



*CUPE38 Connection brings you the latest updates, collaborative events, and resources to strengthen our community.*

## Join Our Next Meeting



**Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2026**

**Time: 7:00 p.m. MST**

**Location: Virtual, via Zoom**

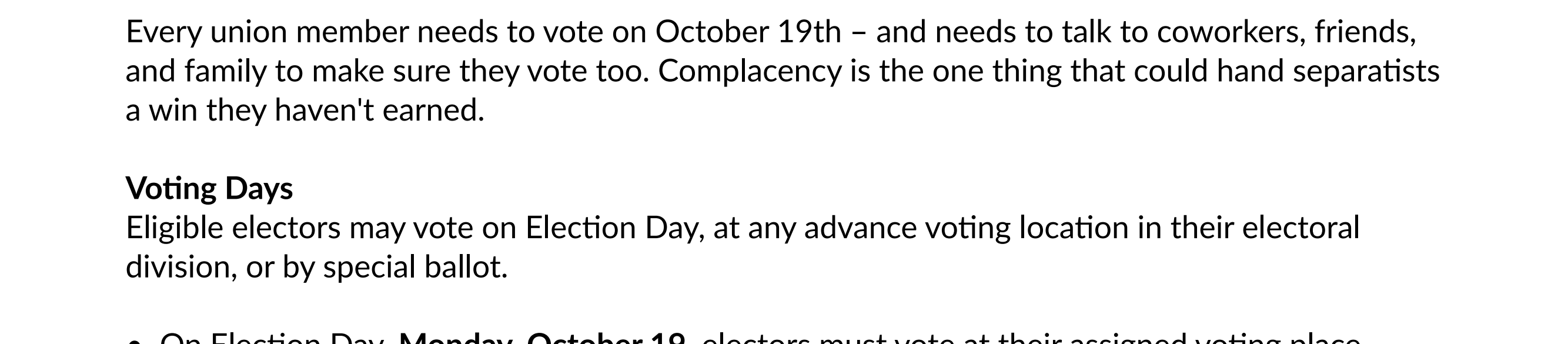
**Agenda: Regular business, ratification of City bargaining proposals, and elections:**

**Up to 8 delegates to AFL Winter School in Jasper, January 10-15, 2027**

**Up to 6 delegates to CUPE Alberta weeklong school in Canmore, April 26-30, 2027**

**RSVP : [office@cupe38.org](mailto:office@cupe38.org) or call 403-233-2700**

## Your Vote Matters – Make It Count on October 19



In last month's newsletter, we shared why Alberta separation would harm workers. Now, it's time to turn that message into action.

Albertans will head to the polls on Monday, October 19, and we are encouraging every member to make a plan to vote.

Local 38's position is clear: **Vote Option 1 to remain in Canada, and vote NO to Questions 1 through 9.**

**The biggest danger isn't the outcome of a fair vote – it's a low turnout.** Polling shows most Albertans want to stay in Canada, but polls don't cast ballots. If workers assume this referendum will fail on its own and stay home, a motivated minority could have an outsized influence on the result. This is not the time to sit it out.

Every union member needs to vote on October 19th – and needs to talk to coworkers, friends, and family to make sure they vote too. Complacency is the one thing that could hand separatists a win they haven't earned.

### Voting Days

Eligible electors may vote on Election Day, at any advance voting location in their electoral division, or by special ballot.

- On Election Day, **Monday, October 19**, electors must vote at their assigned voting place. All voting locations will be open from **9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

- Advance voting runs **Tuesday, October 13** through **Saturday, October 17**. Electors may vote at any advance voting location in their electoral division.

You can find your voting location at [Elections Alberta](https://elections.alberta.ca).

For a breakdown of the referendum questions, visit [Alberta's Voice](#) and [CUPE Alberta](#).

