

MEDIA EVENT: MINISTERS' PRE-CABINET SCRUMS

November 29, 2017

Location:

Outside Legislative Chambers

Speakers:

Ministers [Milczyn](#); [Hoskins](#); [Zimmer](#); [Del Duca](#); [Thibeault](#); [Naidoo-Harris](#); [Hunter](#); [NDP Leader Horwath](#)

Media Attendance:

Print – 12

TV – 4

Radio – 1

Media Outlets:

Jones – CP; Jeffords – CP; Benzie – Star; Ferguson – Star; Rushowy – Star; Cohn – Star; Giovanetti – Globe; Smith Cross – QP Briefing; Hains – QP Briefing; Reynolds – QP Briefing; Smith – QP Today; Crawley - CBC Radio/TV; Lamoureux - Radio Canada TV; Brule - Radio Canada/CJBC; Fitzpatrick – CBC Online; Bliss - CTV Ontario; Rath - CHCH Television

Media Questions:**Questions for Minister Milczyn**

Q: Giovanetti: When are we going to get something new if now is the time?

Well, we've been getting announcements of the properties that we've been releasing, going to markets so we can actually build more affordable rental housing in communities. Today marks the announcement of how we are going to be working with municipalities so they can deliver the Development Charge Rebate Program tailored to their local needs. They can identify the appropriate projects of their communities that are eligible for this program.

Q: Giovanetti: Is \$25,000,000 a year for five years, is that enough of a [Inaudible] for rent-control?

It will deliver many new rental-homes. They could be thousands of new rental homes depending on how municipalities think they should implement it in their communities. That's going to be a significant addition to our [Inaudible]

Q: Giovanetti: Yesterday's announcement about the vacancy rate in the GTA, it is hovering somewhere about 1%. How concerned are you about that?

We're concerned, and that's why it is part of our Fair Housing plan. From the beginning has been to increase the supply of rental housing and affordable housing. Working with our market partners to deliver that, so there is another piece of that. So this is what we are doing. When I look at the Conservative platform, there is barely any mention of housing at all. No mention of how they propose bringing more rental housing to the market, or how they are going to address issues around affordable housing. They're going to cut the cap and trade money, which is how we're funding \$657,000,000 of repairs for existing stock of social housing. They're going to take that away. So, we're doing our best to work with the private sector and municipalities to bring more housing to the market.

Q: Crawley: The vacancy rate, it is coming

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six months after you guys brought in the expanded rent-controls. Is that a coincidence, or does rent-control have some impact?	they have averaged about 1,800 new units of rental housing a year, which is barely even a drop in the bucket compared to the housing compared to the housing that is being built in the GTA over that period of time. So the rent control program that we've had in place for many years, I don't think it is going to have an impact on the construction of rental housing. What we're doing now is bringing land to the market that can built for rental housing and affordable housing. We're going to work with municipalities to make the provision of rental housing more affordable to build. We've brought in changes to property taxes, so new rental buildings are assessed as other residential real estate, which the rental-sector has been asking for years, all of which will help build for rental houses.
Q: Smith: How are you selecting the municipalities and when are we going to find out which ones they are?	So we're going to put the call to municipalities across the province to approach us about which ones want to participate in this and to what extent they think they might participate.
Q: Smith: So you're going to ask them and they are going to apply?	They're going to approach us with their proposals on what they think they can achieve with this money and what their plan is. Once we select the partner municipalities then it will be an application-based process with each municipality.
Q: Smith: What is the timeline on this before it is rolled out and announced?	We are rolling it out now. We want to have this up and running as quickly as possible.
Q: Brule: [Speaking in French] Yes, I would like to know more about your announcement this morning. What is it?	The announcement was about fund to rebate on the of the Development Charges for municipalities in Ontario. So [inaudible], it is an opportunity to build more new homes and provide more rentals.
Q: Brule: [Speaking in French] So is this to encourage builders to build more buildings in cities for which they will be rebated? Can you give us more detail on that?	There is \$25,000,000 annually for rebates available to refund the Development Charges. These are the fees that municipalities pay to build infrastructure in their communities. It can be [Inaudible] a big part incentive for the construction of more homes.
Questions for Minister Hoskins	
Joined in progress	...is doing several things. So there are six private hospitals under the Private Hospitals Act, which was I believe created in Ontario in 1931. So there were six hospitals that were grandfathered, you can call it that under that act. And so we're bringing them into the oversight and accountability and transparency of our community health facilities. That's what's being proposed in the legislation. So it's a higher level of accountability. Where we recognize that there are gaps from a regulatory perspective and oversight perspective. And the legislation also speaks to the eventual repeal of the Private Hospitals Act after we say found the appropriate destination, if I can describe it that way. So, you know,

