

Ontario News Update (Afternoon Edition): China-Vietnam Business Mission - November 23, 2017

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China-Vietnam Business Mission Media Scan: November 23, 2017

ONTARIO NEWS UPDATE (AFTERNOON EDITION): CHINA-VIETNAM BUSINESS MISSION

November 23, 2017

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China-Vietnam Business Mission – Online Coverage

Bayshore Broadcasting - Bruce MPP Says Trade With Asia Shows

Tory MPP Lisa Thompson wants Premier Wynne to lean more on Ottawa to promote TPP trade.

By: Peter Jackson
Thursday, November 23, 2017

http://www.bayshorebroadcasting.ca/news_item.php?NewsID=97704

As Premier Wynne prepares for a tour of China and Vietnam to promote Ontario trade, questions are being raised by the provincial Opposition about the government's stand on Trans Pacific Partnership negotiations.

Huron-Bruce Tory MPP Lisa Thompson is going after the Premier to put pressure on Prime Minister Trudeau for his "no-show" at a critical stage of TPP talks in Asia.

Thompson reminded the Legislature this week that other nations negotiating the TPP took Trudeau's absence from the meeting as a snub.

She pointed out that Ontario grain farmers will be among Canadian agriculture sectors that would benefit under the deal.

Thompson contends that the TPP talks are off-track -- a point that Wynne disputes.

The Premier told MPPs that the province works closely with Ottawa on all trade negotiations including the TPP and the North American Free Trade agreement.

Wynne says she will be accompanied by representatives of over 100 Ontario companies on her upcoming trip to Asia.

She predicts the tour will result in business agreements that will benefit Ontarians and create jobs.

China-Vietnam Business Mission – TV Coverage

None

Ontario News - Online Coverage

2017/11/23 15:53 - PostMedia
thestar.com
Section: News
By: Kristin Rushowy
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Toronto Star - Hydro One's Prepaid Meter Proposal Sparks Criticism

Hydro One is seeking permission to use prepaid meters, a move critics say will only hurt low-income customers.

In a lengthy proposal to the Ontario Energy Board regarding rate increases, Hydro One includes a pitch "to install prepayment meters, which require the customer to pay first before they get any electricity," said New Democrat MPP Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth).

"Everywhere that prepayment meters have been used, they have hurt struggling families," said Tabuns, his party's energy critic, demanding the government ban them, as has happened in the United Kingdom.

Hydro One executives and Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault insist the meters, if approved, would be optional.

The energy board, Thibeault told reporters, is mandated to "have the ratepayers' best interests in mind, and so we leave the decisions, when it comes to rate applications, to the OEB."

Regardless of the type of meter, no one will be cut off from electricity in the winter, he added.

Hydro One's proposal to the OEB states that "one method of enabling customer control of their electricity consumptions, while in arrears condition, and minimizing Hydro One Network's financial risk, is through the use of prepaid meters. Prepaid meters are a type of energy meter that requires users to pay for energy before using it. This is done via a smartcard, token or key that can be 'topped up' at a corner shop, via a smartphone application or online.

"For customers who are high collection risk, the financial risk will be minimized by rolling out this type of meter. With a prepaid meter, electricity is paid upfront. Once the prepaid amount is used up, power is cut-off until the customer is able to load the meter with more credits."

Ferio Pugliese, Hydro One's executive vice-president of customer care and corporate affairs, said "absolutely, this will not be forced" on customers and that it is simply providing them more choice.

The meters, he said, are "an option that we had put into our rate filing as another potential option to be available to customers should they choose it."

Pugliese likened it to customers choosing equal billing payments, "where they don't like fluctuations in their bill so they pay a fixed charge." In this case, he said, it could appeal to those "who might be on a different income cycle, who like to prepay everything up-front or through a period of time."

Thibeault said hunters who have camps they use in the fall "might like to see something like this - they can opt-in and have two months of electricity."

However, he also said, the meter request remains "just a thought."

"At the end of the day, we are still a long way from this even being approved," Thibeault said. "This is just a thought, it's two paragraphs in a 2,000-page document."

But Tabuns believes the meters will circumvent rules preventing electricity cut-offs in the winter.

"Hydro One's installation of prepayment hydro meters would bypass Ontario's rules for disconnections," Tabuns said. "Hydro One won't have to disconnect anyone; the power will be cut off automatically if the customer doesn't feed the meter."

Thibeault also noted that under Hydro One's filing, future rate increases will be no more "than the cost of inflation for the next four years" and in line with the government's promised 25 per cent reduction in hydro bills.

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thestar.com

Section: Opinion

By: Stephen Bede Scharper Annamaria Enenajor

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Toronto Star GRASSY NARROWS POISONING A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY?

Appalling. Heart-rending. Shameful. Rage-inducing.

These are but a few adjectives that gush to mind regarding the half-century of continued mercury contamination at Grassy Narrows Reserve, and the economic, ecological and social devastation it has wrought.

And these adjectives are only a warm up.

As reported by this newspaper(<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/11/11/ontario-knew-about-mercury-site-near-grassy-narrows-for-decades-but-kept-it-secret.html>), the litany of foot-dragging, inaction, denial, nonresponse, and political indifference to the methyl mercury contamination of the people of Grassy Narrows and Whitedog reserves is deplorable.

But it is more.

The pattern of government inaction since 1970, when mercury was found in the Wabigoon River, is nothing short of environmental racism, as previously argued in these pages. If mercury contamination were found in the water supply of an upscale Toronto neighbourhood, one doubts it would be allowed to poison peoples' lives and livelihoods for three generations.

What's more, with the recent revelation that, since the 1990s, Ontario government officials were aware of (but apparently kept mum about) the presence of mercury-drenched soil, what first appeared as neglect begins to appear as wilful negligence. When you add to this that the present mill owner avers the site is probably still toxic and that residents were only informed about this within the last month - a new characterization comes to mind.

Persecution.

When does negligence in the face of continuing harm become a form of persecution?

This is both a moral and legal question.

In a 1983 CBC documentary, which chronicled the appalling impacts of mercury poisoning for the Grassy Narrows community, a youthful, vigorous Steve Fobister speaks cogently for government support and compensation for his people.

Today, as presented in Jody Porter's 2017 CBC documentary, "Children of the Poisoned River," Steve Fobister, now in his 60s, is still asking for government intervention, particularly medical help. But he does this from a walker, his body wracked by severe mercury poisoning. Fobister suffers from Minamata disease, named after the area in Japan where the Chisso Corporation dumped mercury beginning in the 1950s, killing over 100 persons.

At Grassy Narrows, reportedly 90 per cent of the community suffers from some form of mercury poisoning, including Steve Fobister's grandchildren, Darwin and Catherine. Darwin, for example, experiences extreme headaches, as well as memory and concentration problems - all indicators of mercury poisoning.

"They're never going to grow up normal," Fobister said.

While early research suggested mercury poisoning could only occur through direct ingestion, recent studies indicate it can be passed on to children through the placenta. The mercury poisoning in Grassy Narrows is now intergenerational.

In Grassy Narrows, children are literally being born into suffering and death from mercury

poisoning.

One of the international crimes against humanity is persecution.

A crime against humanity requires that a perpetrating state know that its conduct is part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population. To be guilty, the government of Canada would have to know that what is happening in Grassy Narrows is happening by design and not by tragic accident.

The experience of Grassy Narrows must be understood as part of the legacy of decades of mistreatment of Canada's Indigenous people by the government and industry - something that follows from extortionist government policies that forcibly removed Indigenous communities to areas unsuited to their traditional ways of life.

Canada has a history of forcibly displacing Indigenous communities, an act that itself is a crime against humanity under international criminal law.

Forced removal is indeed an aspect of the Grassy Narrows history. The community was relocated in the early 1960s. According to a 1987 paper by researcher Christopher Vecsey in the American Indian Quarterly, this was part of a larger effort by the Canadian government to "modernize" Canada's Indigenous population by putting them closer to pre-existing roads and infrastructure.

The community resisted the move, Vecsey notes, which was apparently imposed upon them by Indian Affairs Agent Eric Law, who allegedly "threatened loss of family allowances to those who resisted."

While the recent pledge by Premier Kathleen Wynne to provide \$85 million to clean up the area is positive, it is an insufficient response to the pattern of neglect and potential persecution of the people of Grassy Narrows.

It is a deficient response to what might well constitute a crime against humanity in Grassy Narrows.

Stephen Bede Scharper is professor of environment and anthropology at the University of Toronto. Annamaria Enenajor is criminal defence and constitutional lawyer at Ruby, Shiller & Enenajor, Barristers.

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Toronto Star HOUSING PLAN WON'T HELP MIDDLE CLASS, EXPERTS SAY

The federal Liberals' new national housing strategy won't shelter middle-income residents from the increasingly unaffordable cost of owning or renting a home in the Toronto region, builders and landlords say.

The long-awaited policy, announced in Toronto on Wednesday, will invest \$11.2 billion in federal funding over 11 years to help create 100,000 new housing units and repair another 300,000 homes across Canada.

But it doesn't address the needs of middle-income residents in the Toronto region making \$50,000 to \$70,000 a year, said Jim Murphy, CEO of the Federation of Rental-Housing

Providers of Ontario.

Read more:

Activists say Ottawa should deliver housing funds over two years, instead of 11(
<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/11/22/activists-say-ottawa-should-deliver-housing-funds-over-two-years-instead-of-11.html>)

Ottawa's housing plan aims to help 530,000 vulnerable households(
<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/11/22/ottawas-housing-plan-aims-to-help-530000-vulnerable-households.html>)

"We're increasingly concerned that those in the middle, who probably wouldn't qualify for most of these programs, are still facing hardship. They can't afford to own with an average price of \$1.3 million (for a detached resale house in Toronto in October). Increasingly, rent is becoming difficult, not only in terms of price but in terms of supply and finding a place," he said.