[Find Where to Vote](#)

## Bargaining Update

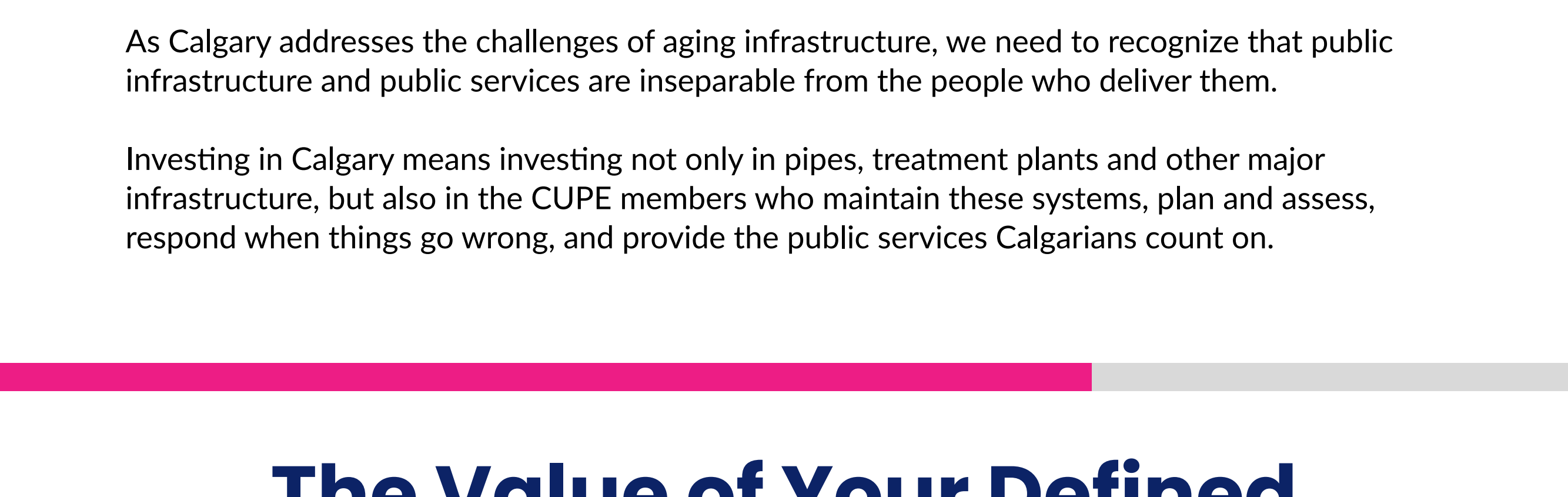


Over the past several months, the Local 38 Bargaining Committee has been compiling and reviewing every survey submitted by the membership. We want to thank everyone who took the time and effort to complete the survey and to provide detailed comments. Your participation is a vital step in the bargaining process. It informs the Committee of the key concerns across the membership and guides the types of proposals we will put forward to the City. The response was thoughtful and wide-ranging, and the Committee has carefully considered the issues members raised.

The Committee will present the proposals at the Regular General Meeting on **October 27, 2026**, for ratification. Once the proposals have been ratified, the next step is to meet with the Local 38 office to confirm they have registered their personal email address with us. Members who are not yet registered, or who have changed their email address, can contact us at [office@cupe38.org](mailto:office@cupe38.org) or by phone at 403-233-2700.

Thank you again for your engagement. A strong and united membership is key to a successful round of bargaining.

## Reminder: Register Now for the 2026 Children's Christmas Party



Get ready, Santa's coming to town for the annual Children's Christmas Party! The Children's Christmas Party has been a cherished CUPE Local 38 tradition for over 25 years. This festive annual event was first introduced as a way for the Local to show appreciation to members and their families while providing an opportunity to meet and connect with fellow members.

**Date:** Saturday, December 5, 2026

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

**Location:** Genesis Centre - 7555 Falconridge Blvd. NE

**Please note:** The check-in desk will open at 8:30 a.m. and close at 10:45 a.m. Only pre-registered families will be able to check in and attend.

