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Unedited Transcript

The following is a partially edited transcript of Question Period.

Table of Contents

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Thibeault)	
Re: Energy Management.	2
MPP Brown (N. Miller) to Premier Wynne (Gravelle)	
Re: Ring of Fire.....	4
MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hoskins)	
Re: Long-Term Care Oversight.....	6
MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hoskins)	
Re: LTC Home Oversight follow-up.....	8
MPP Clark to Minister Hoskins	
Re: Everly Yolkowskie.....	10
MPP Tabuns to Minister Sousa	
Re: Hydro One & Public Accounts	12
MPP Potts to Minister Ballard	
Re: Reducing Homelessness	13
MPP McNaughton to Minister Duguid	
Re: SMB & Manufacturing Support	15
MPP Gretzky to Minister Naidoo-Harris	
Re: Child Care.....	17
MPP Vernile to Minister Gravelle	
Re: Mining Sector.....	19
MPP Pettapiece to Minister Thibeault	
Re: Hydro Affordability.....	21
MPP French to Minister Oraziatti (Naqvi)	
Re: Adam Capay.....	23
MPP Hoggarth to Minister Hoskins	
Re: Mackenzie Vaughan hospital.....	24
MPP Hillier to Minister Naqvi	
Re: Adam Capay.....	26

MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Thibeault) Re: Energy Management

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Another day, another Liberal energy scandal. The past seven days have been a banner week for the Liberals. \$12 million wasted on consultants and advertisements. \$28 million lost ago lawsuit for a project it hasn't even been built. And yesterday it was \$81 million Liberal accounting error by the IESO. And today, today we learned that Northland Power won their court case against the government and on October 21st was awarded -- hear this Mr. Speaker -- \$95 million from Ontario electricity financial corporation. Mr. Speaker, someone has to pay for this \$59 million court case. When will the ratepayers learn from the government that they're on the hook again for another \$59 million because of Liberal blunder?

>> Premier Wynne: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. So I know that the Minister of energy is going to want to speak to the specifics, Mr. Speaker, but, you know, I just think it's important that we take a step back and we recognize that when this government under the previous Premier came into office in 2003, we were dealing with a degraded electricity system, Mr. Speaker. There was a lot of work that had to be done over the years to build that system up. We completed the closure. I grant it was not the start -- Completed the closure of coal plants in this province, Mr. Speaker, taking -- saving \$4 billion in health related costs, Mr. Speaker. And you know opposition can heckle that but they should talk to families of children with asthma, Mr. Speaker. \$4 billion in savings in health costs is not real, Mr. Speaker. Speak to the families of childrens with asthma. We've invested in a system that had --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier. I had a very specific question on the Northland case. Yet another example of Liberal mismanagement. All we hear is talking points on coal, which by the way the Progressive Conservatives initiated the phaseout of coal. Mr. Speaker, my question is about Liberal waste. It's about Liberal scandal. I would actually appreciate the Premier could answer this. \$12 million. \$28 million. \$81 million. \$95 million all in the last week. \$216 million gone in a week because of this government's incompetence. Mr. Speaker, who is on the hook for that? Not pointing fingers, not trying to say what happened ten years ago. I want an answer. Who is going to pay for that \$206 million? Mr. Speaker, it's not the Minister of energy. It's not the Premier. It's not the Minister of finance. They're going to make ratepayers pay again. Does the Premier not appreciate that seniors, families, businesses can't afford these skyrocketing hydro rates?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I care very much that people are able to have clean energy, that they can afford the energy, Mr. Speaker, and that it's reliable, Mr. Speaker. And so -- Changes, Mr. Speaker, to help people to afford energy

and, Mr. Speaker, what happened ten years ago, what happened 15 years ago does matter in terms of this electricity system, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the opposition can take a very narrow short-sighted view and pretend that there is no history, that there is no -- Context but that is just not the reality. We are taking steps. We are removing 8% from bills across this province, Mr. Speaker. We're cutting delivery charges to 300,000 rural customers, Mr. Speaker. By 20% in total with the 8% and 12%, Mr. Speaker. We are --

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. It's very clear the Premier does not want to talk about the four scandals that have happened on her watch just in the last week. A \$95 million court case isn't new to this government. They're used to losing court cases. They're used to throwing it on the backs of ratepayers. The oesd and northland have been battling it out in years. The oefc will now appeal the result again to the supreme court of Canada. Millions and millions have been spent on lawyers. What I'd like to know -- we know the cost of the judgment but, Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us how much she has ordered the government to spend on legal fees? Please show some clarity on this endless waste we're seeing that's being put on taxpayers and ratepayers.