	some of them for example function a lot like long term care homes. So it might be that eventually they require licensure under Long Term Care Homes Act. So it's sort of a twostep process where we want to immediately provide a greater level of oversight and accountability. And this act does this. Schedule Nine of the proposed Act, of the proposed legislation. And work with the six grandfathered the private hospitals to transition them into this new regime. And once we've completed that we'll be in a position where we can repeal the Private Hospitals Act.
Q: Smith Cross: Would this change how they do what they do (inaudible)	Well we'll have to see. So as I mentioned for example if there's one of the six that functions similar to a long term care home it might be that its ultimate destination, if you will, from a regulatory perspective, legislative perspective, is through the Long Term Care Act. And we need to, are working with each individual entity to determine what that best regime might look like. So I think we need to go through that process. And but what's important and the intent is to, you know, I think respect the fact that they are legal in this province; were grandfathered in under the Private Hospitals Act, are providing a service. But we need to have a stronger regulatory and oversight and accountability regime. So that's what this is proposed legislation intends to do.
Q: Smith Cross: Is the legislation or the regulations that go with it going to change the way that private clinics can charge people for associated costs with their healthcare?	So I don't believe that's within the scope of this current legislation. Proposed legislation.
Q: Jeffords: Minister on the tattoo issue. The ban that's been added to Bill 160, is there a need for that? I mean, it's kind of a strange scenario where the government is wading into this (inaudible)	Not at all. So I think many Ontarians saw the horrible images of the woman from the Ottawa region who was given an eye tattoo. A needle injected into her eye by an untrained individual. And she's lucky and she may still, there's concerns about her vision in the long term. I know that, and serious damage to her eye as well. She's spoken publicly about this quite dramatically. And so the Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario came to us very concerned about this issue. That that kind of invasive procedure would be done to an individual's eye in a completely unregulated fashion. And they made the request to the government that we prohibit this procedure unless it's for medical purposes and even when for medical purposes that it's only by a regulated health professional. So we brought that amendment forward based on the advice that we were provided with by Eye Physicians and Surgeons. And I'm gratified that we received unanimous consent and all parties supported it.
Q: Giovanetti: Minister Schedule Nine, was it an oversight (inaudible)?	(Inaudible) when you look at this government we have obviously not introduced any further private hospitals compared to the six that were grandfathered in decades

	ago. So it absolutely was the intent as articulated in the proposed legislation, Schedule Nine that they would transition into a new regulatory regime. We're also bringing forward further clarification to make that crystal clear to everyone that the goal and the intent, and as expressed in the legislation, is for a complete ban on any further private hospitals. (inaudible) and I should add, you know, that with regards to private clinics have a moratorium on private clinics in this province since long before I became Health Minister. (inaudible)
Q: Giovanetti: Schedule One, it seems to allow ambulances to drop off patients at non hospital sites. And it seems to allow paramedics to do a little bit more than they can today. Is that a response to some of the challenges that you're facing with emergency departments and people in ambulances?	Well again it's something that we discussed earlier with paramedics and other stakeholders. And this is an element of the legislation that they support. To have that autonomy, to use their best clinical judgment. Up to now, paramedics, through EMS, are only able to drop off patients at hospital ERs. And we believe that it's important to allow paramedics to use the full scope of their abilities. And that may sometimes lead to ascertain that an individual can simply be discharged on site, doesn't need to be transported. Or it may be that there's a facility, so maybe it's a long term care home that the individual resides in. And if it's a minor situation, I think we can all agree that it would likely be more appropriate for that individual to be returned to the long term care home with the appropriate level of support. Provide individual needs as opposed to a hospital ER. In London, we had the example as well of mental health patients. Now there's a 24/7 crisis center staffed by, run by the Canadian Mental Health Association. And as, it's been going for about a year I think a bit more. And so there are many clients that have a longstanding relationship with that crisis center. So it may be rather than sending that individual to a hospital ER, it would be more appropriate to send them to a crisis center where there are all the necessary professional staff but also a relationship that would be supportive of and conducive to the healing for that individual. So that was the rationale behind it. And I think it's really about giving choice to paramedics so they're not being required to do anything. They're not being told where an individual should be taken. But they are given greater authority I'll call it, under their scope to make that clinical decision that's truly in the best interests of the patient.
Q: Smith Cross: (Inaudible) why is that in the bill if the intention is not to expand private clinics in Ontario?	Well as I mentioned we've looked at our practice. We've had I think since 2011, if not before, we have not licenced a single private entity outside of hospital, of any kind. Whether it's an independent health facility or hospital facility. So that's our track record for many years now and we will continue that through this legislation if passed. And we made it crystal clear with regards to our intent on private hospitals. We've been working closely with stakeholders, including the Ontario Health Coalition, which has been working with us on some of the

