

FOR REVIEW: PAIKIN NOTE

From: "Beaudry, Jennifer (OPO)" <jennifer.beaudry@ontario.ca>
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Date: Sat, 26 Aug 2017 07:36:50 -0400

Hey Rebecca - Here's the note.
I took out the part of the Paikin transcript where he calls me out for not making the P available...otherwise, I think I've covered everything ;)

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Media Prep Sheet: *The Agenda* with Steve Paikin on TVO

Location: TVO Studios, 2180 Yonge St

Date: Monday, August 28, 2017

Time: 3:00PM – 3:15PM Arrival & Make-up / 3:15PM – 3:45PM Interview (Taped)

Prepared by: Jennifer Beaudry

Reviewed by: Rebecca MacKenzie

Premier,

On Monday you will join Steve Paikin for a taping of *The Agenda*. This half hour interview will be taped at the TVO studios, to air on Labour Day. This is meant as a start of session interview, but in addition to looking forward to the next session and the election, Steve will also look back at the past session and some of the bigger policy initiatives we introduced. Steve has been asking for quite some time to have you on again, it has been tough to coordinate something, but he's very pleased you are able to join him Monday.

Steve had both Andrea Horwath and Patrick Brown on his program on June 7. Minister Matthews represented the government. It was one year to the election and the top question was "what do you need to do to be re-elected?" I have included the transcript at the end of this note. This will hopefully give you a flavor of the tone and types of questions Steve will ask.

You last spoke to Steve about a year and a half ago, also in studio. This interview was at the height of the electricity prices issue and Steve focused on that and your poll numbers. Again, this time Steve doesn't want to cover the waterfront, he wants to do a deep dive into 3 main topics.

- 1) Labour Reforms – Fair Workplaces & Better Jobs / Minimum Wage
- 2) Electricity Prices – Fair Hydro Plan
- 3) The Year Ahead

Steve watched your speech to caucus on the livestream and wrote his most recently blog post about it. His post really focused on the political and I suspect when he says he wants to ask about the 'year ahead' he is really talking about election readiness and polling. I have included the blog post and the transcript of your remarks to caucus below. His questions should provide the opportunity to pivot back to the key message about fairness and opportunity.

In fact, when Steve asks about electricity and labour it is also a great opportunity to talk about your

motivation. You will also be able to draw on some of the feedback you've heard from people as you've travelled the province this summer.

The Gallery will be focused on the 2 trials upcoming this September, and Steve is no different. I've included some lines below. Because the matter is before the courts, there is little that you can say. Reinforcing that fact will hopefully force Steve to move on.

There is a good story to tell about how you are working to make this a fairer province with opportunities for everyone. Drawing on this plan, even when asked about poll numbers or the upcoming election will make for a very positive interview.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached anytime at 647-299-5435.

Jenn

Fairness & Opportunity Messaging

- You've heard a lot from us over the past several months. I've been talking about different elements of our plan to build a better Ontario and the thread that connects all of these pieces is fairness.

- What I hear – no matter where I am in the province is that people are feeling uncertain about the future. They are anxious about their own jobs and about what the future holds for their kids.

- Ontario's economy is in a good place – outperforming every other province in Canada. Our unemployment rate is at its lowest point in 16 years.

- But there is also a lot of change and uncertainty – about the nature of work, about what's happening in the U.S. with Trump and trade, about the cost of living rising faster than people's paycheques.

- It is tough for people to feel like they're getting ahead right now – and even those who do feel like they're doing OK still worry about staying ahead.

- With this uncertainty, we have to protect our people as best we can.

- We need to make sure that people across the province feel like they are benefitting from the strength in our economy.

- We need to address the concerns of those who worry about falling behind, even as they work so hard to get ahead. To make life in Ontario fairer and create more opportunity for everyone.

- You've heard me say it before. I believe government must be a force for good. That's not a slogan – it's what drives me every single day.

- We worked very hard to bring the budget to balance this year – people across the public service, across the province worked hard together to do that.

- And what that balance has allowed us to do is invest in the areas that will have the biggest impact for people across the province

- Free tuition for more than 200,000 students

- Getting 100,000 more kids into childcare so their parents can work

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Free prescription drugs for everyone under the age of 25

- A pilot project to test whether a Basic Income is a fairer, more effective way of helping people get ahead

- A Fair Hydro Plan that takes 25 per cent off people's bills

- A Fair Housing Plan to make buying or renting a home in Ontario more affordable

- And a plan for Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs that includes raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour

- All of these things are connected. The motivation behind each of them is the same.