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and answer this question. You know, Mr. Speaker, we are aware of this and this is an ongoing matter. It is still in process, Mr. Speaker, so we can't comment on that. But what we can comment on, Mr. Speaker, is the great work that we're doing on this side of the House to help families and to help businesses right across the province, Mr. Speaker. You know we've actually reduced bills on January 1st by 8% for families, small businesses and farms. For those that are living in rural and remote areas, Mr. Speaker, 330,000 families, those 330,000 families, Mr. Speaker, they will actually see a significant reduction of 20% as well. When it comes to the agreement that the opposition doesn't want to talk about, Mr. Speaker, which is that landmark agreement with Québec, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be bringing in 2 terawatts of power that will be targeted at our natural gas plants, Mr. Speaker. That will be saving, Mr. Speaker, 1 megaton of ghgs, Mr. Speaker. That's a 25% reduction. On that side of the House --

MPP Brown (N. Miller) to Premier Wynne (Gravelle) Re: Ring of Fire

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. And since the government won't answer a question when it cops to their latest hydro scandal, let's try a different subject. Let's try to have a conversation on mining. In May of 2012, the government promised thousands of jobs and new infrastructure for the ring of fire. In 2013 the budget promised to improve vital access to the region. And then in 2014, the budget of the province committed \$1 billion to the ring of fire and then again in 2015 the same promise of \$1 billion. Surprise, surprise. In the 2016 budget, again -- Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate why the government likes to heckle their record of inaction. 2016, for a fourth time, a re-announcement of the same fund. But to date not a single cent has gone to the ring of fire. The economic benefit from the region and first nation communities is incredible. Yet this government won't -- it hasn't put a shovel in the ground. So, Mr. Speaker, my question directly to the Premier. When are we actually going to see --

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I -- I know that the leader -- opposite, the leader of the opposition doesn't want to recognize that the work that has been done with the first nations community, with the metal first nations is very important work that had to be done, Mr. Speaker. In fact the training dollars that have gone into communities, the support that has already begun, Mr. Speaker, in order that those community can be part of the development of the ring of fire and can be part of the economic development, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that the leader of the opposition doesn't value that, but that is the work that has been going on, Mr. Speaker. There has been a serious engagement with those communities to make sure that they are able to take part in the economic development and that as we put shovels in the ground and we build roads Mr. Speaker -- That we build those roads in a way that will connect communities so that yes, they can be part of the economic development of the ring of fire but much beyond that, Mr. Speaker, that they have social supports that allow them to --

>> MPP N. Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Premier. The current government has overseen the entire life of the ring fire mineral deposit to date, from discovery to where we find ourselves today. Read ago press release from 2012, you would have thought a chromite mine was a done-deal. The release proclaims thousands of jobs coming to northern Ontario, has quotes from five Ministers, including the current Premier. It the boasts of the over 20 mining companies that holding claims in the region, a far cry from what we see today. It even goes into detail on a chromite processing facility to be opened in close proximity to the then Minister 's own riding. The government to date has truly overpromised and under-delivered on the ring of fire. So, Speaker, why should

anyone believe that this government is capable of doing what it takes to develop ring of fire?

>> Min. Gravelle: Indeed working hard and very diligently to move the progress forward on the ring of fire and that means, Mr. Speaker, working with all of our partners, working with industry, working with the federal government and certainly particularly as the Premier pointed out working with our first nations to move this project forward. When we signed the regional framework agreement in -- Mr. Speaker, when we signed a regional framework agreement in 2014 with the metal first nation we made a commitment to work with them on regional infrastructure. We made a commitment to work with them on socioeconomic impacts, on resource revenue sharing, all important discussions taking place and may I say discussions are at a very significant point right now in terms of them partnering with us decisions related to the community corridor study. If members of the opposition do not believe we should be having those conversations they should say so. The bottom line is we are working hard. This is a complicated file and we are - Continue to move forward and make progress --

>> MPP N. Miller: Again to the Premier. Premier, I think I've heard that answer before from your Minister. Speaker, first nation communities in the ring of fire region are integral to the entire development. They also stand to gain the most in the local mining opportunities. Mining employs more indigenous people than any other sector, about 14% of the mining work force. So it's important to the communities in the areas to see some progress. So through the Speaker, other than framework agreements to negotiate, what tangible progress have you made on this important project?

>> Min. Gravelle: We recognize it is crucial we move forward on a transportation infrastructure in the ring of fire and that's indeed why we are so keen to move forward with our work with the federal government. This is a nationally significant project, one that deserves federal government support and that's the emphasis we're making as well. In terms of the work with our industry, there are a significant number of companies that have expressed tremendous interest in the ring of fire. We are going to move with them to help move this project forward. This is an absolutely crucial part of our commitment to make sure decisions made related to what will most directly impact their future development. That's why it is so crucial we have those discussions under the regional framework agreement that will make sure the decisions that are made. Are shared by our partners, not just by the first nations but by industry and by the federal government. We'll keep working hard on this. I'm committed to it, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hoskins) Re: Long-Term Care Oversight

>> Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, yesterday police revealed that at least eight elderly residents of long-term care homes were allegedly murdered between 2007 and 2014 in Woodstock and London. It is horrific. It is tragic and it is heartbreaking and our thoughts and sympathy go out to the families and loved ones, Speaker. I understand that there is an open police investigation happening right now and I know that no one here would do anything to impede or compromise that investigation in any way, Speaker, but there are some genuine straightforward questions that need to be asked today. Premier, Ontarians want to know how it is possible that alleged murders can go undetected inside a long-term care home in Ontario for seven years.