	amendments to provide even greater clarity on that question. So we share the same goal. And, you know, I think we've licensed five out- of- hospital premises and health facilities since 2011.
Q: Giovanetti: You've been mentioning the OHC a lot. Just wondering, why has it been important for you to work with the OHC on this? On these amendments?	Well, you know, we worked with all our stakeholders. This was an issue that's important to them directly. So it varies. Talking to paramedics. Paramedics were focused on the legislation that applies to them. You have to ask the Ontario Health Coalition why it's important for them to work with this on this particular issue. But we welcome their collaboration and I think it will be a stronger bill as a result of their input and their advice.
Q: Smith Cross: One of their concerns is that a subsequent government (inaudible)	Look, the purpose behind this legislation was to increase the oversight and accountability for private hospital premises and those six private hospitals that I referenced that were grandfathered in many years ago by the previous government. And this legislation, if it passes, will do just that. And we're clear as a government in terms of our intent to prohibit any further private hospitals. And as I mentioned for the better part of a decade we have not licensed any for-profit, independent health facilities. And we'll continue to do that.
Q: Smith Cross: (inaudible)	Well I haven't seen the amendment. So I know that our team members and the members of government who are on the committee are studying that. So we'll have to see if that comes up in clause-by-clause.
Q: Giovanetti: How often does this happen? That you have to go back to the health bill and actually revisit the legislation?	Oh. So for me, I mean, I've always ...Well you know I think the NDP are about a week late to the party. Right? So we always, I always, welcome good advice and legislation. That's why we put it out there. That's why it goes, you know, it's introduced in first reading and then it debated, and it goes to committee and it gets debated again. It's about making the strongest possible, best legislation. So all of the bills that I've brought forward we've made changes to it. That's, positive changes, and I think that's a natural part of the process. And I welcome, and I welcome any advice or comments from anyone which will make our bill better and stronger. So that's always been my experience. I don't think this is an anomaly at all. I think its par for the course.
Q: Smith: When the NDP say there's a thousand private clinics operating, can you just tell us what those are? Like are these 3D ultrasound clinics or are they like really specific health...	So they include so radiology. So if you're providing an X-ray or ultrasound it might be through a for-profit or not-for-profit entity. So I think, you know, I think there's so many examples like that. And often they are entities that are run by single health care practitioners. Maybe a physician, maybe another type of health care provider, regulated health care provider.
Q: Smith: But you have a moratorium on more of those opening?	So we have a moratorium on for-profit. So we haven't since I think, 2011 maybe not. Well I'm pretty confident

	for the better part of a decade we have not licensed a single for-profit independent health facility or out of hospital premise. We have a moratorium in place on that. And we plan to continue with that. But again you know in terms of I think people are imagining that there's this cascade of licences going out. We've only licenced five independent health facilities in the last six years. Five. Less than one a year. All not-for-profit.
Questions for Minister Zimmer	
Q: Jones: Federal government made a commitment in this meeting to support the construction of this treatment centre. What if anything has Ontario agreed to?	So we met this morning, and as I said in the house this morning, it was a very very productive meeting. As Minister Philpott said "we've turned a page this morning". She made some commitments and there was a round of applause from everybody at the meeting, chiefs, ministers, various advisors. I'm going to leave it up to Minister Philpott to give those details out, and I expect they are going to come out later today.
Q: Jones: So we have the federal commitments, already on the wire, already public. I'm wondering what Ontario has committed to, if anything? Is this just a federal project right now?	No we have a broad commitment to work with the federal government on the range of issues at Grassy. As I mentioned this morning, who were particularly doing the piece on their mediation, regarding 5.2 Million to the (inaudible) and the 85 for the actual (inaudible). But we even discussed a range of other issues this morning, including obviously the mercury disability board issues, the clean of the Wabigoon river. And then there were a number of other issues regarding the jurisdiction issues, and other issues facing the (inaudible). So it was a pretty (inaudible).
Q: Lamoreaux: Who will be responsible for the operating costs of the treatment centre? I understand the federal government will build it, and who is responsible for the operating?	So I'm going to wait until the federal – Minister Philpott formally releases her statement this afternoon. I haven't seen what chief Fobister has put out this morning but we agreed that we would hold off until Minister Philpott issued her statement this afternoon. Which will have the details of what we worked on this morning.
Q: Fitzpatrick: But you can't tell us at this point whether the Ontario government is committing any money to the treatment centre? Either to build it or operate it?	I'm going to, out of courtesy to the federal Minister because they have the principal responsibility, I'm going to undertake the weight and collate her statement, there's nothing more to say until Minister Philpott has formally released her statement.
Q: Jones: Have you sort of agreed on kind of a division of responsibility then? They sort of take the lead and centre and you –	I have made commitment to minister Philpott to wait for her to release her statement and I'll respond later.
Q: Jones: So will your scrum later?	I'm always around working on good government for everybody in Ontario.
Q: Lamoreaux: So what time should we schedule another scrum?	Well you keep an eye on Minister Philpott's news, okay?
Q: Fitzpatrick: Did the leaders of Grassy	As I said in my statement this morning, it was a very