The government has not provided an HST break for developers who build rentals - something that would put more supply in the pipeline, said Murphy.

More action is needed to promote private investment in purpose-built rental, said the Toronto Region Board of Trade (TRBOT).

At about \$1,600 a month, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto makes saving for home ownership difficult, said Clinton Lee, 29, a financial analyst with a downtown bank.

"I'm hearing of these boomerang kids. I didn't expect to be one," he said of his recent move back to his mother's home in Mississauga to save for a condo.

Lee, who earns \$68,000 a year, says he makes a good living relative to what his mother made when she came to Canada from Hong Kong in 1989.

He had purchased a pre-construction condo last year in Toronto's west end. But the developer cancelled the building and now Lee says he is priced out of the market. He's not alone. A TRBOT found 83 per cent of young professionals said the high cost of housing in the region is hindering their savings for retirement and debt repayment.

"My friends are all tapping into their own parents," Lee said.

While some got into home ownership straight out of school, he said the majority of his friends are still renting.

Housing affordability declined the most in the Toronto region compared to the previous year, according to a September report from RBC Economics. To own a home in the area, you need a six-figure income, it said. Recent census data shows home ownership is declining in the area.

Ottawa's strategy acknowledges the value of home ownership and the role of market housing but it doesn't go far enough in addressing the lack of supply and homes that average people can afford, said Bryan Tuckey, CEO of the Building and Land Development Association (BILD).

"It may make it more difficult for young families and new Canadians to achieve a dream of owning their first home," he said.

New construction condo prices, considered the region's affordable housing option, rose 36 per cent year over year in September to an average \$661,188, according to BILD. Condos accounted for 80 per cent of new construction home sales this year.

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Toronto Star PROVINCE UNDER FIRE FOR LIMITING AFTER-SCHOOL CARE OPTIONS

Ontario is vowing to help community-based after-school programs comply with new regulations after parents in Toronto's child-care-starved east end say government rules are leaving them in the lurch.

The ongoing child-care crunch in the area bubbled to a boil earlier this week after a popular Leslieville program offering classes in dance, art, science and technology and martial arts was deemed to be operating an illegal child care because some of the children were age 4 and 5.

If the program wanted to continue, unlicensed, it had to limit children's participation to three days a week.

"Who works three days a week?" said parent Mark Fraser. His 7-year-old daughter is among almost 100 children in the program, including about half who are picked up from area schools five days a week.

"How can this be helping provide families with the child-care options they need?" Fraser said Tuesday.

On Wednesday, after enraged parents signed an online petition and flooded social media with complaints, Indira Naidoo-Harris, minister responsible for child care, sent ministry officials to Sprouts Growing Bodies and Minds on Carlaw Ave. to work out a solution.

"We have been stepping in when (programs) are facing issues of compliance because I regard that as an important part of the job," Naidoo-Harris told the Star.

"So if someone is not compliant and isn't completely aware of all of the rules and needs some assistance and support, we're going there and helping them," she said.

The regulations are part of child-care legislation introduced in 2014 in response to a scathing ombudsman's report after a rash of deaths in unlicensed home daycares, including Eva Ravikovich who died after she was left in a hot car.

In addition to beefed up inspections and new rules for home daycares, the law mandates school boards to provide before- and after-school programs for families that request it, starting with full-day kindergarten in the fall of 2016 and extending to students from Grades 1 to 6 in September 2017.

School boards, such as the Toronto public and Catholic boards that don't provide the programs themselves, are allowed to contract with licensed child-care providers or authorized recreation programs.

After-school programs for 4- and 5-year-olds not run by the school board can be operated only by licensed daycares. And that is where recreation programs such as Sprouts are running into problems with education ministry inspectors, Naidoo-Harris said.

Since September, the ministry has issued 10 compliance orders. All are in the GTA, including four in Toronto's east end.

Recreational programs “play an important role when it comes to parents and children” but they have to be safe, Naidoo-Harris said. The government needed to “create clarity” in the system in light of the ombudsman’s recommendations, which called for more attention to children under 6, she added.

Sprouts co-owner Emily Pengelly said most kindergarten-age children come to her classes with nannies or parents who remain onsite. The few 4- and 5-year-olds who attend five days a week on their own, have older siblings, she said.

“We are not here to babysit. It’s not what we do. We are teachers. And if a child isn’t ready to learn or isn’t interested in what we offer, then they shouldn’t be here,” she said in an interview.

As a result of the ministry visit Wednesday, the program will continue as before but under a different corporate structure, Pengelly said.

Shiralee Hudson Hill, a member of parent group Toronto East Enders for Child Care, said Sprouts is a highly-regarded program that many of her neighbours use.

“Parents understand more than anyone else the need for regulation. But we need spaces. After-care is not optional,” she said.

“With the cost of living in this city, it’s impossible to live on one income. It’s just not tenable. Parents need spaces and those spaces don’t exist in the way the ministry wants them to exist. So what are parents supposed to do?”

Area MPP Peter Tabuns (NDP—Toronto Danforth) who met with Naidoo-Harris Wednesday, said if before- and after-school care was available in schools for every family that needed it, the scramble over Sprouts wouldn’t be an issue.

“Then we would know it is regulated and who was looking after the kids, and parents who wanted something else could go out to the private sector and deal with all those vagaries,” he said.

“But right now, parents are dealing with a mix of providers, including a number of small businesses, some of which are much better than others, and for parents it’s just a very confusing world,” he said.

NDP MPP Catherine Fife blamed the government for being out of touch with the realities of working families, and for deeming recreational programs unsuitable but then “not putting a contingency plan in place.

“Parents are still struggling to find licensed, quality child-care that they can afford — especially in Toronto — and they are looking to these recreational programs to fill the gap,” Fife (Kitchener-Waterloo) said in an interview.

As of September, 83 per cent of Ontario schools are offering before- and after-school programs, Naidoo-Harris noted. But in Toronto, just 74 per cent of schools offer the program and in those that do, space restrictions mean all families can’t be accommodated.

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By: Kristin Rushowy
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From career entrance exams to required hands-on training, Ontario college students are left struggling to catch up after a five-week strike by faculty that has forced semesters to be extended to make up for lost time.

"We are now learning that because of the extended semester, some students wishing to write their paralegal entrance exam with the law society won't be finished in time for the February exam sitting - putting students behind by at least six months," Sattler said Thursday at the legislature.

"Given the fact that the Liberal government sat on the sidelines for five weeks and did nothing to help prevent or resolve the strike, is the premier working on a solution for these students?"

Sattler also said she's worried about students in co-op programs and those with on-the-job training requirements that won't be met in time.

The College Student Alliance said it has reached out to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development for answers.

Minister Deb Matthews - who noted the NDP delayed passage of the legislation forcing instructors back on the job and ending the record-long strike - said "colleges are working very hard to make sure that students are able to successfully complete" their semester.

"We have been working with students throughout the strike and following the strike to make sure that we can be there to offer as much support as possible to get students back on track," she also said.

The NDP has also criticized the government for its hardship fund(The College Student Alliance has said it has reached out to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development for answers) - from monies saved by the colleges during the strike - as being inadequate to meet student needs. In a city like Toronto, the maximum \$500 would not even cover rent, said Sattler.

Matthews said the student alliance is supportive of the fund - a first "in the history of post-secondary education strikes" - and the government's efforts.

"This has been very, very difficult for students, for faculty members, for employers in the community who were looking forward to having those students working in their organizations," Matthews said. "The strike was tough. It had a big impact. We're doing everything we can to support students to get back into the classroom and back on track for their careers."

During the strike by 12,000 faculty, classes were cancelled for as many as 500,000 students starting Oct. 16, and resumed Nov. 21.

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Toronto Star HEERS FROM SUPPORTERS AS ACTIVIST DESMOND COLE APPEARS IN COURT TO FIGHT TRESPASSING CHARGE

In a courtroom packed with supporters, Desmond Cole appeared in Old City Hall on Thursday to fight a trespassing charge laid at Toronto police headquarters this summer, after the activist and freelance journalist refused to cede the microphone at a police board meeting.

Cole was escorted out of headquarters by officers in July, after he disrupted the monthly meeting by demanding that he be allowed to speak about the high-profile case of Dafonte Miller, a Black teen alleged to have been severely beaten by an off-duty Toronto police officer and his brother.

Cole says he is determined to fight the provincial charge, which comes with a \$65 fine, though he calls it a "waste of everyone's time and money." His lawyer, Annamaria Enenajor, told the court in a brief hearing that she will challenge the charge on the basis that it violates Cole's Charter rights, specifically his freedom of expression.

A judicial pretrial has been scheduled for January.

"We are not going anywhere until we get the accountability that we deserve for Dafonte," Cole said outside court, prompting cheers from more than 100 supporters.

Miller was 19 years old when he was alleged to have been severely beaten with a steel pipe by an off-duty Toronto police officer and his brother in Ajax on Dec. 28, 2016. He suffered serious eye damage, a broken orbital bone, a broken nose and a fractured wrist.

Const. Michael Theriault and his brother Christian Theriault are charged with aggravated assault and assault with a weapon. They also each face one count of public mischief based on allegations (<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/08/01/toronto-police-officer-and-brother-accused-of-misleading-investigators.html>) they misled investigators.