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, this is an extremely distressing case, and as I said yesterday I don't think there's anyone in this legislature -- this is not a partisan issue in any way, Mr. Speaker. There is no one in this legislature who is not distressed by this case, Mr. Speaker. And so the question that the leader of the shirt party asked, how could this happen, is exactly what the police investigation is about, Mr. Speaker. That is exactly the question that needs to be answered and so we need to let the police investigation unfold, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, of course there is a police investigation ongoing and I respect that very much. But the question I'm asking has to do with the ministry of long-term care and their oversight procedures. While this is perhaps the most graphic, serious and tragic example of abuse and mistreatment in our long-term care system, we all know that it's not the first. The families of 78,000 Ontarians in long-term care want to know what action the government has taken in the last 24 hours to ensure that their loved ones are safe. Has the Premier ordered any action or review of current oversight measures in Ontario's long-term care centres?

>> Min. Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, let me also add my deepest sympathy to these families who have not only had to mourn the death of a loved one but now face the allegations as outlined by police yesterday. It truly is tragic in fact for the communities of Woodstock and London as well. I also -- it's important the police, as deliberately, as stated yesterday morning, that there's no danger to any of the residents in long-term care homes in this province as a result of these alleged actions. We have stated the same. We have one of the most robust oversight accountability measures to ensure the safety and protection of long-term care residents certainly in Canada, Mr. Speaker. In fact in the world. And that inspection process is robust. That being said we are actively participating in

collaborating with the police to ensure that the many questions including those from the opposition, those questions are answered in due course.

>> Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, something has obviously failed and that's the reason I'm asking the question today, Speaker. Again it has to do with oversight, Speaker. Speaker, seven years and no one knew. That's a failure of our system and that's what I think the people of Ontario require us to look at, as a group, Speaker. So my question has to do with oversight in our system, not the details of the investigation. We all know those details are going to come, Speaker. It has to do with the oversight that's needed to protect the most vulnerable seniors and residents of long-term care. There are 78,000 residents in long-term care homes across Ontario today, and they and their families have simple straightforward questions that deserve answers from the government. What is the Premier doing to improve oversight and protection of Ontarians living in long-term care homes in our province?

>> Min. Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that I remind all of us in this chamber that we are dealing with allegations. There are absolutely horrible, terrible allegations but they're allegations nonetheless. And I also want to, appears the police did yesterday, in reassuring the public and reassuring the residents of long-term care homes that there is no danger to them as a result of these horrible allegations, Mr. Speaker. I can also assure the legislature and the public that the highest priority for myself and my ministry is the safety and security of residents in our long-term care homes as it is for all Ontarians. We have among the best oversight mechanisms for critical incidents as well as for general annual inspections in the world, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to improve upon that strong robust system, but it's important that all of us remind Ontarians And assure them of their safety in this critical time.

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hoskins) Re: LTC Home Oversight follow-up

>> Andrea Horwath: My next question's also to the Premier, Speaker. As we continue to learn the details of this unspeakable tragedy and the ones before it, I want to ask the Premier very clearly, does she have faith? Does she have faith, Speaker, in the current rules and regulations -- Does she have faith in the current rules and regulations that are currently in place in the province Ontario to make sure that long-term care homes are safe? Are safe for the people who live there.

>> Premier Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to be very frank with the legislature that what the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has said is exactly right. We're dealing with allegations and a very horrible horrible situation, Mr. Speaker. But there are processes that are in place that need to unfold. But, Mr. Speaker, if the leader of the third party is suggesting that somehow I'm not interested in getting to the bottom of this, that I don't know, I don't want to know what happened, she's absolutely wrong, Mr. Speaker. I believe that there are systems in place that are set and are designed to protect the innocence of people against whom there are allegations, but also, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that answers are found to very difficult questions. If, Mr. Speaker, as those -- As those processes unfold and I'll complete my answer in the supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I agree with the Premier insofar as this is a very tragic situation, that we're talking about someone's parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts or uncles. We're talking about family, Speaker, and that's what makes it so extremely important. But Ontarians need to know exactly what's being done by the Premier to ensure that something this horrific and heartbreaking never happens again. So will Premier be directing her Minister of health to review how the government monitors nursing homes in this province?

>> Premier Wynne: As I said, Mr. Speaker, there are processes in place right now that must be allowed to unfold, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely imperative that the police have the opportunity to do the work that they need to do to get to the bottom of the questions that are obviously being asked by of one, especially by the families of the people who have died, Mr. Speaker, and it is the responsible of the government and ministry of health to make sure all the systems and protections are in place. Mr. Speaker, at some point if there is a need for an ... review or inquiry, we will absolutely undertake that, Mr. Speaker, not because of political pressure from the NDP, Mr. Speaker, but because we all need to have the answers. But in the interim, Mr. Speaker, there are processes that the police are leading and they need to be allowed to do their work.

>> Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, these deaths are unspeakably tragic and I can only imagine the pain that these families must be feeling right now. But it's not about impeding a police investigation, Speaker. It is not about impeding an investigation into this tragedy. But there are 78,000 Ontarians in long-term care right now, and that means 78,000 families are looking to the Premier for reassurance about their loved ones. When will the Premier be taking action to ensure that Ontario has the most effective oversight, the most effective possible oversight and monitoring of our long-term care facilities?