Narrows seemed satisfied with -?	productive meeting. At a point in the meeting there was a round of applause from the chiefs, ministers and all the various advisors in the room.
Q: Fitzpatrick: They were saying yesterday that they feel like they've been pleading for this for years and it's been falling on deaf ears, that they've been ignorant and this has taken for too long and ugh.	So as I said this morning, in house, here, it was a very productive meeting and we addressed a number of issues and importantly there was a round of applause, that doesn't happen that often at these meetings. There was a round of applause from the chiefs, the advisors and ministers and their advisors so stay tuned.
Q: Lamoureux: But what changed because they're saying that they've been asking for that for years.	Stay tuned. Wait until Minister Philpott has her remarks out and then call me if you want to talk, okay?
Questions for Minister Del Duca	
Q: Bliss: (Joined in progress) Suggestions that the Highway Traffic Act be changed, that collision reporting regulations be amended to take into consideration the seriousness of dooring. Would you be open to making any changes to either of those so people have report cases of dooring?	So as you might remember in Bill 31 when it passed in the legislature unanimously a number of months ago to make the Ontario Road Safer Act contained tougher penalties and sanctions for dooring in that legislation. I understand Toronto City Council has been deliberating on this. I believe they may have passed something a motion on it earlier today. So I'm very open to the conversation. I look forward to receiving correspondence from the city or Toronto or any other municipality that wants to engage in this discussion. It's one of the other reasons not specifically on dooring but generally speaking, dealing with our most vulnerable road users including pedestrians and cyclists. We've introduced measures in legislation that's before the legislature right now that would toughen penalties. I think broadly speaking we understand the importance of making sure we keep our roads and highways safe. In particular for our most vulnerable road users so I'm open to the conversation.
Q: Bliss: Two specific things they are looking for one is that there be mandatory education on dooring for the G1 test. What do you think about that?	Again open up the conversation I think at the end of the day I want the ministry to work with all of our municipal partners and those that are interested with the advocates or with our stakeholders in the road safety realm to make sure that we landed in the right spot. To me it's most important that we get the right outcomes. So if it's an education issue, if it's a sanctions or penalties issue; if it's an enforcement issue, those are all things that we'd be open to looking at.
Q: Bliss: One more idea they tossed around is the possibility of putting rearview mirrors down in the passenger doors for cars for hire such as Uber vehicles or taxicabs so that people are kind of armed before they get out of the car. What do you think of that?	Look again all very interesting and interesting perspective, open up the conversation to look forward to receiving formal correspondence and then through the ministry and the city engaging in that discussion and hopefully we will end in a good spot. Thank you.
Questions for Minister Thibeault	
Q:	(Joined in progress) So giving Hydro One the opportunity