The case has prompted intense criticism (<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/08/16/civilian-oversight-agency-asked-to-investigate-after-toronto-officer-charged-in-dafonte-miller-assault.html>) about the handling of the incident by both Toronto and Durham regional police - chief among them each police service's failure to notify Ontario's police watchdog, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), given the involvement of Michael Theriault, who was off-duty at the time.

The watchdog only became aware of the incident when contacted by Miller's lawyer, Julian Falconer, months later. The SIU then began an investigation, resulting in charges against the Theriault brothers in July.

At the police board meeting just over a week later, Toronto police board chair Andy Pringle and police chief Mark Saunders acknowledged the case, announcing an unusual step (https://www.thestar.com/news/city_hall/2017/07/27/waterloo-police-will-be-asked-to-conduct-an-internal-investigation-into-dafonte-miller-case.html) to call in Waterloo Regional Police chief Brent Larkin to conduct an internal review of Toronto police's handling of the incident.

The meeting then moved on to other business, but Cole, in a deputation to the board on another matter, began speaking out about the Miller case. Pringle then attempted to tell Cole that nothing further could be said on the matter because of the ongoing criminal case and the investigation by Waterloo police.

"It will come back and you will have an opportunity to speak," Pringle said, of the investigative report from Waterloo police.

Pringle had earlier warned that no disruptions would be tolerated, alluding to previous board meetings where Cole and members of Black Lives Matter loudly chanted and questioned board members, sometimes prompting the meeting to temporarily adjourn.

As Cole continued to speak, Pringle adjourned the meeting, and the board - including Mayor John Tory - walked out. Cole was later escorted out and charged and the meeting resumed.

Outside court Thursday, Cole questioned why the board has been silent on the Miller case in the four months that have passed since the charges were laid, a criticism also being made by

Falconer, Miller's lawyer.

"Neither Dafonte Miller nor his family have received one iota of information," Falconer said in an interview this week, adding that there has been a "bizarre radio silence" on behalf of police and its board in this case.

Falconer has called for a systemic review of police conduct by Ontario's police complaints watchdog, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD), saying it is a "poster child" for what's wrong with police oversight in Ontario.

The lawyer alleges misconduct by both by Toronto police and Durham regional forces, including attempts by Michael and Christian Theriault's police officer father to conceal his sons' alleged crimes.

In a complaint filed to the OIPRD in August, Falconer alleges that John Theriault, a 30-year Toronto police veteran who currently works in the professional standards unit, "repeatedly contacted (Durham police) investigators to gain information relating to the status of the investigation" and provided false information about injuries suffered by Christian "to aid in the concealment of the crimes committed by his sons."

The complaint also alleges Toronto police permitted John Theriault to communicate with and have access to Durham investigators.

John Theriault did not respond to a request for comment from the Star this week.

Waterloo police, Toronto police and chair Pringle confirmed to the Star this week that the internal investigation into Toronto police conduct is ongoing - but it may be months before it is sent to the board.

"We are currently reviewing information and will be completing the report for Toronto Police Service," Waterloo police Insp. Mike Haffner said in an email. He did not respond to a question about when that would occur.

The chief's administrative review, known as a section 11 report, is mandatory after the completion of every probe by Ontario's police watchdog, the Special Investigation Unit (SIU).

Last year, following a Star series on police transparency, the Toronto police board committed to releasing (<https://www.thestar.com/news/crime/2016/05/19/toronto-police-to-release-internal-reports-into-siu-investigations.html>), in part, these previously secret reports.

Under Ontario's Police Services Act, these reports are required to be sent to the board within 30 days after the SIU finishes its investigation.

This requirement is much simpler in cases where the SIU does not lay a criminal charge. The 30 days begin ticking down when the SIU director informs the chief from the affected police service that the director's report has been sent to the Ministry of the Attorney General.

However, in cases where a criminal charge is laid there is no such report. The Police Act regulations do not explicitly spell out when the 30-day countdown begins in this scenario.

Toronto police has adopted a practice where they aim to report to the board within 30 days of a charge being sworn in court. In Theriault's case, that period would have begun in July. However, given the fact that the case is both highly complex and currently before the courts, it may be several months before the report comes to the board.

In an interview with the Star, Pringle stressed that while it was important to let investigators from Waterloo do their job, he hopes to see the report soon.

"We want to see the answers, too, and sooner, not later," he said.

Don Peat, spokesperson for Tory, reiterated in an email this week that Tory, too, wants to let Waterloo police do their job.

"Mayor Tory was clear that there were unanswered questions around this case and he is waiting for the independent probe to be completed before commenting further," Peat said.

After Durham police were called to the scene on the night of the incident, officers initially charged Miller, not the Theriaults, with assault, alongside other charges. All were withdrawn by the Crown in May.

Durham police are also conducting an investigation into their handling of the incident. In September, Durham Police Chief Paul Martin announced a new policy (<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/09/11/durham-chief-vows-to-tell-siu-of-incidents-such-as-dafonte-miller-beating-in-future.html>) to ensure the SIU is called in to investigate serious injuries caused by an officer in his region - regardless of whether the cop was from his force or off duty.

Dave Selby, spokesperson for Durham police, said their internal investigation is ongoing.

"We are co-operating fully with both the OIPRD and SIU investigations and have offered to provide them any information they might require," he said.

Theriault has been out on bail since his arrest on July 18. He is suspended with pay.

2017/11/23 13:48 - PostMedia
Postmedia Breaking News
Section: PMN Canada
By: The Canadian Press
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: PBN_201711230240

Postmedia Breaking News NEWS PLAN DESIGNED TO IMPROVE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY, DUCLOS SAYS

OTTAWA - The Liberal point man on a new national housing strategy says the government would rather spend money on building and finding homes for low-income Canadians than put cash into more shelter space.

The hope that Jean-Yves Duclos and others in the government have is that fewer Canadians will be or fall into homelessness over time through billions in government spending to boost the stock of affordable housing and eventually provide direct housing benefits to tenants.

The social development minister says that should also help make private homes more affordable in markets like Vancouver, by giving young people, for example, more affordable rental options where few currently exist.

And it's why Duclos sees the private sector as a key cog in the housing strategy the Liberals unveiled Wednesday, because governments and housing providers alone can't solve the affordable housing crisis, he says.

The plan outlines a combination of planned and expected spending and financing between federal, provincial and territorial governments that, if it all works out, would amount to \$40 billion spread roughly evenly over 10 years.

In an interview with The Canadian Press, Duclos admits there are many details that still need to be worked out, like how to ensure that a new housing benefit doesn't push up rents in markets

with low vacancy rates, and crafting legislation to make housing a human right.

2017/11/23 12:58 - PostMedia
Postmedia Breaking News
Section: PMN Canada
By: The Canadian Press
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: PBN_201711230222

Postmedia Breaking News MOHAWK COLLEGE APOLOGIZES FOR STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF TV REPORTER

HAMILTON - A southern Ontario college says it's investigating two incidents in which a television reporter says she was sexually harassed by students.

In a posting on the Mohawk College Facebook page, president Ron McKerlie says campus security is looking into "misogynistic words" used by two students on Tuesday.

CHCH reporter Britt Dixon was reporting on students returning to class following a five-week college faculty strike and said Tuesday on Twitter that a male student yelled a lewd comment behind her in the middle of an interview. Later she tweeted "Wow twice in one day."

McKerlie says he has personally apologized to the reporter on behalf of the college and says sexual harassment is a clear violation of Mohawk's student behaviour policy.

He says violating the policy can result in suspension or expulsion and, at a minimum, students are required to apologize and sign a behaviour contract.

McKerlie calls the incident "deeply disappointing" and not reflective the college's values.

"If you somehow believe it is acceptable or humorous to demean and sexually harass women then you are not welcome at Mohawk," he said.

2017/11/23 12:43 - PostMedia
Postmedia Breaking News
Section: PMN Canada
By: The Canadian Press
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: PBN_201711230218

Postmedia Breaking News ACTIVISTS APPLAUD VOTE TO REMOVE COPS FROM TORONTO SCHOOLS

TORONTO - A group of activists is welcoming a move to scrap a program that placed police officers in certain Toronto schools and is calling for other school boards with similar programs to follow suit.

Phillip Morgan, a member of Education Not Incarceration, is lauding the decision by the Toronto District School Board to permanently end the School Resource Officer program.

Morgan, who was joined by activists from Black Lives Matter Toronto at a news conference this morning, says more work now needs to be done to get Toronto's Catholic District School board to cancel its own program.

The TDSB program, which was suspended at the start of the school year, saw police officers stationed at 45 high schools to try to improve safety and perceptions of police.

The board's decision to permanently end the program came Wednesday night, after a TDSB staff report issued earlier this month found the scheme left some students feeling intimidated or uncomfortable.

Mike McCormack, the president of the Toronto Police Association, says cancelling the program was politically motivated and called it a missed opportunity to address some students' negative perception of police.

Toronto police spokesman Mark Pugash wouldn't comment directly on the board's decision, but said the program was beneficial for building relationships between police and youth.

2017/11/23 09:33 - PostMedia
torontosun.com
Section: Toronto & GTA
By: Canadian Press
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: TSWO201711230040

Toronto Sun UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO CONTRACT STAFF VOTE IN FAVOUR OF STRIKE MANDATE

TORONTO - Contract academic workers at the University of Toronto have given their union a 91 per cent mandate in favour of strike action as they work towards a new contract.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees says the workers include non-student sessional lecturers, writing instructors and music professionals.

CUPE says the key issue is how post-secondary institutions rely on "precarious labour," with sessional lecturers at the university delivering more than 20 per cent of all undergraduate teaching, yet earn less and have little to no job security.