>> Min. Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I believe that we -- I know that we have one of the strongest oversight mechanisms for long-term care homes in the entire world, and we continue to work to improve that. But I want to speak to the families of those that are at the centre of these allegations and I want to assure them that we as a government will do absolutely everything possible to answer their questions, to answer the questions that they have, that their family members have, that Ontarians have and rightly deserve answers to and we'll do that in the context of collaborating and participating in the police investigation that is under way. And I want to reassure the 78,000 individuals who call long-term care homes their home, Mr. Speaker. There is nothing more important to me, and I give them my absolute commitment as Minister of health to do whatever I can. To ensure their safety and their security in their homes, wherever they might reside in this province, Mr. Speaker. That is my obligation and that is my promise to them.

MPP Clark to Minister Hoskins Re: Everly Yolkowskie

>> MPP Clark: Thanks, Speaker. My question's to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker month ago I asked the Minister to get involved in helping baby Everley yolkowski. Beverly's parents in my riding are still struggling to keep their beautiful baby alive with no help from this government. It's absolutely shameful. This young family is living this nightmare while health bureaucrats waste time. The Minister said he's providing updates? I don't want updates. I want action. To lift this unimaginable burden off this family. The ccac has failed baby Everley. Her parents have lost trust and faith in them. Speaker, this family is in crisis. Will the Minister personally step in to get baby Everley her care without any further delay?

>> Min. Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate this question, and the member opposite knows that we've discussed this tiny person's challenge and the challenge that it's created for her family on a number of occasions. And it truly is distressing. The circumstances that this family is going through. That's why -- and I know the ccac has been involved. My ministry's involved. My office is directly involved. The Minister of children and youth services as well to find a way to provide the level of support that that small infant deserves and we have a responsibility to prove. We're working with the children's hospital of eastern Ontario as well, who has aptly in a hospital setting provided extraordinary care to this tiny individual. I know that this is challenging for all involved. I'm committed to seeing it through and providing the supports that family so desperately needs.

>> MPP Clark: Speaker, the bureaucrats who have utterly failed this family they get to go home at night. For Sarah and Jordan, there's no end to their day. They live this reality 24/7. At any moment, Everley can stop breathing and they have to resuscitate her. It's life and death, and the stress is indescribable. These brave parents do it because they want their little girl at home. But after two months on their own, they're losing hope. They're running out of funds and they're feeling totally abandoned by our health care system. Speaker, this is cruel, and it lacks compassion. Speaker, is this the health care system the Minister wants? If not, will he pick up the phone and call Sarah and Jordan to apologize and assure them that they won't have to go through another night on their own?

>> Min. Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, this is a very challenging situation for the family as I mentioned. There are maybe 50 children around this province that fall into a category of being exceedingly extremely challenging from a medical perspective. We know that this tiny baby was well cared for in hospital, but appropriately, as the parents should -- as the parents want to the and we should support, they want to bring their baby home and provide that support at home. We need to work with them to do that. These are the most challenging individuals that we need to embrace that and we need to find the flexibility to be able to provide that

support. That's what we're trying to do. I'm sorry that it has taken the amount of time it has. I know, however, the ccac has been working, as challenging as this is for them, they've been working as hard as they can to find a resolution. There are now multiple ministries involved. My office is directly involved. I'm confident that we will be able to provide the support this child requires, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Tabuns to Minister Sousa Re: Hydro One & Public Accounts

>> MPP Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the Premier.... to public accounts, nearly \$800 million in Hydro One cash was recognized by the trillium trust last year. These, quote, asset optimization proceeds were supposed to be spent on infrastructure last year. This was the whole point of the Hydro One fail. But none of this Hydro One cash was spent on infrastructure. Will the Premier explain where \$800 million in Hydro One cash proceeds has gone instead of being spent on infrastructure?

>> Min. Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. The member opposite I think does know that all proceeds that are generated from Hydro One in regards to the I.P.O. And since then the subsequent offering, a good portion of that has gone to pay down the debt that's accorded to the transaction and the rest is going directly to the trillium trust, which is being used for infrastructure projects in our community, Mr. Speaker. Something that member opposite hasn't had a plan to do and they actually have not even called for investments in some of these infrastructure projects and transit systems that are critically important to our competitiveness and enabling us to have a higher return for the use of those fund, and that is all the reason that we're making these investments and the transition from Hydro One to be reinvested into our communities.

>> MPP Tabuns: Actually aren't investing the money in infrastructure. But another question. When the Premier gave a privatized Hydro One a \$2.6 billion tax holiday, this increased the book value of the government's remaining ownership in Hydro One by about \$2.4 billion. Last year the government rewrote the trillium trust act to allow the government to recognize this gain on paper as revenue that could somehow be dedicated to infrastructure. But this \$2.4 billion is not ash. It exists only on paper. It cannot be spent on subways. If this accounting adjustment represents more than half of the \$4 billion in Hydro One proceeds the Premier has promised for infrastructure. Will the Premier explain how \$2.4 billion in accounting vapour is going to be used to pay for infrastructure?