	to do this pilot project and do the build redesign really helps provide a lot of the clarity that ratepayers were looking for it when it comes to their bills.
Q: Hains: And are you open to roll out this kind of project to you know the various other power companies?	Yes so. You know giving Hydro One the opportunity to have this bill redesign and then the second piece we've created the bill redesign team that's working with many of the utilities, some of the leaders in other sector, as well as the Electricity Distributors Association. They're going to actually come up with a lot of the things you know in Hydro One has been leading the way on this but they're going to come up with many of these pieces and then make sure that we can see that rollout in the first quarter of 2018.
Q: Ferguson: So that is for the other utilities?	Yes we're dealing with that. So anyone that. So anyone that wants to participate. You know the bill redesign committee is working on creating that for them and so that should be ready come you know, as soon as possible in the first quarter of 2018.
Q: Ferguson: So then all the utilities can pick up on that.	Yeah it is. Well you know because the important thing for for us as the government is you know we've been trying to make the bills as clear as possible. And a perfect example of that is the debt and retirement charge for residences. So we thought it was a good idea to keep the debt retirement charge on the bills and show that it was zero, showing that it was eliminated. But you know hindsight is that upset people. People are saying you know when is this coming back. So it was confusing more than what it was providing the clarity. So for us it's making sure that we can be more clear on that.
Q: Hains: Beyond Hydro One is a purely optional measure for them.	So you know the bill redesign committee is working on making sure that they can create a very clear and understandable bill for rate payers and so you know this will be something that all of them would be able to participate in and why wouldn't you want to make it as clear as possible for rate payers.
Q: Ferguson: (Inaudible) buyback shares for Hydro One. Andrea Horwath now does not know how long it would take. Where does that money go now from the dividends? What do you do with that money?	So all that money, what we've done with the money from the sale and from the money that we and we get on the dividends it goes into infrastructure. We make sure that you know where we're building roads, we're building hospitals, we're building schools. We've got the largest infrastructure plan that this province has ever seen. You know we're talking about \$190 billion over the next 12 years or 12 years total. And so we're making sure but that's invested in building up Ontario. So again it just shows to me that you know this isn't a plan and this isn't a plan to actually address the affordability issue that we've done through the Fair Hydro Plan. This isn't an issue that is actually going to see a single cent come off of anyone's bills because we're all aware that the Ontario Energy Board is the entity that sets the rates not Hydro

	One. They've had to apply in the past and have been denied.
Q: Ferguson: So just to clarify, the dividends go through general revenue into infrastructure?	So they go they go into general revenue. Most of the stuff that we're using right now when we're talking about Hydro One is what have you done with you know the billions of dollars that you made in the sale that money went into infrastructure. You know the dividends
Q: Ferguson: And paying down the debt.	And paying down the debt. That it was about 50 50 right and looking at be overall close to that you get to the exact numbers you need that.
Q: Ferguson: So if they are going to take the Hydro One dividends, and use to buy back Hydro One shares, does that not leave a hole in the treasury that has to be filled by other means?	So I mean that's it it leaves and then you know onward two hundred and sixty million dollar hole. I think if you look at the report that Hydro One just put out and how much we've received is \$260 million. That's \$260 million dollars that you need to find to actually continue to invest in schools and you know in the infrastructure that we use.
Q: Ferguson: And that was for 2016, that \$260Mil roughly?	Yes.
Q: Ferguson: Right. That's great. Thanks	
Questions for Minister Naidoo-Harris	
Q. Rushowy: (inaudible) child care rebate that the Tories have proposed (inaudible) what do you think of it first of all?	Well, you know, frankly, I think this is a vote grab. The bottom line is this. They are doing nothing to build the system. We are transforming the system. They are basically saying upfront we'll move some money forward. In fact, the math doesn't even add up. But the bottom line is this. They're saying they're going to move some money forward. They're not going to be reducing fees. They're not working on doing supports for the workforce. They're not looking at increasing spaces. They're not looking at quality. And this is exactly what parents out there told us, that they wanted a transformational change, and we're working very hard to make sure that we're delivering on that change. This is just going to be a very kind of, you know, top-level, you know, very basic idea of giving families some funds. But in the end, it does nothing to improve the situation for families when it comes to child care, and families are facing challenges, and we get it, and that's what we're trying to do.
Q: Crawley: But they say they're also going to, you know, build the 100,000 spaces that you guys are promising to do; plus, they're going to make child care more affordable. So what are you guys going to do about affordability?	We're working on affordability right now. But let me just go back to the fact that the bottom line is this. Their math doesn't add up. They're going to bring in \$12 billion in cuts. We're already moving historic amounts of funding into the child care space. I do not see how they can do this without cutting, without cutting childcare on a very real level, and without putting a stop to some of the real strong initiatives that we have underway right now. When it comes to affordability, as you all know we're already moving a ton of money into subsidies, and we're