Union official Jess Taylor says after four months of bargaining, they have made some gains at the table in terms of wage increases, but contract workers need a pathway to permanent employment.

The two sides are scheduled to resume bargaining on Friday and Taylor says the union hopes the strike mandate message is "well received" by university negotiators.

"Many of our members have been working at the University of Toronto for decades," said CUPE 3902 chairwoman Pamela Arancibia in a statement.

"The minimum per-course salary for sessional lecturers is less than \$15,000, whereas faculty members earn at least \$23,000 for teaching the same courses."

2017/11/23 07:33 - PostMedia
torontosun.com
Section: Toronto & GTA
By: Kevin Connor
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: TSWO201711230034

Toronto Sun SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM AXED BY TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD FOLLOWING INTIMIDATION CONCERNS

TORONTO - The School Resource Officer program has been expelled by the Toronto District School Board to address a minority of concerns.

The board voted Wednesday evening with 20 trustees in favour of axing the program, three not in favour and one trustee abstained.

After the vote, a small group in the audience broke into Black Lives Matter chants.

Even though the majority of students, parents and staff don't object to the presence of SROs, the "negative experience" of some must be acted on, TDSB director John Malloy said at the board's monthly meeting Wednesday night.

"We often hear the majority voice is most important," Malloy said. "A small number spoke their truth (of being uncomfortable with SROs) and we have to take those students' concerns seriously."

The program - implemented at 45 schools in 2008 after a 15-year-old was shot dead in a Downsview school - was suspended in August.

That was after critics of the program complained that armed officers in schools was intimidating to some students and some felt racial discrimination because of the program.

The board conducted a six-week survey this fall - including students, parents and staff, at the 45 schools with SROs.

Of the 15,000 students interviewed, 2,000 said they felt intimidated with the SROs.

One survey response was that SROs target black male students. But more than half of students surveyed for the report said they felt safer having SROs in schools and 75% of parents approved of the program.

Trustee Gerri Gershwin said she was "profoundly disappointed" with the decision to axe SROs.

"SROs should be reviewed but that hasn't taken place yet," she said. "We have been given opinions but no data or stats. This is a cop-out."

Trustee Marit Stiles says it takes "guts" to make this kind of change regarding SROs.

"We need to do so, so all students can feel safe, protected, can learn and not be afraid," Stiles said.

The board decided to continue to work in partnership with the Toronto police, but there is no decision on in what capacity. The SRO program was funded in full by the police. The Toronto Police Services Board is having their own review of the SRO program that is being completed by Ryerson University.

2017/11/23 15:58 - PostMedia
torontosun.com
Section: Crime
By: Canadian Press
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Story ID: TSWO201711230077

Toronto Sun JUDGE'S FAILURE TO GIVE REASONS RESULTS IN NEW SEXUAL ASSAULT TRIAL

TORONTO - A massage therapist properly convicted of sexually assaulting two women will get a new trial because a judge failed to say why he refused to allow a separate hearing for each charge.

In overturning the conviction against Jitender Sahdev, Ontario's top court ruled the lack of

reasons were enough to quash the - even though it found the judge who actually presided over the trial had made no errors.

"The appeal must be allowed and a new trial ordered because the application judge's failure to provide reasons for refusing severance frustrates meaningful appellate review," the Court of Appeal said in its decision on Thursday. "It is not apparent from the record why the application judge decided the issue in the manner that he did."

Court records show Sahdev, who ran a massage and yoga studio with his wife in London, applied to sever the charges related to incidents that occurred in June 2012.

According to his lawyer, Sahdev planned to testify in relation to one of the complainants, but probably not in relation to the other. The prosecution, which wanted a single trial on both counts, maintained the notion of his testifying at one trial was not realistic.

In February 2014, Superior Court Justice Andrew Goodman rejected the request to hold separate hearings, promising written reasons would follow. He never provided them - even after the Appeal Court itself would later ask for them. It's unknown why.

Sahdev's trial on both counts proceeded almost two years later before Justice Duncan Grace. The defence did not raise the severance issue.

A neon sign in the window of an exotic massage parlour in the city.

Evidence at trial was that two women separately went for massages to Sahdev's facility, Savy International. The first complainant, aged 25, said he touched her genitals inappropriately despite her requests for him to stop, and kissed her on the mouth. She went to police that same night.

Sahdev, a medical doctor by training, argued in his defence the woman had invited him to examine her breast and genital areas because she had problems with them, but said he had declined. Witnesses, one Sahdev's wife, said the woman had left the premises smiling and seemed fine.

The second woman, 27, went to him for a back, shoulder and neck massage, but complained a few days later - after seeing a report on the first complaint - that he had touched her breast and pubic areas. Sahdev said the woman was fully clothed during the massage, and denied touching her inappropriately.

Grace convicted him in December 2015, saying he didn't find the accused credible.

Sahdev raised several grounds on appeal, including the lack of reasons provided on the severance issue. He also argued Grace had subjected his evidence to a higher level of scrutiny than he did for the complainants.

While a judge has the discretion to require a single trial, the Appeal Court said, his decision must be transparent so it can be determined if it was legally sound. Without reasons, the higher court said it was left guessing why Goodman decided as he did, and the prosecution's suggestion that the higher court decide the severance issue retroactively would amount to trying to "reverse engineer" the initial decision.

The Appeal Court rejected Sahdev's other arguments but ruled only a new trial could fix the severance problem - which it said was no minor or technical matter but a "critical procedural decision."

"I appreciate the repercussions of deciding the case on this basis," Appeal Court Justice Gary Trotter wrote for the panel. "The appellant's trial was a model of fairness. The trial judge made no errors in conducting the trial."

2017/11/23 16:53 - PostMedia
thespec.com
Section: News
By: jfrketich@thespec.com
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: HBWO201711230064

Hamilton Spectator HAMILTON RESEARCHERS PROPOSE STUDY OF NEW HIGH-DOSE FLU SHOT

Hamilton researchers want to study the new high-dose flu shot that the province plans to give seniors next year.

Premier Kathleen Wynne announced in Hamilton Tuesday that seniors will get a different influenza vaccine from the rest of Ontarians starting next flu season.

"In healthy adults, people respond relatively well to the vaccine," said Dr. Mark Loeb, division director of infectious diseases at McMaster University. "In older adults, it becomes less effective because of waning of the immune system. They can't produce a rigorous response to the vaccine and that renders them at risk."

It's significant considering that the flu causes about 12,200 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths in Canada each year and those most at risk are the very young and the very old.

"The older you get, the more at risk you are of complications," said Loeb. "It's very serious."

There are two flu shots that have been specifically developed for seniors.

One is the vaccine the province has chosen, which contains higher doses of the protein that leads to an antibody response.

The other is an adjuvant vaccine, which means it stimulates the immune system to enhance the response.

Both have been shown in studies to offer better protection to seniors than the standard flu shot. In the case of the high-dose immunization, it reduces flu in seniors by about 25 per cent more than the regular vaccine.

"What's interesting to me is comparing those vaccines," said Loeb. "We don't really know which one would be most protective."

Determining which vaccine works best is the goal of Hamilton researchers led by Loeb.

They already have a proposal before the Ministry of Health to study the two vaccines head-to-head in a randomized controlled trial. The research would provide the missing piece of the puzzle.

"There have not been comparative trials," said Loeb. "This is such an important question. A lot of public health people ask themselves this question."

Loeb has funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for the study but would need additional support from the Ministry of Health. The plan is to do the research at Ontario long-term care centres.

"Those are the residents who are the most frail and the most vulnerable and it's really important to protect them," said Loeb. "It's best to do this over several seasons but we could potentially find an answer over one season because there are so many nursing home beds."

Correction Published: 20171123 - A story on Nov. 10 about a Hamilton flu shot study incorrectly stated the proposal was before Public Health Ontario. It is actually being considered by the Ontario Ministry of Health.

2017/11/23 16:08 - PostMedia
thespec.com
Section: News
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: HBWO201711230058

Hamilton Spectator PREPAID HYDRO METERS COULD BE COMING TO ONTARIO

Hydro One is seeking permission to use prepaid meters, a move critics say will only hurt low-income customers.

In a lengthy proposal to the Ontario Energy Board regarding rate increases, Hydro One includes a pitch "to install prepayment meters, which require the customer to pay first before they get any electricity," said New Democrat MPP Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth).

"Everywhere that prepayment meters have been used, they have hurt struggling families," said Tabuns, his party's energy critic, demanding the government ban them, as has happened in the United Kingdom.

Hydro One executives and Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault insist the meters, if approved, would be optional.

The energy board, Thibeault told reporters, is mandated to "have the ratepayers' best interests in mind, and so we leave the decisions, when it comes to rate applications, to the OEB."

Regardless of the type of meter, no one will be cut off from electricity in the winter, he added.

Hydro One's proposal to the OEB states that "one method of enabling customer control of their electricity consumptions, while in arrears condition, and minimizing Hydro One Network's financial risk, is through the use of prepaid meters. Prepaid meters are a type of energy meter that requires users to pay for energy before using it. This is done via a smart card, token or key that can be 'topped up' at a corner shop, via a smartphone application or online.

"For customers who are high collection risk, the financial risk will be minimized by rolling out this type of meter. With a prepaid meter, electricity is paid upfront. Once the prepaid amount is used up, power is cut-off until the customer is able to load the meter with more credits."

Ferio Pugliese, Hydro One's executive vice-president of customer care and corporate affairs, said "absolutely, this will not be forced" on customers and that it is simply providing them more choice.

The meters, he said, are "an option that we had put into our rate filing as another potential option to be available to customers should they choose it."

