

TRANSCRIPT – Andrea Horwath PQPS – Tuesday December 12, 2017

MPP: Andrea Horwath

Media: Bliss, Ferguson, Jeffords, Fitzpatrick, Jones, Haines, Brulee, Smith Cross, Rath

[START TRANSCRIPT]

[In Progress]

Horwath:

- -- this is a problem
- This is partisan messaging
- Goes on the bills and ****inaudible**** inserts
- And as such it should be paid for by the Liberal party
- Not by the people of Ontario
- And the fact that uhm that the Liberals refuse to acknowledge that
- It is, you know, it's just not fair to Ontarians
- That they're – that public money is being used uh for partisan, political purposes by the Liberals
- And again, it adds insult to injury that the very chair of the Liberal election campaign, Minister Deb Matthews, Deputy Premier signed off on this partisan advertising
- Absolutely inappropriate

Jeffords: Is there any way to know, just based on the order in council, what this would cost people?

Horwath:

- Uh well, there's nothing in the order of council that costs out as far as I know
- We certainly have copies of it
- I'm happy to provide it for you
- But I think people understand that you should not use public money for partisan purposes

- The governing party should not be using public money to uhm to help it send a political message to the people of Ontario
- That's what they're doing
- With these inserts
- That's what they're doing with these messages on the bills
- And it's absolutely the wrong thing to do

Media: What is it about the – what's written down that you find very political or very partisan? Like what's sort of wording that concerns your –

Horwath:

- - I mean, it goes through an absolute list of the requirements
- They must talk about the Fair Hydro Plan
- They must talk about the 25% reduction
- They must do this
- They must do that
- It's an edict to the local distribution companies across this province
- Uh that says, you must tell the Liberal story
- Uh in the hydro bills
- Totally unacceptable

Jeffords: Andrea, it seems like an unusual way to advertise. Is it a way to get around advertising rules?

Horwath:

- Absolutely
- It's absolute – it's a way to not only get around the advertising rules
- But it's a way to use public money to politically advertise
- Which should not be happening
- So it gets around the rules, but it also uses, you know, public dollars to do political advertising
- It's absolutely unacceptable

Media: Thoughts of the paramedics issue – it's unusual for first responders to come out to complain about another first responder, so what do you think of –

Horwath:

- You mean – it – it – it is
- It's really, really, really unusual to see that
- And I mean what I think it shows is that Kathleen Wynne is gone on a path that's creating division once again
- And that's, and that's never a good thing for Ontarians to see
- You know that this kind of division happen

*Media: I came in kind of late. You must have an opinion on the situation with this lawsuit that dropped yesterday with all this **inaudible** going on. Your thoughts on that?*

Horwath:

- On this – this is the uh – the uh – the \$100,000
- *crosstalk*
- Okay, look it, I have to say it's very frustrating to be here in the legislature when people are struggling to pay their bills
- When people are lying up in stretchers **inaudible** hospitals
- And all that Kathleen Wynne and Patrick Brown seem to be able to talk about is each other
- Uh – it's like a school yard spat and frankly, there are much more important things for the people of Ontario to have the leaders talk about
- As opposed to a, you know, uh – uh – uh – who's – who's right and who's wrong when it comes to a – you know – a lawsuit
- It's very, very disappointing all the way around
- And let's face it, we should be talking about the things that matter to Ontarians
- Not, you know, whether Kathleen Wynne is going to give – give Patrick Brown a black eye

*Jeffords: **inaudible** about the **inaudible** tax agreement for uh pot sales – is that 75% **inaudible** a good deal for Ontario? **inaudible***

Horwath:

- Well, I mean, I think the more important question is what's going to happen to the municipalities in terms of their ability to deal with what uh what they see as something that's going to be a significant impact on their communities
- And so, uh, in terms of costs of things like their policing services, their – uh – you know, licensing perhaps
- Building inspection – all those kinds of things
- We know that uh that municipalities are already, you know, struggling with downloading that the conservatives did and has not been uh completely addressed by the Liberals
- And so anything that adds costs to their bills is going to be a problem
- So again, it's really shocking though that here we are 6 months from this uhm this new regime to be in place and we have more questions than answers
- I mean, we still don't know what the cost is going to be or what the pricing levels are going to be
- We don't know what the municipalities are going to see in terms of financial help
- Uh – we don't – we do know is that 40 shops across the province is not going to deal with the criminal element problem that we have
- It's going to be an open season, frankly, for the criminal element with uh only 40 store fronts going up in this province
- So, lots of concerns still exists
- And lots of questions remain unanswered

Bliss: Andrea, about the hospitals with overcrowding up in South Lake – they converted an auditorium, a gym – they've said that they had to put patients in family waiting rooms and staff lounges. Uhm – government's opened up a secondary hospital but there's no relief in sight –

Horwath:

- -- it's not going to – it's not even going to scratch the surface of what families are facing in our hospital system
- I mean, they have squeezed the hospitals uh to a point of no return at this point
- I mean, there are people all over the GTA
- All over the province of Ontario

