

Sept/Oct 2020 Lobbying/Advocacy

From Hero to Zero by Anne Clark RN

The World we live in changed dramatically in Canada in March when the COVID 19 virus was declared a national emergency. A travel advisory was issued by the Canadian Government and our border with the USA was closed later that month. People in Ontario were falling dangerously ill with the Virus in ever increasing numbers and then the Virus erupted amongst our most vulnerable elderly in LTC. The death toll was rising as the most vulnerable died in increasing numbers. Nurses were working without the proper Personal Protective Equipment, caring for the sick and dying at the cost of their own health and safety.



Cathryn Hoy ONA First VP with the Ontario Health Coalition and Members Of Local 83 with Anne, near the offices of Merrilee Fullerton MPP Minister LTC.

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Amidst all this death and panic Nurses were hailed as “Heroes” by the Ontario Government and the people of Ontario. They were hailed as such on the nightly news and by people gathering on balconies on their front porches to bang pots and pans and thank them every evening at 7 pm for their sacrifice. Nurses saved Ontario. Sadly the Nurses awake to grim reality with the Arbitration award delivered on the latest round of Collective Bargaining. The Government had passed **Bill 124** which targeted them and denied them fair bargaining. Bill 124 imposed a 1% wage increase. So the Heroes who saved Ontario in its hour of need were worth a 1% raise?

This action imposed on them by the Government, galvanized the members of ONA as they have never been before. Nurses became politically active and took to the streets in protest, to inform the citizens of Ontario and the Government that they were not taking this slap in the face without fighting back. The Government also passed **Bill 195** further stripping rights regarding hours of work and reassignment under the ONA Collective agreement. Nurses were again singled out to bear the brunt of the COVID crisis.

We have held Rallies all over the Province and in Ottawa protesting outside a different Government Minister’s office every week. I have been proud to be part of these Rallies here in

Ottawa. Heroes do not deserve this treatment. We will not forget this disrespect come the next election, nor will our families.



Our Anne with Linda Silas, President of the Canadian Federation of Nurses.



Rallying at the office of Jeremy Roberts MPP Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry Of Children and Youth, with Local 83 members, Bernie Robertson VP Region 2 and Anne.