- We can do better in Ontario. We can build a province where people do feel optimistic about the future because there is security and there is opportunity.

- I have also been actively reaching out to my Governor colleagues in the U.S. to ensure that they know how important free and balanced trade is to our workers and businesses.

- In July, I attended the National Governors Association Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, where trade was top of mind because our economies are so closely linked.

- I will stand up for the people of Ontario and defend free and fair trade at every opportunity because we all know that it is good for both economies, creating millions of solid, good-paying jobs on both sides of the border.

- There are over 28 states for whom Ontario is their first or second-largest trading partner. I have had conversations now with over twenty U.S. governors who do a high volume of trade with Ontario, and all of them agree that we need to build on the strong, open trading relationship we have.

- We successfully convinced New York State not to proceed with wide-ranging discriminatory Buy American legislation

- It has been a team effort and I am confident that our state partners are hearing us

- NAFTA negotiations began last week, and no-one has any illusions that this will be easy, but we are prepared and actively engaged throughout the process.

- As Premier, I am absolutely committed to defending the free trade that benefits both of our economies and to find ways to make that agreement even better for Ontarians.

CWR – \$15 Minimum Wage

- We want everyone to benefit from Ontario's growing economy.

- But workers in Ontario are finding it almost impossible to support their families on a minimum wage that just doesn't go far enough.

- We need to address the concerns of those who worry about falling behind, even as they work so hard to get ahead.

- Phasing in a \$15 minimum wage over the next 18 months ensures more workers are benefitting from Ontario's economic growth.

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It can also be good for business too.

- When businesses pay fairly, living standards rise and reliance on benefits falls.

- Higher wages also lead to greater job satisfaction and productivity, less turnover and more spending power for lower income earners.

- This is especially true in Ontario where household spending drives more than 50 percent of GDP.

- Raising the minimum wage boosts the economy and triggers more business by improving the purchasing power of those who spend every penny.

- A higher, fairer minimum wage also says a lot about our values.

- It's about equal opportunity – ensuring those who work hard and play by the rules are rewarded.

- It's our job as government to make sure our society reflects these values.

- Whether it's child care or health care, rent control or workplace fairness, the motivation behind each of them is the same.

- They all help build an Ontario where greater opportunity is available for everyone and greater security is achievable for everyone.

Minimum Wage Impact on Small Business

- We know that despite our economy expanding and creating more wealth, not everyone is sharing in the benefits.

- Many workers are feeling as though they are not able to get ahead and some are struggling to support their families on part-time, contract or minimum-wage work.

- Given this uncertainty, government has a responsibility to protect workers and create opportunities so people feel confident about the future.

- Phasing in a \$15 minimum wage over the next 18 months will ensure workers are paid fairly for their work and are given the chance to share in Ontario's economic growth.

- I've been clear that we're going to work with small businesses throughout this process.

- This includes bringing forward some initiatives this fall to help business with the transition.

- But it's also important to remember that paying a higher wage can also be good for business, helping pushing living standards up and reliance on benefits down.

- Higher wages also lead to greater job satisfaction and productivity, less turnover and more spending power for lower income earners.

- Combined with other initiatives like child care, expanded pharmacare, and rent control, a higher minimum wage will help build an Ontario where greater opportunity and security is available for everyone.

Key Messages Electricity Costs

- Helping Ontarians with the cost of everyday living is a top priority for our government.

- Our government has refocused on that goal.

- That's why we've acted by putting into action our *Fair Hydro Plan*, which will give families, small businesses, and farmers an average 25 percent reduction off their month electricity bills as of July.

- Our Fair Hydro Plan provides immediate relief in the short-term by reducing electricity bills by 25% on average for all Ontarians - up to 40-50% if you're rural or low-income.

It then holds rates to inflation for the following 4 years, managing affordability in the medium-term.

- We have also doubled the rural and remote rate protection program which provides a reduction on the delivery line of most rural households' bills, and we have moved the costs of social programs like the Rural or Remote Rate Protection and the Ontario Electricity Support Program from the rate base to the tax base, further reducing electricity bills.

- We have heard the frustration of rural Ontarians when it comes to energy rates loud and clear and we have taken action to make everyday life easier for people living in rural communities across the province.

- Our 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan will show Ontario families and businesses a snapshot of our future energy system, including supply, demand, and affordability, over the longer term.

- The LTEP will focus on taking additional costs out of the system, and address affordability beyond the short and medium term.

