a living wage, health care benefits and pensions for retirement. This is becoming increasingly difficult to attain right across Canada in the current political climate.

I was proud to attend this year’s conference.

Jake Giesbrecht  
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