[Release] Facts Still Matter in Ontario - March 31, 2017

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Date: Fri, 31 Mar 2017 13:01:33 -0400

Liberal Caucus Service Bureau
For Immediate Release
March 31, 2017

Facts Still Matter in Ontario

Good afternoon,

Despite having yet another chance to reveal his supposed hydro relief proposal for Ontarians, Patrick Brown chose instead to mislead members of the Milton Chamber of Commerce during his speech yesterday. Facts still matter in Ontario and Brown needs to be honest when he's speaking to Ontarians.

He claimed: *"the greenhouse industry [is] fleeing to Michigan and Ohio"*

Fact: No - the greenhouse industry is actually expanding here in Ontario. Just this month, Greenhill Produce announced a new $100-million development in Lambton County that will create up to 300 new jobs. This builds on the nearly 3,000 acres and 81,000 jobs already here. The Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers also expect the industry to keep growing by about 150 acres a year. (Source: http://www.lfpress.com/2017/03/14/chatham-kent-operator-looks-north-to-lambton-county)

He claimed: *"Government continues to defund shop class - most don't have shop class now"*

Fact: If Brown spoke to any of the 48,000 students enrolled in more than 1,835 Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs – which specialize in Shops and Trades – at more than 690 high schools this year, he would know that he is wrong. If did his homework, he would also know that in April 2015, we invested $55 million over three years to help the next generation of skilled tradespeople access the training, equipment and facilities they need. (Source: https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/04/ontario-investing-55-million-to-help-more-people-enter-the-skilled-trades.html)

He claimed: *"We don't need to settle to be a province that has our credit downgraded"*

Fact: Moody's upgraded Ontario's credit outlook. The other major rating agencies affirmed Ontario's credit rating this year.
(Source: http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/moodys-ontario-credit-rating-stable-1.3554371 , http://www.ofina.on.ca/ir/rating.htm)

He claimed: *"We receive equalization payments"*

Fact: In 2016-17 Ontario paid $6.9 billion into the equalization program and only received $2.3 billion from it. According to the Mowat Centre "Ontarians have consistently contributed more to the federal government in total tax revenue than they have received in federal spending in return". (Source: https://mowatcentre.ca/mind-the-gap/)

He claimed: *"the growth of interest payments is outpacing what we spend on healthcare"*

Fact: It's not. The last update on the Province's finances showed that interest payments dropped by $381 million, the largest decrease of any line item in the budget. (Source: http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/finances/2016/ofin16_3.html#secE)

He claimed: *"the mighty Ontario that used to lead Canada in economic development"*
Fact: We are leading the country in economic development, Ontario has created 702,000 new jobs since the recession and 107,000 jobs in the last year. Ontario's unemployment rate is at its lowest level in 8 years. (Source: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/start)

He claimed: *"the belated hydro relief doesn't…do anything for business"*

Fact: Wrong. Small businesses across the province, like J'Adore Fine Cheese & Chocolate in Brown's own backyard in Barrie for example, will benefit from the 25% cut through our Fair Hydro Plan. We also expanded the Industrial Conservation Initiative to make even more medium to large businesses eligible for savings up to 1/3 off their bills. The Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program provides an approx. 25% decrease for eligible large northern industrials. The Industrial Electricity Incentive program provides further support. We're also eliminating the Debt Retirement Charge for commercial, industrial and all other electricity users next spring. (Source: http://www.energy.gov.on.ca/en/incentives-program-for-business/ , http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/en/northern-development/business-support/northern-industrial-electricity-rate-program)

He claimed: *"Cap and trade the way it is set up is a revenue grab"* and *"it makes business less competitive"*

Fact: Wrong. Patrick Brown's carbon tax scheme would cost families and businesses four times more without guaranteeing any reductions. And it doesn't include the investments necessary to reduce costs for families and businesses.
Putting a cap on the pollution businesses can release into the atmosphere guarantees emission reductions at the cheapest price possible for people and the economy. It's the best approach forward for Ontario. Every dollar generated through will be deposited in a dedicated account and reinvested into green projects like transit, electric vehicle incentives and housing retrofits that fight climate change. This means every dollar goes back into helping families and businesses successfully make the transition to a low-carbon economy.
(Source: http://www.enviroeconomics.org/single-post/2016/05/17/Impact-Modelling-and-Analysis-of-Ontario%E2%80%99s-Proposed-Cap-and-Trade-Program)

He claimed: *"hydro rates are 2 to 3 times higher than competing jurisdictions"*

Fact: Not true. Ontario's rates are highly competitive with those south of the border, despite those jurisdictions relying on dirty fossil fuels. Hydro Quebec's latest electricity price comparison shows Ontario's average industrial electricity prices were 8.35 c/kWh in the South and 6.35 c/kWh in the North. These rates are lower than New York (8.72 c/kWh), Pennsylvania (9.59 c/kWh), Michigan (9.13 c/kWh), and the U.S. industrial average (8.71 c/kWh). Ontario is also in this position *after* doing the heavy lifting of rebuilding aging infrastructure and transitioning off of coal – costs other jurisdictions have yet to bear. (Source: http://www.hydroquebec.com/publications/en/docs/comparaison-electricity-prices/comp_2016_en.pdf , Ontario Ministry of Energy, IESO)