

TRANSCRIPT – Patrick Brown on CFRA 580 – May 11, 2017

MPP: Patrick Brown

Media: CFRA

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Host: Our next guest, Patrick Brown, the leader of Ontario's PC party. Good morning.

Brown:

- Morning, thanks for having me back on the show

Host: Yeah, my pleasure. Good to hear from you sir. We have been dealing with a severe situation here in Eastern Ontario, as you well know, Patrick Brown, there has been severe flooding. The Premier has been here. What, if anything, would you have done different if you were the Premier, with the flood response?

Brown:

- Well, you know, it's obviously shocking
- And, the, the level of devastation, I think, it took many by surprise
- You know, I try to not make any partisan comments out of a situation that is tragic
- I've spoken to some officials on the ground and asking if additional resources are, are, are needed and if there's questions that should be posed in the legislature
- That assessment isn't yet
- What, what, what, what I would say is that probably understanding—or, I, I think there was probably a sense that we underestimated the size of, of the crisis and, and, and when you need immediate help
- And so, I, I think the lesson here is that when these disasters happen, that you have to be prepared to have help on the ground rather rapidly

Host: OK, let me ask you about something else. It's, it's interesting. You know, housing has been such a hot issue in Toronto and your position is we need to increase supply of housing—that there's been a lot of red tape in building housing and this is partly responsible for the housing crisis. A lot of questions are being asked now about planning, because of this flood. And whether or not we should be building houses where they've been for years and whether we need to really start seriously examining whether houses should be built in areas that are known to flood frequently. What do you think?

Brown:

- Well, certainly, I, I, I think you have to have some—there, th-, there needs to be appropriate planning when it comes to building in areas where there could be floodplains, where there is risk of this, of this happening

- I think Toronto is a very different situation—we're, we're, we're talking about, in the 905, where there's been almost minimal—
- The buildings has [sic] gone down 90 percent over the last 10 years, when there's simply not been the, the, the same capacity, you see skyrocketing housing prices—

Host: Mm-hmm.

Brown:

- --but I, I, I, I do agree with the—the point in the question is that, you know, you, you, you can't give people the confidence *inaudible* they're moving into an area that's safe
- And, and, and, and leave them vulnerable for a natural disaster like this

Host: OK, let's move on to some other things. You've been the PC party leader for 2 years. Happy anniversary, by the way! It was—

Brown:

- Well—

Host: --two years ago on the 9th, I believe, right?

Brown:

- It was!
- About 2 years ago

Host: what's been the biggest challenge as leader of Ontario's PC party?

Brown:

- I think the biggest challenge is that in many respects being the opposition leader is sort of like drinking out of a, a firehose
- There's so many issues going on at the same time and it's a giant province
- And, you know, you're trying to break through what is a busy media market to talk about serious issues—whether it's the hydro crisis, the debt level, the probation crisis right now
- And so, being able to—in opposition it's always difficult to be able to tell your story
- So it means you have to work, work like a dog—non-stop—to get out there, and, and I've been trying to do that, usually doing 20, 25 events a weekend

Host: yeah, so it's, it's been about—and you've faced criticism for this in the media. Pollsters will go out into the field and they'll say what do you think about the job Patrick Brown is doing and folks say who is Patrick Brown?

Brown:

- What I am encouraged though by is that obviously we've seen very positive signs in the polls and the by-elections and those that do know what I'm working on in Queen's Park have a very favourable reaction
- Those that have a similar knowledge of what's the Premier's doing don't have a similar reaction so
- I do believe there is a significant appetite for change in Ontario, we just need to do a better job in letting people know we're the only party that's going to cut red tape going to get hydro rates under control, make Ontario a job creator in Canada again

Host: Okay you stand accused by the liberals on a daily basis of being the man with no plan. When you look at the plan from the liberals there's a plan, 25% off the hydro bill. There's a plan for rent control, there's a plan for a foreign buyers' tax and free tuition, there's a pharamcare plan they have lots of plans, how do you counter this on the man with no plan claim?

Brown:

- Well first of all any time a government has to attack their opponent is because they don't have their—they spend their time attacking me because they don't have confidence in their own record
- The reality is they had no plan in housing, we're the ones that put forward a housing plan on the needs to create more supply in the GTA
- On hydro we've been up on this for years and years asking about sky rocketing hydro prices, pointing out the structural problems and they say they have a fair hydro plan Rob
- Their fair hydro plan is not a plan, it's just borrowing
- Borrowing is not a plan
- Whereas we put out the structural changes to hydro that we believe needed to happen immediately
- That means ending the unmitigated disaster the green energy act, these horrible long-term contracts that we have this massive over generation
- We give energy to Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York
- We produce way more energy than we need
- And you'd think after they borrow all this money to pay for the bad contracts, you'd think they'd stop signing new ones
- The day after they announced their borrowing plan, they proceeded with 1100 more of these ridiculous contracts
- We're the only ones who are going to look at these bad deals
- We're the only ones who are going to stop signing these bad deals
- We're the only ones who are going to rein in executive salary increases

- We're paying people absurd salaries the CEO gets \$4.5M when in Quebec it's \$450,000
- This is a government that is out of touch on hydro
- They're pursuing their fire sale of hydro one despite massive opposition
- And we're going to continue to point out not what are headlines but what are the real, structural changes that are needed for hydro

Host: Let me ask you two things: OSAP and OHIP. There is a new OSAP, free tuition. What's your position on that, and with OHIP it's now called OHIP+ it will include free medications for those under 25 years of age. An opinion on both please.