>> Min. Sousa: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. This is not a tax holiday that's been attributed to this transaction. This is actually a Normal course of business that's been made. The \$2.8 billion deferred tax benefit actually does provide a net fiscal benefit to the province, all of which is being afforded right into the trillium trust, Mr. Speaker. Not only that we have \$3.4 billion thus far from the transaction that is paying down debt at an additional \$4.59 billion that's going to be going directly to the trust fund to enable us to do the very projects that the member opposite hasn't even planned for. We're making the plans. We're making the reinvestment. They don't like the fact we're generating more fund, more money to be reinvested to make ourselves more competitive, Mr. Speaker. That's what this is all about.

MPP Potts to Minister Ballard Re: Reducing Homelessness

>> MPP Potts: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of housing and the Minister responsible for poverty reduction strategy. Speaker, according to push for change it is estimated one third of Canada's homeless population are youth. Joe Roberts know this is reality as a former homeless youth who has transformed his life to back successful businessman. Joe understands the importance of the power of possibility. Since may 1 of his year Joe Roberts through push for change has been pushing a shopping cart across Canada to help raise awareness for youth homelessness. I think I speak for all of us when I wish Joe success on the rest of his inspiring journey. I know our government is committed to breaking the cycle of poverty for children and youth and ending chronic homelessness in Ontario and, Speaker, I would ask the Minister inform this House on Joe's progress in reducing youth homelessness.

>> Min. Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the member for Beaches-East York for that important question. Speaker, I want to take this time and thank push for change Joe Roberts and Marie Roberts and the rest of their team and all the leaders, including persons with lived exp Erience, who are fighting every day to end homelessness in communities across our great province. Speaker, our government remains committed to end chronic homelessness by 2025 is a crucial step in showing we can and must end homelessness for everyone in our province. Speaker, since 2008 our government has made great strides in lifting tens of thousands of children and youth out of poverty. Our government has also announced \$15 million in additional community homelessness prevention initiative funding for the next two years for a total of 30 million in new investments to support municipalities and their local work to fight homelessness. In fact, Speaker, by 2018 our government's annual ... investment will be almost \$324 million.

>> MPP Potts: Yes, Speaker. Today I had the pleasure and I was honoured to participate in an announcement with the Minister of housing, Minister responsible for poverty reduction that would bring community services would receive \$400,000 for the local poverty reduction fund. It addresses poverty concerns is an issue that I brought up very early in my mandate after the 2014 election and a commitment I made to the people of Beaches- East York and across the province. So I'm proud to be part of a government that takes this issue very, very seriously and is taking action on it. So, Speaker, this funding will help evaluate. Homeless older man with health care needs have to housing.

>> Min. Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you again to the member from Beaches- East York for that question. Our government is investing \$50 million over six years towards the local poverty reduction fund, Speaker. This year we're investing \$16 million through the second year of the local poverty reduction fund.

Over \$5 million of this funding will be used to support eleven community-driven programs, innovative, measurable that will improve the lives of those most affected by poverty and homelessness, grant recipients September -- recipients like ... community services are required to evaluate their success in their program. Through this evaluation we can replicate success to help even more people across the province. Local community organizations are helping us build the body of evidence we need. To identify what's working, measure our progress and expand our efforts to continue making Ontario the best place to call home.

MPP McNaughton to Minister Duguid Re: SMB & Manufacturing Support

>> MPP McNaughton: My question today is for the Minister of economic development and growth. Last week I asked the Minister important questions regarding the changing dynamic when it comes to our economy because of decisions made by this Liberal government. Speaker, it is businesses like small and family businesses, startups and established manufacturing companies that are the backbone of our economy. But these very same businesses are telling us that they longer fear their competition. Instead it's the Liberal government that they fear the most. Speaker, last week the Minister said, and I quote -- no government has ever supported our small business community like this government has, unquote. Speaker, utterly out of Kusch. This government's haphazard policies, sky-high hydro and lack of overall economic plan are driving businesses out of Ontario. Speaker, how could the Minister claim to be the best thing going for small and medium businesses. When every day more and more of them are being driven out of Ontario?

>> Min. Duguid: Mr. Speaker, Ontario is producing some of if not the best small businesses and startups anywhere in north America today. If not anywhere in the world. And that is -- the incredible partnership we have with our small businesses and all the good things we've done, from tax reductions, Mr. Speaker, to L reading the country, if not North America, in reducing regulatory burden for our businesses, rather than talk down those efforts, the member should be joining me in praising those small businesses because we're proud of what they're doing in North America. Mr. Speaker, they're not only cutting edge in terms of growth. They're also leading disruptive technology in Canada and around the world, something, Mr. Speaker, that's going to lead our economy into a very prosperous and bright future. Something we ought to be proud of. Something we're very proud of. We're proud of our small businesses, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP McNaughton: Speaker, back to the Minister. While the Minister brags about the government's poor record and hand out subsidies to large multinational companies by invitation only, small manufacturers in this province are facing a crisis. The vast majority of manufacturers in Ontario employ 50 people or less and they provide many high skilled jobs. Speaker, sadly I've spoken with many of these companies and they have an eye on their exit. They have been pushed to their limit by high energy costs and see no sign from this Liberal government that their crisis has been noticed, let alone that relief is ever coming. These employers have a clear message. This government has become the greatest obstacle to their success. Speaker, is the Minister saying the coalition of concerned manufacturers is wrong about the state of their very own businesses?