**Eligibility:** This event is open to **children of CUPE Local 38 card-carrying members only, born in 2016 or later**. You must be a card-carrying member at the time of registration in order to attend.

**Not a card-carrying member yet?** [Click here](#) to obtain a union card before registering.

### New online registration

We're excited to introduce our new online registration system for this year's party! The new system is designed to make registration easier and more convenient for members.

**All families must pre-register by November 5, 2026** in order to attend the event and for eligible children to receive a gift. Please use the registration link below and complete the required information for your children.

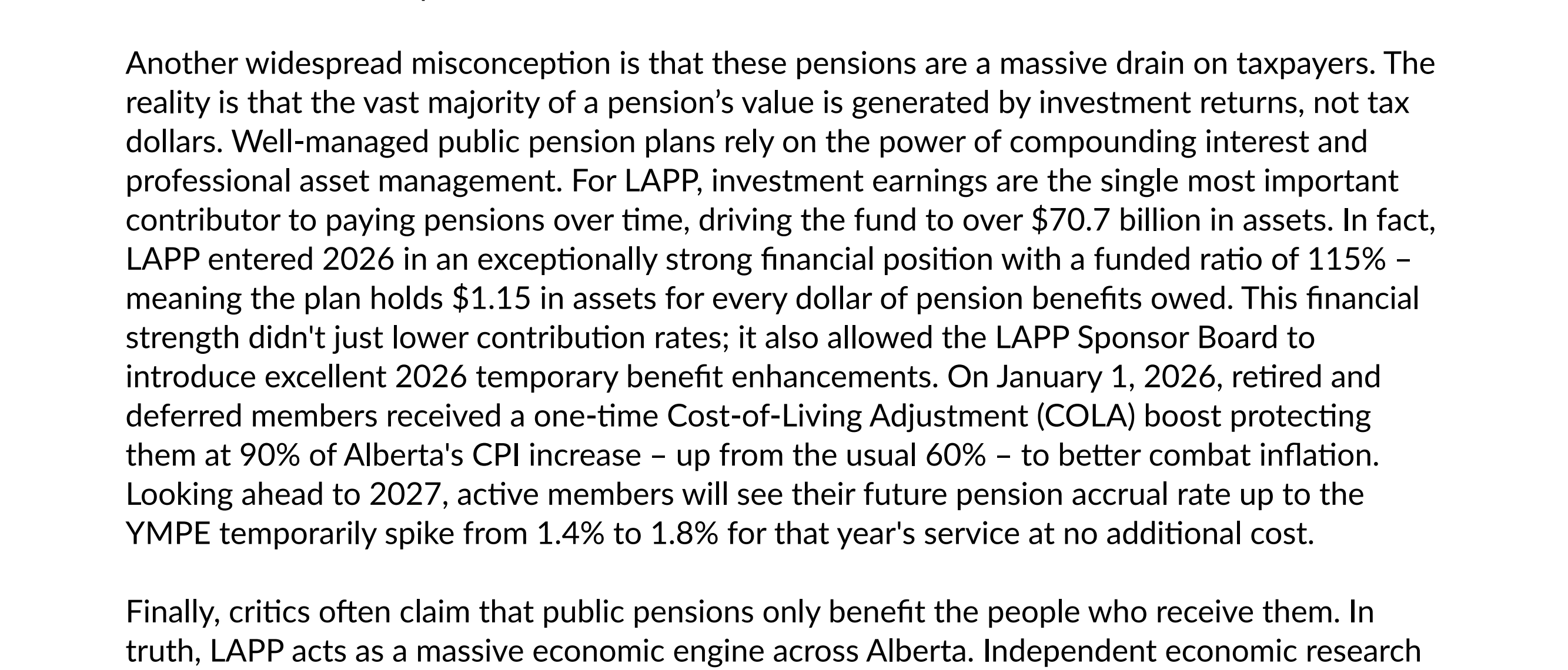
Note that the registration link must be accessed through this newsletter, as it will not be publicly available on the Local 38 website.