Brown:

- So on OSAP, there is no new money in the system
- All they did is they changed existing student assistance programs and they tried to repackage it
- So no new money
- There's no additional help
- It's- I think a lot of students who expect additional help when they go to school in September will be deeply disappointed
- On OHIP+, listen, this is their 8th pharmacare plan, we have 8 plans now
- And they have not run the first 7 plans properly
- And let me say, of course everyone pharmacare, of course everyone supports enhanced-

Host: Do you? Do you?

Brown:

- Of course I do!

Host: Okay

Brown:

- Of course I support enhanced drug benefits
- Why would you not want someone who can't afford their drugs to be able to afford it
- But I want everyone to know, that if you have illusions that the Liberals are going to get this right, this is the same gang that did gas plants, this is the same gang that did eHealth and blew it and they're already blowing pharmacare
- You know you looked at the list of drugs that are covered, they're not even covering drugs for kids that have cystic fibrosis
- They're incompetent

- They are not good managers
- And every new issue they take on, they seem to fumble
- Just like they did with the Green Energy Act
- They will find a way to make this all about bureaucracy
- They will make this about the Liberal party
- They'll find ways to make it benefit themselves
- And we're going to continue to call them out on it

Host: What's wrong with Ontario's probation system?

Brown:

- This is an incredible crisis
- So here we have a situation where you've got 4,513 convicted criminals who have preached their probation and they are out there on the loose
- We're talking about violent criminals, sexual predators
- And Kathleen Wynne and Yasir Naqvi are okay with this system of self-reporting
- So in other provinces, when you have a dangerous criminal, you have home visits who's on probation
- You check up on them
- You have surveillance
- In Ontario, we have a self-reporting system
- And there's a great exposé on Global that was showing – there was a case in Oshawa where there was a child sex predator who is supposed to self-report
- And of course they go out there
- They don't self-report
- And they reoffend
- And so there's a high rate of dangerous criminals reoffending
- And I just find it unbelievable that the government seems to keep on saying, everything is fine
- And they're okay with self-reporting
- Self-reporting is a joke
- And it's not right to our communities
- And it's not right to – frankly re-victimize those that are the original victims

Host: Okay, what would you do to address these concerns? Would you hire more probation officers? Would you –

Brown

- Well the probation officers –

Host: What would you do?

Brown:

- A number of things

- We do need more probation – probation officers
- And I would give them the resources to their job
- But right now, they're not permitted to do home visits
- The government actually discourages it
- You got some whistleblowers, you've got the probation officers, saying they want to do home visits
- They don't believe this self-reporting is good enough
- And so I'm going to – I'm going to go to go to bat for our probation officers and say let them to their job
- And by the way it's not just probation officers who are blowing the whistle on the government
- And saying they're wrong on this
- There was a Global TV interview, where they had a judge saying that he was – he couldn't believe when someone is convicted, and there's conditions assigned to their sentence
- That the government's not following through
- And ensuring that they're followed

Media: Okay one final question for you. Patrick Brown Ontario PC Leader, there are allegations of ballot box stuffing and vote rigging in the Ottawa West-Nepean nomination process - to get a candidate nominated in Ottawa West-Nepean for the PC party. What's your response to those allegations sir?

Brown:

- So let me say, first of all that in our nominations, we've had over 60 now, and in very few have there been any complaints
- And I, I, I do think the party runs a fair process
- In this case of Ottawa—West Nepean, I heard some complaints
- I thought there might be an appeal coming
- Because we have an appeal, where people can review any irregularities
- There hasn't been an appeal in, in Ottawa
- So I guess in retrospect they, they chose not to debate these issues
- I would say this though, you know, I, I want to make sure that our nominations are transparent, fair and democratic.
- So one thing that I did just this week is I've asked PwC to be observers in the nominations
- To make sure that, you know, people, if they have any questions, that there is a level of fairness
- And they, they have a third party that they can report any, any concerns to
- And, and I'm only going to allow nominations that are certified by PwC to proceed they're the ones that have done other political party...

Host: That's PriceWaterhouseCoopers Patrick?

Brown:

- Yeah, yeah

Host: Okay, so do you consider the matter closed and this candidate nominated then?

Brown:

- Well, yeah, unless there's an appeal then the nomination stands and I, I, I don't get involved in these matters
- But I, I, I, I felt, given the fact there was some complaints that I would ask PwC to be an observer in the process
- My goal is just to see big contested, exciting nominations
- I think the fact that Liberals are now appointing candidates, they can't find people to run
- And our, our party is facing more contested nominations, more people running, more members coming in than we've ever seen before – that's a good sign

Host: you had nothing to do with the nomination of Ottawa-West-Nepean?

Brown:

- Well certainly I don't get involved in nominations, so yes

[END TRANSCRIPT]