>> Min. Duguid: Mr. Speaker, we're proud of the investments we've made in partnership with our manufacturers across this province. In particular, Mr. Speaker, we're proud of the partnerships we've had with our auto sector. We've seen just in the last month alone, Mr. Speaker, the Oshawa manufacturing plant for G.M., the largest manufacturing centre in all of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Because of our partnerships with G.M., we're going to save thousands of jobs in Oshawa, jobs that would be gone. If that party were elected. We just recently saw fiat Chrysler, Mr. Speaker, announce that the future of the Brampton plant thousands of workers, thousands of Ontario auto workers are there, will be saved, Mr. Speaker, because of a part -- because of the partnerships we've with H with them. We're working hard with Ford and Toyota. We're working hard, Mr. Speaker, with Honda. Because of the partnerships that we've brought to that sector, Mr. Speaker, our sector in Ontario is alive and well. If they had their way, we wouldn't have an auto sector..

MPP Gretzky to Minister Naidoo-Harris Re: Child Care

>> MPP Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the Premier. Today early childhood educators and child care workers from across the province came to Queen's Park to deliver thousands of signatures on a petition collected from Windsor to Wawa calling for a universal child care system in Ontario. A new report by the Association of Early Childhood Educators shares the experience of those working in a sector with low wages and limited benefits. Delivering a service that few parents can even afford. What will it take for this government to finally listen to child care workers and families and commit to a system of universal, affordable child care in Ontario?

>> Min. Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for asking this very important question. I'm so pleased to be here today as we recognize the sixteenth annual child care worker and early childhood educator appreciation day. After all the work that our early childhood educators do on the ground is so very important. These are the smiling faces and helping hands that ensure that our young people are looked after. These are the people that we entrust our precious children with, the ones we put our faith in and the ones on the front lines shaping our children and future generations. So it is with great respect that I am here today and proud to speak out about our early childhood educators. We are providing, Mr. Speaker, \$269 million to support a wage increase in the licensed child care sector. We're also adding an additional \$1 an hour to up that to \$2 an hour for early childhood educators. This is an important sector and one that we respect and are happy to work with.

>> MPP Gretzky: Again to the Premier. Child care is more than a conversation of places and spaces. Parents who couldn't afford child care before this government's throne speech are no better off today. Working conditions in the child care sector are reaching a tipping point. Where over a quarter of our dedicated professionals are looking for another job. Nearly 25% of early childhood educators makes under \$15 an hour, despite their tremendous role and responsibility in caring for our children. The future of this province. Will this government finally commit to universal child care systems that works for child care workers and Ontario families?

>> Min. Naidoo-Harris: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased and proud to rise today and talk about the important work that our early childhood educators are doing. Once again we are transforming the way that we deliver child care in this province, transforming it. We're transforming it with an historic investment. An historic investment not just in our early childhood educators but also in our children and the future of this province. And how are we doing this? Well, we recognize that this means that this is about partnerships. We are all working together to deliver the best child care system that we possibly can in this

province. And that means ensuring that those people who are out there on the ground and on the front lines taking care of our little ones get the support they need. It begins with a \$269 million to support a wage increase. It also goes to the \$1 an hour that brings our increase up to \$2, and in addition the \$10 a day to \$20 a day. More work to do? Absolutely.

MPP Vernile to Minister Gravelle Re: Mining Sector

>> MPP Vernile: Thank you, Speaker. My question this morning is for the Minister of northern development and mines. Ontario is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources including rich mineral deposits. As the Minister knows, the mining industry is critical to the livelihood of many people in northern Ontario and it serves as an economic driver of many communities in that region. Speaker, people in Ontario want to know that their government understands this and is taking steps to ensure that our mining industry remains prosperous and on the right track. Speaker, could Minister please tell this House what the government is doing to support the mining industry in Ontario and how we can continue on the path to become the global leader in sustainable mineral development?

>> Min. Gravelle: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for asking that very important question. Certainly, Speaker, our government is absolutely committed to ensuring that our King sector remains strong now and into the future. That's why last December we renewed Ontario's mineral development strategy, a blueprint for the mining sector over next ten years. Tremendous initiative, Speaker. Renewed mineral development strategy means tremendous initiatives like an investment of \$5 million to the junior exploration assistance program to report further investment in the exploration which will bring about development of new mines future. It also means modernizing the way we do business with legislated changes to the mining act that would if passed introduce a provincewide online claim registration and integrated lands management system. I can go on and on about the work that we're doing but I'm excited to continue to working to help Ontario become the global leader. In sustainable mineral development. Thank you.

>> MPP Vernile: Thank you, Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that answer. It's very encouraging to hear that the government understands the value of our mining sector and is continuing to nurture growth in this very important industry. But in the face of declining commodity prices, Ontarians need to know that the right investments are being made and that Ontario is working with all its partners in the mining sector. Speaker, today is a special day in the legislature as guests from the Ontario mining association are visiting us. Could the Minister please explain how this government intend to steer Ontario toward innovation in the mining sector and how this will help northern Ontario's **economy continue to grow?**

>> Min. Gravelle: Well, thank you again to the member for Kitchener centre. Just a great question. While Ontario's reputation as a destination of choice for mineral development is very well known, we understand that the province's mineral development landscape is constantly involving and there are many challenges. We are committed to helping it face those new challenges, Mr. Speaker. It's why we are continuing to modernize the mining act, to ensure a fast more efficient

system is in place to promote a dynamic and competitive business climate in Ontario. And our government very much values the work that the mineral industry does each year to provide Ontario with the building blocks of a modern society in a great new industry. Speaker, as the member mentioned today is meet the miners day. The Ontario mining association meet the miners day here at queen's park. I want to invite all members. And all the members of the House there is a reception tonight in the dining room to meet the miners and find out how we're building industry in the province.

