

Today's News - Thursday, March 8, 2018

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Happy International Women's Day! As Ontario's first female Premier, Kathleen Wynne has a special message for every woman and girl who wants to reach her full potential and push for real change. Read the Premier's article [here](#).

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- Yesterday, Minister of Finance Charles Sousa announced that starting next year the Government will be making the deliberate choice to run a deficit in order to invest in health care, child care and mental health. Please use the following key messages when discussing this topic moving forward:
 - o The Minister of Finance has announced that our 2017-18 budget will see a surplus.
 - o Starting next year we are making a deliberate choice to run a deficit at less than 1 per cent of GDP in order to invest in care.
 - o That means investments in mental health, health care and child care.
 - o The 2018 Budget will outline a path to return to balance, building on the province's long track record of strong fiscal management.
- Ontario is standing up for workers and businesses by taking measured actions in response to discriminatory American procurement policies. The Fairness in Procurement Act, 2018 was passed today in the Ontario legislature, and will allow the province to take responsive action to address unfair government procurement practices that are being implemented in New York State and Texas, and considered in other states. These policies represent a worrying trend towards protectionism and prevent Ontario businesses from accessing cross-border procurement opportunities. The legislation gives Ontario the flexibility to choose whether and how to respond to discriminatory actions by creating regulations to address those actions. Responsive regulations will be pursued when a U.S. subnational jurisdiction enacts legislation or adopts an unfair, discriminatory policy. The government has posted proposed regulations to respond proportionally to the restrictions set out in New York State and Texas "Buy American" legislation. Proposed regulations are [posted for public comment](#) on Ontario's Regulatory Registry.

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Our government's plan to build a stronger, healthier Ontario includes historic new investments in health care, including free medications for everyone 24 and under through OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare, providing free tuition to over 210,000 students and on-the-job learning opportunities to help land a great job, helping 100,000 kids access quality, licensed child care and making it more affordable for families, making everyday life more affordable by reducing electricity costs by 25 per cent on average through our Fair Hydro Plan, and taking action to make housing more affordable for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.