expanding the subsidy system. We've got \$1.4 billion in operating costs, \$200 million to create more spaces; some of those spaces, 16,000 of them, will be subsidized. In addition to that, we're moving forward with \$1.6 billion to build capital, to build spaces in terms of actual capital costs. We're doing so many things on so many different levels, including the EarlyON Child and Family Centres. What's going to happen to those? How are they going to be able to fund those? They are basically saying in a very kind of, you know, vote-grab way that they are going to do a very basic thing. 'We'll give you some cash but we're not going to build the system. We're not going to reduce your fees. We're not going to make it more affordable. We're not going to give you more spaces.' What about the workforce? The 20,000 ECEs who are going to have to be there for those 100,000 new spaces. What about their wage enhancements? What about the money they make? What about the quality they've asked for? None of these things are in their platform, so it says to me that they haven't done their homework, they don't know what they're talking about, they don't understand the complexity of the system that we have in place, and they actually don't even understand what we're doing. They have no idea and no clue about what needs to happen when it comes to child care. And I have to say this actually is very troubling on many levels. I remember a number of years ago – after all, the leader of the opposition was in Stephen Harper's government. A number of years ago, when Paul Martin moved forward with what was going to be a national child care plan that was going to go across the country and do some of the key things that needed to be – happen to lay a solid foundation for child care in the country and for Canadian families, Stephen Harper came in. He basically said he was going to move some money forward and basically stop that initiative, and in the end, everybody lost out. Families especially lost out. In this plan that they are suggesting, what's going to happen is that you're going to have low-income families basically getting a refund along with those families who are making \$200,000 or more. I mean, you know, where's the balance here? This isn't about creating a system that supports families who are facing challenges. This is just a very basic kind of idea that doesn't get to the heart of what's needed to transform child care in this province. I am very proud of what we're doing. Everyone in the sector tells us that we are on the right track. We are doing a deeper dive in affordability. We have Dr. Gord Cleveland doing our affordability study for us and coming up with a strategy. We also have a workforce strategy that we're working on and plan. We're looking – we have an inclusive working group looking at inclusive supports. We are doing so many different things. Why? Because we want to get it right. This was a commitment on a massive level and it wasn't just a vote grab saying, 'we're just going to move a little bit of funding here.' And the

	math doesn't add up. In fact, they don't even understand that the numbers that they're moving forward are less than half essentially of what families are paying for child care out there. So on every single level this plan fails, and it fails dramatically.
Q. Rushowy: Do you think though the idea of a rebate is pretty appealing to parents. Do you think maybe you need a refresh on your own child care strategy?	No, our strategy as you know, the framework is in place (inaudible) the affordability strategy is still moving forward, right? So Dr. Cleveland is working (inaudible). We are doing our homework by consulting the sector about what they want. I mean, I have an early-years and child committee essentially made up of close to 60 organizations, whether they're teachers, whether they're child care providers, whether they're parents, you know, across the board, whether they're experts, because we know that this is something that needs to happen and needs to happen properly, and that will be about fairness for families, that will be about equality, that will make those fundamental changes to the system that will be sustainable, right? That was not just move money forward and say, 'here's your money. And that's it, you know, and that's the rest of it.' We are doing things that will live on for years to come and support families for generations to come.
Questions for Minister Hunter	
Q: Bliss: What sort of things do you expect that they can do to help?	This is a conversation happening between bus operators and their drivers and that's where the conversation is happening at the negotiating table.
Q: Bliss: Okay but I mean contingency plans, I mean what do parents do if they wake up and there's a strike?	Well the schools themselves, and the school board is expected to have contingency plans in place, in anticipation if there is going to be a disruption that that plan is communicated to parents in advance.
Q: Bliss: We experienced difficulties with the buses, at the beginning of the school year, there were problems last year and now we have this strike. What's going on with this industry? Which is vital to families.	We know how important school buses are to students, it's the first and last part of their day, and in many instances across this province and we want to make sure that students arrive on time, safely, and ready to learn. We actually provided an additional \$12 Million in funding as of this September to the school bus operators and we've also announced that we're going a longer term review of the transportation system. That's something we're looking forward to working with all of our partners and school bus operators to really relook at our transportation system to make sure we're doing the best possible for students in this province.
Q: Bliss: Do you have any plans to um step into this dispute and offer any assistance in terms of mediator, or getting the two sides closer together?	Well I would encourage both sides to think about what is at stake and continue the conversation at the negotiating table.
Q: Brule: But for now, its hands off by the	We expect them to be talking to each other as they