MPP Pettapiece to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro Affordability

>> MPP Pettapiece: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of energy. When speaking about the mess his government has made of the energy file, the Minister refused to call it a crisis. My constituents disagree. In the Stratford condo building, bills have more than doubled. Their monthly global adjustment charge alone was over \$2,600. Another constituent got a bill for over \$100 for using no power at all. Their mother contacted me. She burst into tears and was terrified after learning rates could increase twice a year. I asked the Minister if this isn't a crisis, what is it?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A crisis is when you don't have a system that's unreliable and doesn't work, Mr. Speaker, and that's the system that they left for us, Mr. Speaker, that we had to pick up and take over, Mr. Speaker. That was the crisis. We understand on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that there are some families that are having difficulty, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we brought forward the bill, Mr. Speaker, that's going to have an 8% reduction as of January 1st to help all families across the province, Mr. Speaker. We're very pleased that that bill passed last week because that will be something that's effectively going to help all families right across the province, families that on their homes, small farms, Mr. Speaker, and small businesses. We're happy to see that pass, Mr. Speaker, and we're also happy to see there's going to be that 20% reduction for 330 families across the province that live in rural or remote parts, Mr. Speaker. It's not just us saying that, Mr. Speaker. You know what? The C.E.O. Of the Ontario chamber of commerce says the announcement that we made is a very significant one for residents, small industry and it's the most important group that will be able to benefit from this, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, that's not fooling anyone. Neither is this government's multimillion-dollar advertising. They told us the Ontario electricity support program would help those who need it but they didn't make the benefits automatic. Instead they forced people to apply. Why? Because the Liberals, as usual, wanted maximum political benefit. This way they could waste almost \$12 million on consultants, publications, media and advertising. That includes \$9 million to line the pockets of Liberal-friendly consultants. Meanwhile many can't afford to keep the furnace running. That, sir, is a disgrace. Will the Minister explain to my constituent why this government is using their money to sell such a scam?

>> Min. Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess he doesn't understand the whole concept about the Canada revenue agency, Mr. Speaker, and making sure that we work with the federal government on this, like you're mandated to do and we do, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House. In terms of the money that we're spending on this, Mr. Speaker, we're very proud on this side of the House that \$21 million has been spent so far, providing support to 145,000 families in ten

months, Mr. Speaker. In fact we've got another 14,000 families that are signing up for this program every month, Mr. Speaker. We want more. We have a budget of \$225 million, Mr. Speaker, to help families right across the province, Mr. Speaker. The unfortunate thing, Mr. Speaker, is on that side of the House they don't talk about this program because they know it will help families, Mr. Speaker. What they like to do is just make up some numbers, Mr. Speaker. We talk about making sure that we're starting up a program that's helping 145,000 families, Mr. Speaker. We want more families to sign up and that's why we continue to talk about it and advertise it on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker .

MPP French to Minister Oraziatti (Naqvi) Re: Adam Capay

>> MPP French: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Adam cape has been held in solitary confinement for the past four years. Worst of all it is for a crime which he has not yet been convicted. He has been kept in isolation while awaiting a trial since 2012. This is our justice system in Ontario. The supreme court of Canada has ruled that a delay longer than 30 months constitutes a violation of charter right. Adam has been held for 52 months. Will the Premier please explain why our justice system is violating the charter right of Ontarians?

>> Min. Oraziatti: Thank you very much, Speaker. I thank the member opposite for the question. We are working to improve the correctional system and obviously the conditions for segregation for any individual, and segregation as I indicated last week and released publicly, this will be a means of last resort and that every effort needs to be ensured that an individual will only be in segregation when it is for their safety or the safety of others in the institution. I can provide an update to the House with respect to this particular individual. This individual has been moved from their cell. They are no longer in that same cell. They are in a different location with appropriate lighting, access to day rooms, spending time out of their cell for showers, phone calls and access to TV and it is my understanding. From speaking to officials, the inmate is satisfied with the conditions that they are presently in.

>> MPP French: Thank you, Speaker. The Canadian charter of rights and freedoms guarantees all Canadians the right to be tried within a reasonable time. The supreme court of Canada has deemed a reasonable delay to be no more than 30 months. Adam capé has waited nearly twice that long. Can the Premier guarantee that there are no more than Adam capés that have been lock under our Jays? Can she guarantee there are no more Adam capés?