Pugliese likened it to customers choosing equal billing payments, "where they don't like fluctuations in their bill so they pay a fixed charge." In this case, he said, it could appeal to those "who might be on a different income cycle, who like to prepay everything upfront or through a period of time."

Thibeault said hunters who have camps they use in the fall "might like to see something like this - they can opt-in and have two months of electricity."

However, he also said, the meter request remains "just a thought."

"At the end of the day, we are still a long way from this even being approved," Thibeault said. "This is just a thought, it's two paragraphs in a 2,000-page document."

But Tabuns believes the meters will circumvent rules preventing electricity cut-offs in the winter.

"Hydro One's installation of prepayment hydro meters would bypass Ontario's rules for disconnections," Tabuns said. "Hydro One won't have to disconnect anyone; the power will be cut off automatically if the customer doesn't feed the meter."

Thibeault also noted that under Hydro One's filing, future rate increases will be no more "than the cost of inflation for the next four years" and in line with the government's promised 25 per cent reduction in hydro bills.

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thespec.com
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Hamilton Spectator reopens Hamilton case

Ontario's police watchdog has reopened an investigation into an incident where a 41-year-old man was injured during his arrest by Hamilton police in September 2016.

The Special Investigations Unit said the case was initially closed the following month after the man said he was hurt falling from a roof, but has since changed his story.

According to the SIU report, at around 12:11 a.m. on Sept. 14, 2016, Hamilton police responded to a domestic situation at a home. Police had difficulty gaining entry and found the occupants uncooperative.

Inside the residence, police recognized the 41-year-old man as being wanted on several outstanding warrants for failing to appear in court. He then ran from police through backyard alleys and over garage roofs.

He was Tasered twice, arrested and later taken to hospital where he was diagnosed with a cracked rib.

On Oct. 18, 2016, the SIU closed the investigation, finding the officers were not at fault because the 41-year-old had said he hurt himself jumping off a roof.

When he was contacted that day for notification of the SIU decision he said he was facing two charges of assaulting a police officer from the Sept. 14 incident and was "ready now to tell the SIU the truth." In his new version of the event the 41-year-old alleged his broken rib was actually from an officer hitting him.

The SIU is an arms-length agency that investigates incidents involving police in Ontario where civilians are seriously injured, killed or there are allegations of sexual assault.

2017/11/23 14:53 - PostMedia
thespec.com
Section: News
By: noreilly@thespec.com
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: HBWO201711230046

Hamilton Spectator DRAFTED: Hamilton school bus driver charged

A 70-year-old school bus driver has been charged with abducting a 14-year-old girl four times while she was being transported to and from school in Hamilton's east end.

Hamilton police child abuse unit detectives began the investigation on Oct. 24 and on Wednesday charged David Nauss with four counts of abducting a person under 16.

Nauss was a school bus driver for Attridge Transportation and the alleged abductions are said to have occurred on four separate days in late October, said Acting Det. Sgt. John Pauls of the victims of crime unit.

The victim is a 14-year-old girl, described as being developmentally delayed, and who attends an unspecified public school in Hamilton's east end.

Hamilton police are not disclosing what exactly he's alleged to have been doing with the girl, other than to say there is no indication there was any sexual assault, Pauls said.

During each incident the girl was not gone long enough that she was reported missing, he added.

Police believe there may be more witness or victims and have taken the step of releasing Nauss' photo with the hope anyone with information will contact investigators.

Nauss was also a volunteer bus driver for the children's charity City Kidz.

Attridge Transportation has fired Nauss and is co-operating with police, including handing over all records of the driver's four years with the company, said Glenn Attridge.

He personally spoke with the driver after receiving a complaint and was concerned enough by the responses that he contacted police.

In his 42 years in the business Attridge said he has "high instincts." After hearing what the driver had to say, he said he thought: "Oh boy this does not sound good to me."

Police told Attridge the family needed to contact police, which they did.

The next day Attridge Transportation did a longer interview with the driver who was immediately terminated.

When Nauss was hired he passed all police and vulnerable sector screenings and had never before been the subject of complaints, Attridge said.

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board spokesperson Shawn McKillop said they're taking direction about what to tell families from police and referred any questions about the incident to police.

"Our thoughts are extended to this victim and the family," he said. "It's obviously a challenging and upsetting situation for them."

Nauss is in custody pending a bail hearing.

If anyone with information is asked to contact Det. Kerry Duench at 905-540-6252.

To provide information anonymously call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

2017/11/23 15:03 - PostMedia
windsorstar.com
Section: Local News
By: Sarah Sacheli, Windsor Star
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: WIWO201711230021

Windsor Legal Aid workers vote to join OPSEU

Legal Aid Ontario workers in Windsor have voted to join the Ontario Public Service Employees Union.

The workers are among those employed at six locations in southwestern Ontario. They join 250 Legal Aid workers already represented by the union.

Legal Aid Ontario runs 76 clinics across the province. It is an publicly funded corporation that provides legal services to low-income individuals.

2017/11/23 12:43 - PostMedia
ottawacitizen.com
Section: Columnists
By: Christina Spencer, Ottawa Citizen
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: OTWO201711230017

Ottawa Citizen Cameron: Ontario lawyers now face their own free

Apparently, it's no longer enough for lawyers in Ontario to know the law and their ethical obligations. Starting this year, the Law Society of Upper Canada requires every lawyer in the province to "create and abide by an individual Statement of Principles that acknowledges (their) obligation to promote equality, diversity and inclusion generally" - and to do so as part of their 2017 Annual Statement.

The Annual Statement is a licensing requirement.

Many lawyers have publicly rebelled at the Law Society's attempts to coerce both their speech and their behaviour. And given the current debate about free speech in our universities, the measure bears examination.

In following the story, I reviewed the Law Society's Barrister's Oath (bylaw 4, section 21). The language is fairly typical, including pledges to act ethically, not promote lawsuits on frivolous pretences, conduct all cases faithfully, etc. One line of the oath stood out to me, however: "I shall champion the rule of law and safeguard the rights and freedoms of all persons."

It would certainly seem that the Law Society cannot require lawyers to waive their constitutional rights to freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression by signing a "personal" inclusivity statement against their will, and at the same time require them to take a solemn oath to "champion the rule of law" (what about the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?) or "safeguard the rights and freedoms of all persons" (what about the rights and freedoms of lawyers?).

The statement creates a new paradigm, and a new work reality for every lawyer, and it would seem that the Lawyer's Oath needs to be re-written, and re-sworn by every lawyer to reflect new obligations. The year 2017 is nearly over, and the annual statements are due soon. Any lawyer who intends to conform under duress and create an "individual" statement, should also be willing to swear to the following:

1. I pledge to renounce my own ideas (which I suddenly realize are bad, now that my licence may be at stake) and embrace those of the Law Society (which I never realized were so good until I realized I may have a hard time feeding my family if I don't agree with them);
2. I pledge to embrace insincerity, and say things I don't mean, and mean things I don't say, and do so in a manner that sounds convincing and compelling to all around me;
3. I pledge to promptly call the practice adviser if I go off-script in regard to the promotion of inclusivity, or if I lose the leaflets that say what I'm supposed to think that is;
4. I pledge to seek counselling if I begin to suffer depression from mouthing platitudes that aren't mine - but solemnly recognize and agree that I would rather eat and be a hypocrite than not eat at all;
5. I pledge to retweet whatever the Law Society of Upper Canada tweets within eight hours (three hours if it has to do with inclusivity), and pledge to neither fondly remember nor yearn for any of my former freedoms; they are shadows that I have already forgotten.

The coerced signing away of one's rights and individuality as a condition of practising law in Ontario is profound. Alexis de Tocqueville famously warned us about the tyranny of the majority, and its obsession not with liberty, but with the god of equality that it pursues above all else. Coerced worship of the idol is a sign of the death of a "free and democratic society," which the charter establishes as Canada's ideal.

The current oath includes a pledge to uphold the freedoms of all persons. That includes lawyers. It's time for every lawyer in Ontario to consider carefully this: If they can't determine to stand for their own rights, how will they stand for anyone else's?

2017/11/23 09:33 - PostMedia
lfpress.com
Section: Regional
By: Canadian Press
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: LFWO201711230016

London Free Press Ontario's labour reform: 15 things to know

Ontario's Liberal government passed a host of changes to labour laws Wednesday. Here are some highlights of the legislation, including the centrepiece minimum wage increase:

- Minimum wage rises from \$11.60 an hour to \$14 on Jan. 1, 2018 then to \$15 on Jan. 1, 2019.
- Casual, part-time, temporary and seasonal employees will be given the same pay as full-time employees for doing equal work. There are exemptions based on seniority and merit.
- Lower minimum wage rates for liquor servers, students under 18, hunting and fishing guides will also rise along with the general minimum wage.
- Once an employee works for a company for five years, they will be entitled to three weeks of paid vacation.
- Personal emergency leave no longer only applies to workers at companies with 50 or more employees. All workers will get 10 days per year, two of them paid.
- Victims of domestic or sexual violence, or parents of children who have experienced or are threatened with it, will get five days of paid leave and 17 weeks of job-protected, unpaid leave.
- Employers will not be allowed to request a sick note from an employee taking personal emergency leave.
- Parents whose children die will get unpaid leave of up to 104 weeks. It was previously only offered to parents when a child's death was related to a crime.
- Employers must pay three hours of wages if they cancel a shift with fewer than 48 hours notice, with weather-dependent work exempted.
- Employees can refuse shifts without repercussion if the employer gives them less than four days notice.
- Employees on call must be paid three hours at their regular pay rate.
- Companies that misclassify workers as "independent contractors" instead of employees in order to skirt labour law obligations would be subject to fines.
- The maximum fine for employers who violate employment standards laws will be increased from \$250, \$500 and \$1,000 for various violations to \$350, \$700 and \$1,500. The government will publish the names of those who are fined.
- Ease restrictions on union certification and allow unions to access employee lists and certain contact information if the union can demonstrate it has the support of 20 per cent of employees.
- Makes it easier for home care and community services workers, people in the building services sector, and those who work through temp agencies to unionize.
- The maximum fines under the Labour Relations Act will increase from \$2,000 for individuals and \$25,000 for organizations to \$5,000 and \$100,000.

