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Releases

Cronk and Skidmore acclaimed to second term as BCFED wraps first-ever online convention

(Unceded Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam territories — Vancouver, BC) — Delegates to the 59th convention of the BC Federation of Labour have acclaimed President Laird Cronk and Secretary-Treasurer Sussanne Skidmore to a second term.

Elections were the final order of business of the BCFED's two-day convention, marking the first time the biennial event has taken place online — the result of pandemic restrictions. Over 800 delegates from the Federation's affiliated unions gathered at the virtual session for policy debates, voting and other business.

"We're grateful that delegates have given us a second term," Cronk said. "This is one of the most important moments in the history of working people in BC. And it's crucial that labour speak with a clear, united voice."

"We'll work hard over the next two years to put the needs of workers front and centre throughout the pandemic response, and to work with the new NDP majority government to secure a future for all," said Skidmore.

The convention also elected equity representatives, trustees and district labour council members of its executive council.

Although this convention was shorter than past events, delegates still adopted a wide range of resolutions supporting such policies as:

- a permanent safe supply program and decriminalization of personal possession of illicit drugs;
- endorsing calls for a ban on evictions and cancelling rent and mortgage debt;
- increased investment in post-secondary education;
- support for measures to strengthen public auto insurance;
- reducing the legal voting age to 16;
- returning contracted-out hospital support services, and the workers who deliver them, to the province's health authorities; and
- a pandemic pay premium for all frontline, essential and critical workers.

An emergency resolution in response to the assignment Abbotsford schoolchildren were given to write "5+ positive stories/facts from the residential schools" passed overwhelmingly. It committed the BCFED to educating union members and the public about the damage done by Canada's residential school system, and spurred delegates to flood Twitter with photos of themselves wearing orange shirts in solidarity.

"We missed seeing everyone face-to-face, but we were delighted at how well this worked, and how many delegates were able to participate and make their voices heard," Cronk said. "Embracing new ways to organize and communicate is one of labour's superpowers."

"Our thanks to union members and activists across BC, along with our staff and officers who went so far above and beyond to make this such a success," Skidmore said.

The BCFED's next convention will take place in 2022.