- It also helps those who have been struggling unfairly from high rates

- We're creating a \$200M Affordability Fund to help Ontarians who are not eligible for the Ontario Electricity Support Program.

- And we are removing the delivery charge for all on-reserve First Nations residential customers.

Hydro Quebec Deal

- No new agreement has been reached to buy electricity from Quebec. Minister Thibeault wrote a letter in July saying he deal they offered wouldn't work

- Any future agreements reached with Quebec will have to meet the following principles:

- Demonstrate that the proposal is cost effective and provides a reduction in Ontario electricity costs when compared to other supply alternatives;
- Include firm capacity that can be counted towards meeting Ontario's resource requirements;
- and
- Support the shared goal of carbon reduction by targeting domestic natural gas generation and demonstrate measurable reductions in GHG emissions.

- While we haven't yet received an offer that meets those core objectives, we look forward to continued discussions with our Quebec counterparts.

Sudbury

- Since the beginning I've been open with the legislature, the media and the public, about the allegations related to the Sudbury by-election.

- Parliamentary Privilege extends to all Members, and exempts a Member from the normal obligation to attend court if summonsed as a witness, from 40 days before a session of the House begins until 40 days after it ends.

- I've said all along that she would be open and transparent throughout this process and that is exactly what I'm going to continue to do.

- Therefore, if called, I will waive parliamentary privilege and appear.

- This matter is now before the courts and we need to allow this process to take place.

PREMIER WYNNE SPEAKS TO CAUCUS ABOUT PLAN FOR FAIRNESS & OPPORTUNITY

PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE: Thanks Lou. You know what, I have a mic on so I'm going to leave that. And I just want to say hi to everybody. Some of you I've seen over the summer but not everyone and it is lovely to be back in this room with all of you. It's just great. So welcome back, and I know you have been working very hard in your ridings. I've seen you on social media and I know that you've made lots of contacts with your constituents. So what I wanted to do today was just take some time and kind of assess where we are, and I know we're going to have some time over the next two days to have a really good discussion about what you've been hearing and our plans going into the fall.

- But I just wanted to take stock. Maybe it's because I just got out of a canoe – I was up on the Rainy River with – well between eight and 12 at any one time young Métis people in a voyager canoe. They had been on the water for 80 days, 80 days these kids, they're between 18 and 25, and they had been every day paddling at a clip of 56 strokes a minute, okay, try that. It's really fast, is what it is. And the young guy in the front, we would try to get him to slow down, but he was like his clock was set for 56 strokes a minute. But you know when you're in a canoe for two full days and then two half days, there's a lot of time to talk and think and so maybe I wanted to do this because I've been reflecting on where we are, and I had a chance to talk to some of those kids.

- And one of them asked me on the last day when we were just heading out – and Jane was with me, and just for the record we would lift our paddles from time to time because they were all much younger than we are so – but this guy, his name was Noels, he asked me why I got into politics, how I got into politics. And it got me into thinking who we are and I, you know, I had the opportunity to answer him in a way – there were no cameras around at that point and there was no other context, we were on this beautiful river, and this was a kid who hasn't been involved in politics, hasn't been particularly engaged, and was truly curious about why someone would get involved in political life. And what I heard myself saying, because it was kind of instinctive what came out, I said because I believe that the world is inherently unfair, that we come in with different advantages depending on where we're born, depending on our parents, depending on our advantages and our opportunities. We come in with different paths and that means that as we go along there's got to be some force, I believe, that creates a more levelled playing field. Because there is that inherent unfairness, we can't just assume that it's going to get fairer as we go through our lives.

- So I got involved because I believe that government exists to make the world fairer, to make society fairer, to create more opportunities. So whether that's providing education or whether that's health care or whether it's the other things that we are doing that I want to talk about in minute as part of our plan, fundamentally I believe that we can always create more fairness. You know it is – and you know I – often I will say – and this is true, when I'm asked that question, "Why did you get involved in politics?" I will say because I was fighting for education, I was fighting for publically funded education and I'm reminded of – one of my kids, my middle daughter, when she was quite young and I was involved in the fight that many of us were involved in, somebody asked her what her mum did and she said she's a government fighter.

That's what she does. Okay. I realized I needed to flesh that out a little bit for her but that was what she saw.