2017/11/23 08:53 - PostMedia

lfpress.com
Section: Local
By: Hank Daniszewski The London Free Press
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: LFWO201711230013

London Free Press London restaurateur warns of fallout from hike wage

The passage of a bill hiking Ontario's minimum wage has sparked warnings from a London restaurateur.

Brace yourself for higher prices, smaller menus and fewer, more stressed-out staff, said Twee Brown, co-owner of a chain of 10 Asian restaurants including London's popular Ben Thanh.

The Wynne government Wednesday passed sweeping labour reform legislation, hiking the minimum wage from \$11.60 an hour to \$14 an hour on Jan. 1 and \$15 an hour in 2019.

The planned wage hike gave the government a bump in the polls and is popular with labour and some economists who say it will boost the economy.

But Brown said the hike in minimum wage to \$14 an hour will cost her restaurant chain, with about 400 employees, \$260,000 annually and another \$80,000 when it jumps to \$15 an hour in a year. She said the estimates don't include higher paid staff who will expect a salary bump to keep up.

"Myself and my husband will be working more hours. We have plans to change our product and service offerings to streamline the operation so we can reduce the hours and positions in our company," Brown said.

Profit margins in the restaurant business are notoriously thin, especially for Asian restaurants where most of the menu items are modestly priced, she said.

A minimum wage hike may be popular with the public, but Brown said she does not know if the consequences will be accepted by consumers.

"We can't have everyone say, 'We support higher wages, but no hike in prices, please.' "

Brown also doesn't like another provision of the labour legislation that will allow all employees two paid sick days a year, saying it will create problems for small restaurants.

Brown said her restaurants will make practical changes to cut costs. The menu will be trimmed to streamline the kitchen. Fancier cocktails will be dropped so bartending shifts can be trimmed.

In an economic update last week, the Liberal government said the Ontario corporate tax rate for small business will fall to 3.5 per cent from 4.5 per cent effective Jan. 1. Businesses also will be offered \$1,000 incentives to hire and retain young workers.

But Brown said a cut in the corporate tax rate will have minimal impact, a view echoed by the London Chamber of Commerce, which warns many small businesses will struggle and cut staff hours.

Chamber general manager Gerry Macartney said the tax cut is a drop in the bucket.

It works out to less than \$5,000 in savings for the average small business that has a profit of \$500,000 or less, he said.

Macartney said that only offsets the payroll cost of a single part-time employee moving from \$11.60 to \$15 an hour.

"This does not go anywhere near the impact that businesses are going to feel. There's no mitigation here whatsoever," he said.

Across the province, Macartney said the tax cut will save small businesses about \$250 million during three years. But one independent analysis said those small businesses will face \$23 billion in added costs due to the minimum wage hike.

With files from The Canadian Press

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lfpress.com
Section: Regional
By: James Wallace Postmedia Network
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: LFWO201711230011

London Free Press: Hydro One makes pitch for pre-paid electricity

If it's possible to rub something more painful, infuriating and insulting than salt into the collective wound represented by the mess the Liberal government has made of energy policy in this province, surely it is this.

Hydro One is seeking permission to install "pre-paid" meters across Ontario to force consumers - especially those struggling to cover electricity bills - to pay up front before the utility switches on the juice for heat and lights.

Instead of a coin slot, Hydro One's pre-paid electricity meters would replace some existing smart meters and could be "topped up" at a corner shop, via a smartphone application or online," according to the utility's distribution rate application before the Ontario Energy Board.

Those who can't pay up front - logically pensioners struggling on fixed incomes; low-income families or new Canadians trying to make ends meet; those scraping by on social assistance - would effectively be cut off and are inevitably among the potential targets of a new "Collection Enhancements" plan revealed Wednesday by New Democrat MPP Peter Tabuns.

"Everywhere that pre-payment meters have been used, they have hurt struggling families," Tabuns said in the legislature, and urged the government to "prohibit pre-payment meters."

Meanwhile, on page 2,038 of a distribution rate application before the Ontario Energy Board, Hydro One makes the case that a rising number of "overdue accounts present a financial risk" to the provincial electricity transmission and distribution utility Kathleen Wynne sold to private interests.

"For customers who are high collection risk, the financial risk will be minimized by rolling out this type of meter," Hydro One argues. "With a pre-paid meter, electricity is paid up-front. Once the pre-paid amount is used up, power is cut-off until the customer is able to load the meter with more credits."

Tabuns points out pre-paid meters potentially circumvent the Liberal government's Protecting Vulnerable Energy Consumers Act, legislation that prevented utilities from cutting off power in winter and passed after some 60,000 households across Ontario were left in the cold in 2015.

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault had little meaningful to say in response, other than to note the OEB was reviewing and had to approve the application.

However, Hydro One insisted "No residential customer will be without power during the winter months, regardless of the type of meter they may choose to have in the future," said spokesperson Nancy Clark.

"As a leading electricity service provider, we look at best practices across many different jurisdictions and countries," Clark said in a statement to the Sun. "This is just one of the many options we are exploring to offer our customers more choice on how they manage their electricity accounts."

Meanwhile, it ought to be painfully obvious when you waste billions on phony rate cuts, overpay for unneeded "clean" energy and mismanage energy infrastructure to a point that Ontarians enjoy the highest electricity rates in the country that paying sky-high electricity bills is a growing burden for many.

It ought to be equally clear pay for play hydro meters are no answer to that problem.

2017/11/23 08:13 - PostMedia
lfpress.com
Section: Comment (op

By: Lorrie Goldstein Toronto Sun
Published: 2017/11/23
Story ID: LFWO201711230006

London Free Press GOLDSTEIN: How universities killed free speech

Academic freedom -- for conservatives -- died a long time ago.

So can we please end the pretence that universities today are bastions of free speech and that Wilfrid Laurier University's appalling treatment of graduate student Lindsay Shepherd was an aberration?

What happened to the 22-year-old Shepherd has been the norm in universities for at least two generations, where so-called "liberal" academics in the humanities and social sciences believe their mission is not to teach young people how to think, but what to think.

The only reason WLU apologized to Shepherd, who actually believed her job as a teaching assistant was to expose students to controversial ideas, and to encourage civil discussion and debate about them in an academic setting, was that she had her WLU interrogators and tormentors dead to rights on tape.

Had Shepherd not recorded the proceedings of the three-person kangaroo court she faced that was ready to convict her for, in the immortally imbecilic words of the lead professor, committing the moral equivalent of "neutrally playing a speech by Hitler" -- merely for citing controversial U of T psychology professor Jordan Peterson in a classroom discussion -- she would be academic roadkill today.

As so many other idealistic young people, particularly those espousing any tolerance, let alone support, for conservative ideas, have been anonymously ground underfoot at universities for decades.

This without having learned the precise nature of the accusations against her, other than that they came from one or more of her students in a first-year "communications studies" course, apparently upset in some way about a class discussion she led on the use of non-gendered pronouns.

A discussion Shepherd set up by using a clip from TV Ontario -- the province's educational television station, for gawd's sake -- featuring Peterson, who opposes non-gendered pronouns, and another academic who supports them.

The audio tape reveals Shepherd's interrogators unwilling even to listen to her side of the story as, her voice breaking but her dignity and counter-arguments intact, she fearlessly stands her ground.

What happened to Shepherd was grotesque and absurd, like something out of a novel by Franz Kafka, most famously in *The Trial*, in which the victim is persecuted by an unmovable bureaucracy, unable to defend himself because the precise nature of what he is being accused of is never made clear.

The belated, apologies to Shepherd by WLU's president and the lead professor in Shepherd's interrogation, while better than nothing, failed to address the substantive issue.

That is that this was an obvious case of workplace harassment and bullying of a subordinate by superiors, for which those responsible should be subject to serious discipline.

Shepherd, who describes herself as a "leftist", but not one who believes in shutting down opposing views, wasn't fooled, tweeting in the wake of the apologies: "Moral of the story: A university must be repeatedly publicly shamed, internationally, in order to apologize (oh, but keep the task force & investigation). Even then, ambiguous about free speech. Also, make sure to secretly record all meetings or they won't take you seriously."

As she wrote earlier in the controversy in an email to therecord.com: "Universities are no longer places where ideas may freely circulate -- they are places where if you even bring up the 'wrong' ideas (ideas they do not consider politically correct), you are labelled as some sort of public enemy. Universities are no longer places where one can engage with controversial ideas. They are echo chambers for left-wing ideology."

Shepherd squarely places herself in the tradition of three of the greatest American conservative political philosophers of the 20th century, who demolished the idea modern universities defend academic freedom decades ago.

Allan Bloom in his seminal 1987 book, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, explained how universities had abandoned their proper role as bastions of critical thinking and the pursuit of reason, for moral relativism, radicalism, faddism, and the strict enforcement of political correctness.

Thomas Sowell has skewered the self-righteous rhetoric of universities which claim to be models of "inclusiveness" by observing: "The next time some academics tell you how important diversity is, ask them how many Republicans there are in the sociology department."