province?	negotiate the settlement at the table.
Q: Lamoureaux: So he said he's been talking to parents, and I'm sorry I'm going to read from my phone because he's doing the story and I'm not, but the government modernized the sex-ed curriculum but many teachers seem to pick and choose what's actually being taught in the classroom. Many parents have told us that their kids are not being taught about, depending on their age, masturbation, anal sex, or oral sex despite these items being part of the new curriculum. Is that acceptable to you?	Well my expectation is that school principals are actually responsible for the delivery of the curriculum in their schools. We know that classroom teachers exercise their judgement depending on their classroom, their situation, and the materials that they cover. We actually want to see that happen, teachers in Ontario are very well trained and they have the ability to teach that curriculum. So I just want to be clear that the delivery of that curriculum is not optional, it needs to be delivered and our school principals are accountable for that.
Q: Brule: But how do you check that it is taught the way it should be taught? Is there a way to check to make sure that it is taught and that teachers don't just pick and choose?	Well I mean there are multiple expectations that are embedded within the curriculum and school teachers have the opportunity to select from that but the overall responsibility for the delivery for the curriculum remains with the school principal.
Q: Lamoureaux: We've heard about stories of a catholic high school that gathers kids in the gym to listen for an hour for a priest to talk to them about abstinence and the importance for boys to control their desires. Does that sound acceptable to you?	You know what, as I said the school boards have the overall accountability of the delivery of education and school principals have that direct responsibility within their schools, with the delivery of that curriculum.
Q: Lamoureaux: And is it acceptable when there are 12 students who opt out for religious reasons? Is this the way it should be?	So parents certainly always have had the ability to opt out of the portion of the curriculum that they choose to. That's something that has always been in place, it continues to be in place. They might choose to do that for a variety of different reasons.
Q: Brule: So just to check, this is at the school level and the board level?	At the school level.
Q: Lamoureaux: At the school level they have to check to make sure that it is taught the way it should be taught.	So the principal within the school is accountable for the delivery of the curriculum within that school.
Q: Global: Is there any methods within the ministry can check that the curriculum is actually delivered truly?	Absolutely, we have a number of different ways of accessing student performance in a variety of different ways of assessment and reporting. We've actually announced a review of our assessment as of this September we have consultations that are happening right across this province right now. As we look at provincial level assessments, as we look at school level assessments.
Q: Lamoureaux: So how to you assess this sex-ed curriculum to make sure it's taught the way it should be?	So the curriculum is delivered at the school level, and the principal is accountable for the delivery.

Q: Global: But Minister you have a policy liaison officers that are supposed to be assuring provincial mandate. Is that happening?	Absolutely. You know I'm I want you to know that Ontario has one of the best education systems in the world by international standards and by measure. We have a variety of ways both internationally, provincially and locally to assess the delivery of the curriculum and the understanding of students of the curriculum that they are being taught.
Q: Global: That's not the question though. Are your policy liaison officers enforcing the provincial standards around sexual education? Are they being sent out to do that?	As I said, we have an excellent education system in this province. Our local school principals are responsible for the delivery of curriculum. And it is my expectation that they are doing just that.
Q: Brule: And how are you sure of that? How are you sure they are delivering on that? Do you have a method? A way to assess that?	We have a variety of assessment tools. I've just described a number of different levels of assessment that we do within our schools. And I'm very confident that our school system is performing at an above even international standards. And our students in Ontario are getting the best education possible.
Q: Brule: What happens if the ministry get a complaint from a parent? That the curriculum has not been taught or some subject has been avoided in the classroom?	So I always encourage parents to connect with their school principal. They can connect with the superintendent within the school board if they have concerns and that's definitely something that is open to parents at any time they can connect with their school board if they have concerns.
Q: Brule: Does the ministry act on it? Does the ministry act on the fact that a principal decided that some subject been avoided in a school?	My expectation is that no subject is being avoided. That t school principals and school boards are delivering the curriculum as it is in place. And we're certainly open to the review of curriculum. We implemented a new health and physical education curriculum because we heard from public health officials and others that Ontario's outdated curriculum which was 16 years out of date and needed to be updated. So that we can keep our students safe and that they have the most up to date information for the times in which they live in. I think thank you. Thanks very much.