As always, the Children's Christmas Party is made possible by volunteers. It's a great opportunity to get into the Christmas spirit and connect with fellow union members outside of a formal setting. If you're interested in helping out, please contact us to volunteer.

[Register to Attend](#)

[Volunteer](#)

## Investing in Calgary's Infrastructure Means Investing in the People Who Keep It Running



On October 5, a City Council committee provided preliminary support for substantial rate increases to help fund capital projects aimed at replacing and strengthening Calgary's aging water infrastructure. The Executive Committee voted 8-2 in support of the proposed increases, which would see a typical residential water bill rise from approximately \$119 per month today to nearly \$207 per month by 2030.

The committee's proposed rate increases reflect the significant challenges facing Calgary's water system. The Bears paw South Feeder Main Independent Review found that Calgary's water system is under increasing strain. Leak rates rose from 17% in 2015 to 22% in 2024, compared with an estimated industry median of 12%. That stress continued into 2025. The city reported a leak rate of 23% in 2025, highlighting the ongoing challenges facing the water system.

The City says the investments are needed to address aging infrastructure, population growth and increasing system risks. Acting Chief Operating Officer Michael Thompson said, "We need to make an intergenerational investment in our water assets." Those planning horizons extend far beyond the timelines of most municipal decisions and Council election cycles. As water utility assets can have lifespans of 40 to 50 years or longer, the decisions made today can affect Calgary for generations.

Long-term planning is essential to maintain reliability, support population growth, manage water supply, and ensure that services remain available and affordable. Sustained investment in Calgary's water infrastructure is essential – but infrastructure investment is about more than pipes, treatment plants, and construction projects.

While major projects get the headlines, CUPE members are working every day, around the clock, to ensure Calgarians receive the municipal services they depend on. Capital projects may create or replace infrastructure, but skilled public-sector workers keep that infrastructure functioning day after day. Maintenance, inspections, monitoring, planning, assessments, repairs, and emergency response keep critical infrastructure operating safely and reliably. Ensuring frontline staff are properly funded – and have the staffing, equipment, training and tools they need – is critical to building a resilient Calgary.

As Calgary addresses the challenges of aging infrastructure, we need to recognize that public infrastructure and public services are inseparable from the people who deliver them.

Investing in Calgary means investing not only in pipes, treatment plants and other major infrastructure, but also in the CUPE members who maintain these systems, plan and assess, respond when things go wrong, and provide the public services Calgarians count on.

## The Value of Your Defined Benefit Pension Plan



For years, public sector pensions have been a frequent target in Alberta's political debates and media headlines, with critics often painting these retirement plans as unsustainable luxuries funded by the taxpayer. However, when we look past the rhetoric at the actual data surrounding our own Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP), a very different picture emerges. The truth behind the common myths reveals that LAPP is a well-managed, highly sustainable win for workers, retirees, and the provincial economy alike.

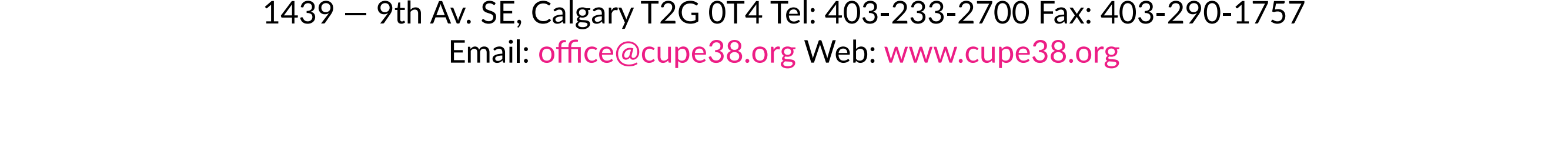
One of the most persistent myths is that public sector workers get "gold-plated" pensions for free. In reality, a LAPP pension is not a gift; it is deferred compensation. Every single month, LAPP members contribute a significant portion of their own paychecks directly into the fund. Because of the plan's massive financial health, active members are benefiting from a temporary contribution rate reduction throughout 2026, with base rates dropping by roughly 1%. Members now pay just 6.52% of pensionable earnings up to the Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE) and 9.32% on earnings above it. This is money workers choose to invest today so they can have a predictable, lifetime retirement income tomorrow. Furthermore, these pensions are factored into total compensation packages during bargaining, where public employees often accept lower base salaries than private-sector counterparts in exchange for the stability of a Defined Benefit (DB) plan.