- In stretchers – uh – in – in the most unaccommodating places
- And so, whether that's a gymnasium or a lounge or a, you know, in some cases shower rooms
- I mean, good on South Lake hospital for going public with this
- Uh because we've been raising this issue for a long time
- We've talked to a lot of folks
- And been in a lot of hospitals to try to raise the alarm bells
- But this is a wholly inadequate response
- And we're in this mess
- Specifically because the Liberals have been cutting back on our hospitals
- Look, hospitals are a basic service that people expect to have uh, have an ability to access when they need it the most
- To have people, you know, even being turned away from hospitals now
- In our province
- Is worrisome
- And we're at the beginning of flu season
- I just – I shudder to think of what might be happening in this province over the next couple of months
- It is completely irresponsible of this government to put us in this mess
- And its peoples live that we're talking about
- Its families and people's lives, it's a terrible situation

Media: where does the money come from though? Right, I mean, for it to provide relief, if billions

Horwath:

- But I mean
- Not only to provide relief
- But look
- The time it takes to make sure that that relief is effective is a worry
- I mean, the government can throw money at this
- But they've caused such a problem in the system
- Uh, that even professionals in the system are saying
- Even with the extra money, we can't hire people, we can't hire the staff to take on temporary jobs for temporary beds
- Um, it is a, it is a, you know, the Minister of Health criticized me for calling it a crisis
- He said "oh you're calling everything a crisis"
- Well it's not just me

- Now, CEO's of hospitals are calling it a crisis
- It is a crisis
- But it's a crisis that was created by government
- They thought that they could cut back on those hospital budgets for 10 years
- That's what they've done for a decade
- They have been squeezing those hospital budgets
- And now, we're reaping the results of the results of that wrong-headed move the Liberals undertook for those 10 years

Media: On Bill 166 tomorrow, are you supporting it, are you voting against it? I'm particularly interested in what you think of the Ticket Sales Act portion of it.

Horwath:

- You know, it's really frustrating
- I think this is the third time at least
- That the Liberals have brought something forward
- To try and address this problem
- What we still see is people not being able to afford, or even get access, to the tickets that are being, you know, are being, given away to others or kept separate for other interests to get a hold of them before every day families can
- I mean people can't even take their kids to the hockey game
- So I haven't – I don't have much faith in what the government is doing this time
- Because the last 2 or 3 times they went at it they didn't fix it for families

Media: are you going to vote for it or against it?

Horwath:

- Well, I'm actually not positive what our, what our final decision is on that bill at this point
 - I mean to be honest with you I - *staffer whispers to Horwath*
 - We're going to be voting against it, there you go
 - It just doesn't do enough
 - I mean again, I don't see it actually solving the problem
 - Again, it's the third attack at this by the Liberals at least
 - And we just don't have a lot of confidence that – I mean, that's the big issue, that there's still going to be big blocks of tickets that are not going to be accessible
- *cross talk*

Media: But the idea of a price cap, though

Horwath:

- And we don't know who those tickets are going to
- So it's very worrisome
- Again, do we think people need to be getting better access to tickets at a regular price and not inflated price
- Absolutely
- Do we think that this government has done enough in this bill to ensure people get access to the events that they want to attend? That they want to take their families to?
- We don't think it does, we don't think it hits the mark

*Media: Andrea, just want to be clear about *inaudible* voting against it, is it in regards to the language on the bills itself or the inserted *inaudible**

Horwath:

- It's both – it's both
- It requires the local distribution companies to put information on the bills
- And as inserts
- And then it lists out all of the details about what needs to be in that information
- It needs to promote and advertise the government fair hydro plan
- It needs to talk about the 25% reduction
- It needs to talk about the 8% HST rebate that they – we forced them to do a year ago
- It's very obviously partisan in its nature
- And it forces the local distribution companies – or your local hydro company
- To put that information in the hydro bills

Ferguson: Um, I missed you earlier, um, I know you voted in favor – caucus voted in favor of the cannabis bill, but do you have any reservations on that?

Horwath:

- You know, well, it's obvious even today there are still so many unanswered questions
- I mean we don't know what the price point is
- We don't know what's going to happen in terms of municipalities
- And how much they are going to be able to get support from the government
- We do know municipalities are worried about the impact on their budgets in terms of taking uh, you know, taking responsibility around policing and all of those pieces

- But what we know for sure is that 40 storefronts
- Is not going to deal with the criminal element that we have here in the province
- In fact 40 storefronts basically tells the criminal element its wide open season for marijuana here in Ontario
- And I don't think that's very responsible

Ferguson: Okay that said, why vote for it then if you have those reservations?

Horwath:

- Well I mean, we know it's coming to Ontario
- We know all across Canada there is going to be access to legalized marijuana
- That's something that we support
- And in fact, New Democrats, for many, many decades have been saying that marijuana should be decriminalized in our, in our country, as well as our province, and so, that's – this is a step towards that
- But, and the government is basically forced to put basically some kind of regime in place
- The problem is, they have been dragging their feet
- And they, there is still so many unanswered questions
- So yes we support you know, the general, you know, implementation that needs to happen, but not the specifics of what the government has done
- Because at this point there is still so many questions

[END TRANSCRIPT]