Finally, William F. Buckley Jr. famously observed: "I'd rather entrust the government of the United States to the first 400 people listed in the Boston telephone directory, than to the faculty of Harvard University."

Imagine his horror if the alternative had been Wilfrid Laurier, a textbook example of Buckley's equally well-known observation that, "liberals claim to want to give a hearing to other views, but then are shocked and offended to discover that there are other views."

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TheRecord.com
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By: lbooth@therecord.com
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Waterloo Region : Wilfrid Laurier profs push free speech after assistant

WATERLOO - A group of Wilfrid Laurier professors are calling on the university to adopt a resolution for freedom of expression.

The call comes in response to widespread criticism over the recent censure of a teaching assistant by university staff.

In a Wednesday news release, four professors - with the support of the teaching assistant, 22-year-old graduate student Lindsay Shepherd - say the university must maximize "freedom of expression on campus within the bounds of the law and operations of the university."

"What we've seen our administration offer so far in its treatment of Lindsay Shepherd suggests to us that it does not believe freedom of expression and freedom of inquiry is the primary function of a university, and that worries us," said religion and culture professor David Millard Haskell, listed as the spokesperson on the news release.

The professors want the university to adopt a freedom of expression statement modelled on one developed by the University of Chicago. It also has been adopted by a number of other universities stateside.

A petition has also been created online by the professors, with the "Wilfrid Laurier University Statement of Principles on Freedom of Expression" being proposed.

Haskell said the petition is a direct response to the university's handling of the recent case involving Shepherd.

The teaching assistant was chastised by Laurier officials after showing students a video clip of a debate on TVO's public affairs program, "The Agenda," about the use of gendered pronouns.

Shepherd teaches a tutorial on language use to first-year students.

The TVO segment featured controversial University of Toronto professor Jordan Peterson, who objects to having to use what he says are "made-up" gender-neutral pronouns such as "ze" instead of "he" or "she" - used when a person's gender is unknown or when a person doesn't feel attached to either gender.

The clip also showed University of Toronto professor Nicholas Matte countering Peterson's position.

Shepherd has explained that her class had a "friendly" discussion about the clip - but one or more

students complained about the material.

As a result, Shepherd was called into a meeting with her supervisor, Prof. Nathan Rambukkana, as well as Prof. Herbert Pimlott and diversity and equity official Adria Joel.

During the meeting, which Shepherd recorded, she was accused of "causing harm to trans students," and "creating a toxic climate" in her classroom for showing Peterson's point of view on the use of gender-neutral pronouns.

Rambukkana said her presentation of the material was similar to "neutrally playing a speech by Hitler."

On Tuesday, following a week of media reports on the encounter, the release of the recording and national criticism of the university, the school's president Deborah MacLatchy and Rambukkana apologized for their treatment of Shepherd.

Rambukkana said he has since rethought many of the positions he took during the meeting and expressed regret that he "didn't do enough to try to support" her during the meeting.

MacLatchy said she would strike a task force to explore how to encourage and protect principles such as academic freedom, critical thought, free speech and civil debate.

"As part of its work, the task force will be seeking input from the Laurier community and would welcome submissions, including the University of Chicago principles," the university said Wednesday.

But Haskell is concerned the task force won't achieve what it's meant to.

He points out that Rambukkana expressed interest in serving on the task force in his apology, posted to Laurier's website.

"Here is a man who is on record saying certain topics are beyond debate," said Haskell.

Haskell said the petition's proposal that the university adopt "The Laurier Statement for Freedom of Expression," will protect the exchange of ideas in the academic setting.

"If we're going to claim in the arts and humanities that we are teaching our students to critically think, the only way that happens is through presenting opposing views," said Haskell, who said the Shepherd incident isn't the only example of limits being put on free expression at the university.

In an interview on Wednesday, Shepherd said she supports Laurier adopting the statement proposed by Haskell along with business and economics professor, William McNally; digital media and journalism professor Simon Kiss; and human rights and human diversity professor Andrew Robinson.

"I would hope that if this was adopted that what happened to me would never happen again; that we can show TVO clips in the classroom," she said.

But the media coverage of Shepherd's meeting with academic officials and the university's response came under scrutiny by the Wilfrid Laurier University Rainbow Centre on Tuesday.

The centre offers student services within the Diversity and Equity Office and advocates for queer and trans students.

It released a statement on Facebook, saying: "The discourse of freedom of speech, is being used to cover over the underlying reality of transphobia that is so deeply ingrained in our contemporary political context."

Shepherd disagrees with this position.

"They're suggesting that being trans and supporting academic freedom are mutually exclusive," she said, adding that one doesn't have to be chosen over the other.

Shepherd will speak at a Friday rally organized by Laurier students in support of freedom of expression.

CFTO TDSB Votes To End Police Presence In High Schools

Source: CFTO

Nov 23, 2017 12:00 PM (1)

Anchor: We're live at Toronto police headquarters. After 10 years, the police service will not be providing officers to work in the hallways of Toronto public schools. Good afternoon. We have reaction today to the TDSB decision to disband the resource officer program. Activists are calling it a victory after their decade-long fight to quash the program, and now they want the government to take officers out of all Ontario schools. CTV's Janice Golding is live at police headquarters where opponents of the program celebrated this morning. Janice?

Reporter: Ken, groups like Black Lives Matter gathered outside of Toronto police headquarters this morning to discuss what they are calling a historic victory, one they say was 10 years in the making.

Reporter: For nearly 10 years, Toronto police officers have walked the hallways of 45 Toronto high schools, but no more.

Unidentified: That motion is carried.

[Cheering and Applause]

Reporter: Last night, trustees of the Toronto District School Board voted 18-3 in favor of ending the School Resource Officer program, to the joy of many community activists.

Activists: Children's lives they matter yeah! Children's lives they matter yeah!

Reporter: They spoke out today outside of Toronto police headquarters.

Unidentified 1: This has been 10 years in the making. (Inaudible) took to the streets 10 years ago, and asked the community at that time what did we want in our schools, and did we want cops in our schools, and it was overwhelmingly no.

Unidentified 2: The School Resource Officer program here in Toronto has criminalized youth for a decade. We have had children afraid of going to school and avoiding going to school because of the School Resource Officer program.

Reporter: The SRO program was introduced one year after 15-year-old Jordan Manners was shot and killed inside C.W. Jefferies Collegiate Institute in 2007. But it was suspended in August after a survey of 15,000 students found some were uncomfortable with armed police officers in schools.

Unidentified 3: More than 2,000 students noted that they felt watched or intimidated by the SRO program. So I want to commend the TDSB for taking steps to eliminate the program.

Reporter: While many of those gathered today say they are happy about the decision, they add this is just the start.

Unidentified 4: They have set a precedent. This is a historical decision, and what we are looking to demand now is that the province listen, that the Ministry of Education, Mitzie Hunter makes this decision for all Ontario schools.

Reporter: Of the 15,000 students who were surveyed about having officers in schools, 2,200 said they felt watched, 1,700 said they felt intimidated. And more than a thousand students said they felt uncomfortable going to school. The SRO program is still in existence in Catholic schools across our city. Reporting live, I'm Janice Golding.

GLOBAL TDSB Votes To End Police Presence In High Schools

Source: GLOBAL

Nov 23, 2017 12:00 PM (1)

Anchor: Let's start with police officers, no longer patrolling the corridors of Toronto high schools. The Toronto District School Board made that final decision late yesterday. Global's Mark Carcasole has been getting reaction, and joins us now live from George S. Henry Academy, one of the schools that did have

an officer. Mark, good afternoon, and how is that decision going over there today?

Reporter: Good afternoon Jeff, and George S. Henry was actually one of the first schools in the city to have its own school resource officers. Views on either side of the fence have been fairly mixed, between some parents and students here, and between the activists and trustees that helped get to this point. It was about a decade ago that Toronto police assigned officers, to embed themselves in various schools around the city, watch over students, interact with them, get to know them. But some issues came to light in recent months, the TDSB said it received reports from some students who felt intimidated by their various SROs. That led to a report which recommended the abolishment of the program, and as you mentioned at their meeting last night TDSB trustees did just that.

Unidentified 1: That motion is carried.

Reporter: The TDSB building Wednesday night filled with jubilation after the board voted 18-3 to scrap the School Resource Officer program after nine years. The celebratory mood continued outside Toronto police headquarters Thursday morning, where Toronto social justice organizations claimed the TDSB vote as a major win for students who felt intimidated by the police presence in their hallways.

Phillip Dwight Morgan, Education Not Incarceration: More than 2,000 students noted that they felt watched or intimidated by the SRO program. So, I want to commend the TDSB for taking steps to eliminate the program. Again, it's been 10 years in the making. This is an important first step but it's not the last step.

Reporter: In 2008, after the fatal shooting of 15-year-old Jordan Manners inside C.W. Jefferys Collegiate the previous school year, the SRO program was implemented in 11 Catholic and 19 public schools. George S. Henry Academy was one of them. Parents and students here are not celebrating the TDSB's decision.

Unidentified 2: I really think that we as parents should come out and really fight this because it's for our children's safety.

Unidentified 3: I'd rather have a police officer because we feel safe.

Reporter: Jude is in 12th grade at George S. Henry. As a member of the anti-bullying committee, he's worked closely with the school's officer, Patrick Thompson, who he says was more than a security figure.

Jude Tega, Grade 12, George S. Henry Academy: He coached cricket when he was here. He would stay after school to help the kids. We would stay after school with him to plan Pink Day or like, Anti-Bullying Week.

Reporter: The TDSB admits the number of students surveyed who felt intimidated or targeted by their SRO wasn't a majority, but a large enough group to warrant action.