Another widespread misconception is that these pensions are a massive drain on taxpayers. The reality is that the vast majority of a pension's value is generated by investment returns, not tax dollars. Well-managed public pension plans rely on the power of compounding interest and professional asset management. For LAPP, investment earnings are the single most important contributor to paying pensions over time, driving the fund to over \$70.7 billion in assets. In fact, LAPP entered 2026 in an exceptionally strong financial position with a funded ratio of 115% – meaning the plan holds \$1.15 in assets for every dollar of pension benefits owed. This financial strength didn't just lower contribution rates; it also allowed the LAPP Sponsor Board to introduce excellent 2026 temporary benefit enhancements. On January 1, 2026, retired and deferred members received a one-time Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) boost protecting them at 90% of Alberta's CPI increase – up from the usual 60% – to better combat inflation. Looking ahead to 2027, active members will see their future pension accrual rate up to the YMPE temporarily spike from 1.4% to 1.8% for that year's service at no additional cost.

Finally, critics often claim that public pensions only benefit the people who receive them. In truth, LAPP acts as a massive economic engine across Alberta. Independent economic research commissioned by Alberta's public plans shows that their collective members and retirees contribute more than \$4.8 billion annually to Alberta's GDP. LAPP is the largest pension plan in the province, supporting health care staff, municipal workers, and school board employees who live, work, and spend their retirement income right here in our communities. Every pension check spent on local groceries, housing, and services helps support over 43,700 local Alberta jobs. Adequate pensions ensure that retired workers remain self-sufficient, significantly reducing the strain on provincial social safety nets.

Securing a predictable retirement shouldn't be viewed as an unfair privilege – it should be the standard for all workers. Rather than pulling down public sector pensions in a "race to the bottom," LAPP serves as a textbook blueprint for how to build sustainable, dignified retirement security for the entire Alberta workforce.

## 2026 CUPE Local 38 Scholarship Winners



Each October, Local 38 awards two \$1,000 scholarships through an essay contest. The scholarships are open to card carrying members or their eligible dependents who are enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

Local 38 is pleased to announce this year's winners: Reece Cymbalisty and Lucas Calosing. Reece and Lucas' essays explored how unions can work together to create positive change, as well as navigating the political landscape of municipal unions.

Excerpts from both essays have been included below.

Congratulation Reece and Lucas, and best of luck to all applicants in their studies.

"Residents may not be familiar with the terms of a collective agreement, but they understand the importance of safe water, reliable transit, well-maintained infrastructure, and accountable public services. Union communication is most effective when it explains the connection between working conditions and the service residents receive. A staffing issue is not only an internal labour concern if it affects response times, continuity, or safety. A training issue is not only a bargaining demand if insufficient training increases the chance of error. By making these connections clear, unions can build public trust before a labour dispute occurs." – Reece Cymbalisty

"Labour unions seek change by advocating for the rights of employees. This advocacy naturally attracts the attention of governments and other political bodies – especially if they are campaigning against one. As such, to be successful in their pursuit of change, a labour union must be capable of navigating through a political environment while simultaneously putting pressure on the organization they are targeting. Over the course of this country's history, unions have learned how challenging it can be to contend with government agendas at all levels, as well as ways to combat government overreach and methods to garner political leverage that can strengthen their position before those they wish to influence." – Lucas Calosing

## Stay Strong and See You Next Month!

Sincerely,

Your Executive Team