>> Min. Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. And we very much recognize, Speaker, that this is extremely serious and challenging matter, and we recognize that people have questions and concerns, and our government takes -- Speaker, our government takes the concerns that are being raised very seriously and of course obligations that are enshrined within the charter of rights and freedoms very seriously as well. Speaker, I can share with you that as we all know Mr. Capé is facing some very serious charges. As the Attorney General, it is my responsibility to ensure that we do not include the outcome of -- influence the outcome of any prosecution that is ongoing, but what I can say is that I've been advised that the crown has and will continue to -- Work to bring these charges to trial as quickly as possible.

MPP Hoggarth to Minister Hoskins Re: Mackenzie Vaughan hospital

>> MPP Hoggarth: Thank you, Speaker my question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know that health care is the top priority for our government. Investing in health infrastructure is an important part of ensuring that Ontario patients have access to the high-quality care that they need today and in the future. York region is one of the province's fastest growing dynamic areas, and as more families continue to move to the area, many are wondering how the province will continue to invest in health services to ensure low wait times and access to the highest quality of care. Account Minister of health please update this House on an important announcement that was made yesterday in York region?

>> Min. Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for this important question. And I particularly want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of transportation and the member from Vaughan for his tireless advocacy, if I can describe it as such, to ensure that there are investments towards high-quality state-of-the-art health care services in the region. Across the province, Mr. Speaker, we're investing \$12 billion in health care infrastructure over the next decade to build new and improved hospitals. Right today there are 35 major hospital projects either under construction or being planned. But specifically about the Mackenzie Vaughan hospital the Minister of transportation, the member from Vaughan of course was there for the announcement as was the Minister of community and social services, the member from Oak Ridges-Markham and the Minister of research innovation and science, the member from Richmond hill all were in Vaughan yesterday to break ground right across from Canada's wonderland. I was there last year when we announced the project for the new Mackenzie Vaughan hospital site.

>> MPP Hoggarth: Thank you, Minister, for that response. It's reassuring to know that our government is committed to building hospital infrastructure in the northern G.T.A. And across this province. And I know that residents across the region are excited for the ground-breaking, construction and eventual ribbon cutting of this very important project. I also know that many residents across the area are interested to learn about what health care services will be offered at the new Mackenzie Vaughan site. Would the Minister be able to provide further details of what features the residents of north G.T.A. Can look forward to seeing in the coming years?

>> Min. Hoskins: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Barrie for this question. The Mackenzie Vaughan hospital will be at a time of the art. It will have fully integrated smart technology. It features systems and medical devices that communicate directly, Mr. Speaker, to maximize the exchange of information, to improve, maximize the quality of patient care and the patient experience. It's going to have 350 beds, 1,800 full-time staff positions in the area,

100 physician specialists, Mr. Speaker. It will have everything you can imagine a state-of-the-art hospital should have. By putting shovels in the ground yesterday, we took a concrete step towards providing technologically advanced patient-focused health care to the people of Vaughan and the greater York region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Hillier to Minister Naqvi Re: Adam Capay

>> MPP Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, to the Attorney General. Speaker, last week in this House, the Attorney General and I spoke about access to justice week. He spoke of stats and figures and I spoke of the human face of access to justice. We have another face who has been denied access to justice, Adam capé. The "Globe and mail" headline I think is important for us to understand. Ontario's sickening mistreatment of Adam capé. For over four years, he has been denied his freedom, denied his liberty. He has been held incarcerated without due process. He has been denied justice. He has been denied his day in court. Speaker -- To the Attorney General. I heard your answer. Adam capé needs justice. Will you stand up in this House and confirm that he will get justice --

>> Min. Naqvi: Speaker, I would state again this is a very serious and challenging matter and I very much recognize that people have questions and concerns, and we as a government and I as the Attorney General take those questions and concerns very seriously, Speaker. Speaker, as I've said, Mr. Capé is facing some very serious charges and as the Attorney General it is my responsibility to ensure we do not influence the outcome of that prosecution which is on the way in any way whatsoever. What I can say, Speaker is that I have been advised the crown has and will continue to work to bring these charges to trial as quickly as possible.

>> MPP Hillier: Speaker, again to the Attorney General. I've spoken in this House about the tragedy in our justice system. 43% of people who are -- face criminal charges kept incarcerated who only then have their charges and their cases stayed or withdrawn before trial. That's a terrible, terrible track record of this Attorney General. And is Adam capay going to be another one of those statistics that the Attorney General speaks about in next year's access to justice? And that he still languishes there without a trial? Speaker, the Attorney General says he's facing serious charges. Well, I'm going to say the Attorney General is facing serious charges. Over four years of keeping somebody. Incarcerated without the right to a trial? That's a serious charge. It shouldn't be taken lightly. He should stand up and make sure that the Attorney General 's office does its job.

>> Min. Naqvi: Speaker, the matter is a very serious matter. The charges are very serious charges. I think my advice to all members would be to refrain from speculating as to the circumstances before the courts and the work that the crown and his defence counsel may be doing. I do want to address the issue of, Speaker, briefly the issue around access to justice because it is a very important and fundamental tenet of our justice and judicial system. The Jordan decision recently issued by the supreme court of Canada presents a valuable opportunity for our justice system. It's an issue that all jurisdictions around Canada are discussing and grappling with. In fact at the most recent federal provincial and territorial meeting of justice Ministers. We spent time talking about the

implication of the Jordan decision and the strategies we are all Collectively putting in place to ensure people get speedy justice.