Marit Stiles, TDSB Trustee: We are a school board. It's about learning, it's about creating an environment where students feel safe to learn in a caring environment.

Reporter: But it all seems backwards to Jude.

Tega: Who'd actually complain unless you're hiding something from the police force? You have nothing to fear from these people, they're your friends, they're here to protect you, they're here to make sure you are safe.

Reporter: Now the SRO program remains operational in 21 Toronto Catholic District School Board schools and the board says at this point anyway it has no plans of ending the program within its jurisdiction.

GLOBAL Hydro One Is Considering Bringing In Pre-Paid Electricity

Source: GLOBAL

Nov 23, 2017 12:05 PM (6)

Anchor: Hydro One apparently looking at bringing pre-paid electricity metres. The energy service provider has applied to the Ontario Energy Board for permission to install them right across the province. The idea is that users would need to pay up front, either at a corner store or online. And according to Hydro One's application, once the pre-paid amount is used up, power is cut-off until the customer loads more credits. Hydro One says it would minimize the financial risk due to overdue accounts. Coming up, I'll talk to NDP

Energy Critic Peter Tabuns about why he feels – why he thinks this is going to hurt people.

*GLOBAL Global News Interviews NDP Energy Critic Peter Tabuns
Metres*

Source: GLOBAL

Nov 23, 2017 12:20 PM (12)

Anchor: Let's turn back now to the possibility of prepaid hydro metres coming to the province. NDP Energy Critic Peter Tabuns joins me now from Queen's Park. Mr. Tabuns, good afternoon and thanks for your time, I appreciate it.

MPP Peter Tabuns, NDP Energy Critic: It's a pleasure. Thanks for having me on.

Anchor: Hydro One says that these kinds of metres would actually help protect them from the risks of overdue accounts and people failing to pay. What's your reaction to that?

MPP Tabuns: I think the reality is you will see a lot of families get cut off, and cut off because they cannot afford to put money into the metre. We saw this kind of thing in the UK under Margaret Thatcher. It had a huge negative response in that country. Families were hurt in, and eventually the UK banned these prepaid metres because they have such a negative impact on people. Frankly, if you are worried about finances of Hydro One, worry about the \$400 million a year that is paid to the CEO, or the billions of dollars that are being given as tax breaks to the ambassadors. That is the big worry, not that people are having a hard time holding things together with their families.

Anchor: Can I ask you, sir, the Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault, he is accusing you and your part of trying to confuse conversation a bit here? They maybe calling some of this fear mongering, that it is still has to be reviewed, and the application itself has to be approved? Is this a case of making too much about nothing here? Do you believe that?

MPP Tabuns: No, not at all. They put in an application to put in these pre-payment smart metres. Once it is approved, it will be very difficult to turn it back. I am warning people now that this whole approach is going to have really negative effects on families here in this province. We have seen it happen in other countries, and now is the time to stop it – not waiting until they are in place and people start getting cut off in the middle of winter.

Anchor: Can you explain to me, because I know largely in thanks to Global News investigation, the rules and laws were changed where Hydro One cannot go in and disconnect somebody during the winter months due to the fact that they cannot pay. But with these prepaid metres, the way I understand it is they are able to circumvent the law, is that correct?

MPP Tabuns: That is exactly it. If you do not put the money into the metre, you do not get the power. So they do not have to send anyone out to disconnect you, they can always say to you and your reporters, 'well we didn't disconnect them, they just didn't pay.' So yes, they don't have power, it may be -20 degrees, but it is their problem, not our problem. What you did was really good, I think it protected a lot of families, but now Hydro One is trying to get around that. Their only interest is making sure that their investors are well off, they do not care about the families of the province, and apparently neither does the Energy Minister.

Anchor: You touched on this a second ago: you mentioned that maybe the discussion should be about the exorbitant hydro rates in this province. Are we focus on is focusing on the wrong thing here when we are talking about families needing to feed the metre instead of maybe why is hydro so expensive, and so many families cannot afford what is a necessity?

MPP Tabuns: That is a really excellent point. If the hydro bills were more affordable, you would have fewer people in trouble, but they are not. The Liberals have put things in place to drive them up year after year. We are getting this very short period of break. By the time these metres are coming forth, the bills will start going up 6 per cent a year at least. My guess is more like 10 per cent a year. People are going to have a really tough time. If you had affordable hydro rates, you would have far fewer people having difficulty paying them, and that is what this Minister should be focused on, not trying to spread confusion about what is really going on.

Anchor: Finally, where does this go from here? We mentioned a second ago it still needs to be approved, the application for this. Do you and your party plan to fight this to make sure these prepaid metres never

see the light of day in this province?

MPP Tabuns: We will be fighting this, and frankly in the next election, we will make sure that we would not go forward with this, and if the Liberals get in, they will make sure that families in Ontario are going to have a very hard time keeping the lights on.

Anchor: All right. NDP Energy Critic Peter Tabuns with us at Queen's Park this afternoon. Mr. Tabuns, I appreciate the time. Thank you.

CKCO Ontario Passes Labour Reform Bill To Increase Minimum

Source: CKCO

Nov 23, 2017 12:17 PM (18)

Anchor: The provincial Legislature has passed a labour reform bill, boosting minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Currently sitting at \$11.60, minimum wage will rise to \$14 this January 1st. It then goes up another dollar in 2019. The move is popular with labour advocates but businesses maintain the increase is too fast about will lead to job losses.

CJOH Prime Minister Trudeau Announces National Housing Strategy

Source: CJOH

Nov 23, 2017 12:12 PM (14)

Anchor: The federal government says it has a \$40 billion housing strategy in place.

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau: Build four times as many units in the past decade. Repair three times as many units as the past decade. The federal government is not only back in housing, but we are here to stay for the long-term.

Anchor: The goal: to help 530,000 families in urgent need and cut chronic homelessness in half. But there will be a long delay before these promises become reality. The money won't be available until after the next election and the bulk of the cash won't be released until the Liberals win a third mandate. It's a conditional offer. The Liberals have to be re-elected for the Prime Minister's plan to help Canadians in the future.

MCTV MOL Document Reveals Safety Concern With Shaft At Vale

Source: MCTV

Nov 23, 2017 12:05 PM (10)

Anchor: New information this noon hour on Coleman mine in the Greater Sudbury community of Levack. CTV has obtained a Ministry of Labour document that reveals safety concerns with the shaft at Vale's Coleman mine that dates back six years. About 500 workers are off the job without pay. With more on that story, here is CTV's Alana Everson.

Reporter: It is right here in black and white, in this Ministry of Labour document dated November 14th of this year. An inspector writes, "The need to remove the concrete blocks and brattice has been known to the mine owner for quite some time. A meeting similar to today's was held with the Ministry of Labour on October 30, 2013." It goes on to say, "It's hard to fathom why the identified unsafe shaft conditions were not addressed in a timely fashion". The United Steelworkers Local 6500 is the union representing the workers at Coleman. It says safety issues with the shaft come down to negligence on the part of Vale.

Tim Kiley, Steelworkers Local 6500 Vice President: The shaft is deteriorating at the ventilation site as well as other areas and this has been going on since 2008. We found out this morning, and there has been hundreds of reports done by our workers about this, about the way it has been taken care of. It's sadly neglect.

Reporter: We contacted Vale. It says, "Vale puts strong emphasis on planned maintenance to ensure the well-being of our assets and safety of our people. In fact, we do Planned Maintenance Periods (PMPs) every 12-18 months." It goes on to say, "A significant PMP took place in our surface plants this spring and we also had 14 days of planned maintenance at Coleman in May and June of this year." The union says it questions why it took the company so long to address the safety concerns that put workers at risk and even their families. Last summer many people went underground at Coleman as part of a family day.

MCTV New Poll Finds 68 Per Cent Of Practical Nurses And PSW

Source: MCTV

Nov 23, 2017 12:10 PM (12)

Anchor: The numbers are staggering, a new poll shows 68 per cent of registered practical nurses and personal support workers in Ontario have experienced at least one incident of physical violence in the last year. CTV's Lyndsay Moggy has more.

Scott Sharp, PSW: He broke loose from my co-worker's grip and he punched me.

Reporter: Scott Sharp recalls the day he was assaulted by a patient at a Guelph hospital. The incident left him with a spinal cord injury. He says it wasn't the first time he had been assaulted at work and for a long time, he thought it was just part of the job.

Sharp: I didn't come into this to have someone punch me in the face. I've had my eyes gouged. I've been slapped, punched, you name it. But you keep going back. You keep going back because of that caring bit.

Reporter: Sharp is not the only one who has experienced this type of violence in the workplace. This fall, the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions polled over 1,900 members working in seven Ontario communities including several in the northeast.

Michael Hurley, Ontario Council of Hospital Unions President: The highest numbers in our survey were in North Bay. The highest number of physical assaults, the highest number of sexual harassments, sexual assaults, were in North Bay. Sudbury, on physical assaults, is just a little bit higher than the rest of the province.

Reporter: Results also show almost half of those polled are afraid of reprisal if they speak about these issues of violence.

Sharp: If you take a look at that 44 per cent, those people were allowed to speak out with fear of being blacklisted. Can you imagine what the stats would be on the assaults, on the injuries? It would be a lot higher.

Joe Pilon, Health Sciences North: You're trying to create a culture to say we cannot fix the problem unless you tell us about it. We are getting regular reports through our instant reporting system when there is violence. We use that to follow up as quickly as we can.

Reporter: The union is calling on the provincial and federal governments for legislative changes to protect healthcare workers. Lyndsay Moggy, CTV News, Sudbury.