Questions for NDP Leader Horwath

Q. Jeffords: [Joined in progress] ...added to bill 160. I understand (inaudible). Is this a strange thing that the government has to legislate? (Inaudible) protecting people from making a bad choice?	Well, I mean, again, if it's something that is being done that is going to injure somebody and be a threat to their health and well-being, then I think that there is a role for government to play. And so, you know, eye tattooing is something that's very dangerous. It's something that's very harmful. And it doesn't seem to me that there's much standard or requirement around skills of folks who might be undertaking that procedure. And that leaves the person who is wanting to get that tattoo quite vulnerable. And so the, you know, the banning of that procedure I think is something that's reasonable, considering that it's a person's sight that will be forever gone should a procedure go wrong in an unregulated process.
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Q. Bliss: Hydro One rolled out new bills, new design. On that bill, they prominently feature how much money people are saving from the Fair Hydro Plan. What do you think of that (inaudible)?	Well, I mean, look, here's the Liberal government on the one hand apparently allowing or encouraging or having Hydro One put their Fair Hydro Plan information on the bills. And yet, when it comes to banning things like prepaid hydro meters, the government says they have no opportunity to do that. So you can't have it both ways. If you are wanting to advertise your political, you know, scheme on hydro bills, then you can also be telling Hydro One to ban prepaid meters in the province of Ontario.
Q. Bliss: Shouldn't that kind of thing be prohibited forever?	Advertising on the bills, you mean? I mean, yeah, absolutely. I mean, these are, these are people's hydro bills; they shouldn't necessarily be used as an opportunity for partisan advertising and that's pretty much what the governments done.
Q. Lamoureux: Apparently, the Grassy Narrows people had good news this morning and there will be a treatment centre funded by the federal. How do you react to that?	Well, the people of the English-Wabigoon river system, the Grassy Narrows First Nations, and the other First Nations that have been affected, deserve action. They deserved action generations ago. So I'm pleased that we're going to see the establishment of the centre to help those who are sick and to deal with some of the, you know, some of the health problems that exist. But let's face it, there's still a lot of work that needs to be done by the provincial government, in terms of cleaning up that river. And, again, the government's made a commitment, but I haven't seen a lot of the funds flowing. So I hope that that centre gets up and running very quickly because those people deserve so much better than what they've gotten so far. And we need to see the provincial government take quick action on the cleanup of the contaminants that continue to flow into that river.
Q. Lamoureux: Sorry, I wanted to ask you about the Tory (inaudible) rebate. What do you think of that idea?	Well, look, I mean, what's, what's in some ways not surprising at all is that we have a Conservative government that's completely interested in privatization of child care. I mean, look, we know that privatized childcare does not provide the same level of service that not-for-profit and public childcare does. The differential is about (inaudible) per cent, in terms of quality. People in Ontario deserve to know that their children are getting the best quality child care, at the most affordable prices, in the most accountable way as possible. That doesn't come with privatization. In fact, quite the opposite. And so I'm disappointed and I'm shocked, frankly, that the Conservative answer to the real crisis in child care here in this province is to simply open the floodgates to more privatization. That's not the way to best serve the people of Ontario. Again, we believe that child care spaces need to be added to the system, absolutely. We've been critical of the Liberal government's expansion of privatized child care. In fact, I myself have brought private members bills to stop further privatization of child care in the province. The Liberals have been happy to allow private companies to come in and make profits off of our children. That's not

	acceptable.
Q. Lamoureux: Do you think the idea of a rebate will be appealing to parents, though?	Well, again, I think the people who know that they want affordable, quality child care are going to be very careful about...of what this Conservative plan looks like. I think it's one thing to say that you get a rebate, but if you can't afford the child care in the first place, if you can't afford the profits that are being built in by these private companies in the first place, then the rebate is not going to help you. A rebate is not going to help you. So, again, it's a totally different vision than what New Democrats have. The Liberals and Conservatives favour privatized child care, they favour privatized hydro, they favour privatized health care. We don't. We believe when it comes to the most vulnerable people in our society, in our communities, young children...I mean, look, if it's smart and reasonable to have children from kindergarten up through even college and university have a publicly funded and monitored education system, then certainly, surely our most vulnerable children, the ones that are, you know, four-years-old and younger deserve the same quality and the same oversight by government.
Q. Reynolds: On the subject of rebates - forgive me if you've touched on this already...	That's okay.
Q. Reynolds: With the announcement or re-announcement this morning of \$125 million over five years to rebate costs for builders of new rental units, what do you make of that?	Well, I mean, there's no doubt that there's a problem here in Toronto. So many people are looking for a place to live. They're looking for an affordable place. They are looking to buy into neighborhoods that they perhaps were raised in and they are discouraged because it's very difficult. So there's no doubt that there needs to be some action. I don't know that this government has hit the mark, in terms of making sure that there's a good supply of housing, regular housing to purchase, whether there is an adequate supply of rental housing. And, of course, we know that affordable housing is very, very meager. And, in fact, our affordable housing stock, social housing is crumbling because this government's not been partnering with the municipality, with the City of Toronto to help keep that housing stock available to folks. And so, all the way around, the government's been missing the mark. And I think that there needs to be much more work done, particularly around trying to crack down on flippers and those kinds of, those kinds of, you know, business transactions that create upward pressure on prices.
<i>N.B.: Comments captured are not verbatim quotes</i>	