- So that notion that we can always make the world fairer, we can always do better is kind of what drives me. And then I was thinking about us, and I was thinking about our values and who we are and I've been talking a lot this summer, wherever I go, about our diverse caucus. You know we talk about our diversity being our strength and underneath that is why is that important? Why is it important that we have Joe Dickson who runs small businesses? And Lou Rinaldi – what is this, your 50th? 50th year of your business this year. Why is it important that we have Eric Hoskins and Shafiq Qaadri and Helena Jaczek who understand what it's like to sit with a patient and say either 'It's okay. You're going to be okay,' or 'It's really not going to be okay, but I've got your back.' Why is that important? Because the life experience that you all bring – and the fact that a third of us, a third of you, were not born in this country. That's really important. It's really important that Yasir Naqvi understands what it means to fight for democracy because his dad went to jail in a fight for democracy. So that diversity is not – that's not a slogan, that's a reality about us as a caucus and us as a government. And so that value system is what informs our plan, that value system is what informs who we are.

- So I was thinking about that, and then I was thinking about the challenges that we're facing that are global. So the reality is that here we are in Ontario, in a place where we have about 13.5 million people, and we're experiencing the same buffeting that other jurisdictions are experiencing you know? There's lots of questions about what the future is going to hold. There are big, big global challenges that we're confronting. So we know that the planet is warming. There's no question about that. We know that the planet is warming. And you only have to go up to where I was in that canoe trip, to Rainy River. You only have to go the shores of James Bay where so many of you have been with David Zimmer. You only have to talk to people who are on the front line of the melting that's happening. You only have to talk to people who've had their communities flooded to know that the climate is changing. And so that is the biggest thing that we are confronting.

- Technology, which we hold out as the answer to a lot of questions also raises a lot of questions. I think of technology as a double-edged sword. You know it is the answer to so many challenges and it displaces and raises questions about what people are going to do, what work is going to look like, and how we're going to manage that. So whether it's technology, whether it is climate or whether it's that fundamental question of how do we actually make our society more fair and provide more opportunity? How do we foster the growth in this particular economic moment? How do we foster the growth that is going to allow us to create that fairness and opportunity? It is very tempting, I think, for people to think that if we could just go back, if we could just go back to the way it was, if we could just create the conditions that – certainly as a baby boomer, if I think back to the – I can, to the sixties and the seventies, I was going to say the fifties but really, I was very little in the fifties so I don't have to say that.

- But you know, it's tempting to think back to those days when everything was building. When there was so much going on and it was a different economic time. It was a different time in terms of the environment, and I mean that in the broadest sense, in the world. And there was a different sense of what the future was going to hold. And it's easy, I think, to go back and say we just need to recreate those conditions and that's not possible. It is naïve, it's not possible and I think it's dangerous because it takes our eye off the imperative of looking forward and recognizing that there are many, many young people who have lots of ideas about what the future is going to hold. They have lots of optimism about what's coming and we have got to listen to them, and we have got to understand what they are thinking and we've got to create the conditions for those young people to be able to be at their very, very best.

- The same young kid said to me, after I talked about why I was in politics, he said, "I don't know how to be engaged." He said, "Where can I go to talk about what I think?" Because he said "I don't want to join a political party but I want to be able to talk about what I think," and it made me realize we've got to do better in creating those places for young people who maybe aren't in college or university, and they're not in the

internship at Queen's Park, and they're not thinking politically. We need to create those places.

- So we've got those challenges and there is uncertainty because of those challenges. When we talk about climate change and we talk about the economic uncertainty, those are big, big realities. But I believe they play out in people's lives and as I go out around the province I hear people talking about the realities in their lives that I think connect to those big uncertainties like 'What is my kid's job going to look like? Where are they going to end up? How am I going to make sure that they have some certainties in their futures? What am I going to do if I'm a 55-year-old and I don't have the job that I've had for 20 years, what am I going to do? What is it going to look like for me?' So those kinds of uncertainties play out in people's lives and that's what I heard.

- So even though Ontario is doing really well, there are lots of people who, in their lives, do not feel that. They do not have that sense of well-being. So those big challenges are what we are confronting. And with our value system and the plan that we've got in place, we are tackling them head on. We are not afraid to tackle those challenges. So how are we going to provide better education and childcare? How are we going to make sure that our healthcare system is sustainable, and fundamentally, how are we going to foster growth so that there is more fairness and opportunity?

- Well our plan is exactly designed to tackle those things. We've put the building blocks in place and they are exactly what we need to do in order to face those challenges. So whether it's a hundred thousand childcare spaces so that, you know, moms – because it is women who will benefit the most from those – have the opportunity to go to work or whether it's the more than 200,000 kids who are going to end up this fall, just in a couple of weeks, they are going to be at college or university and a large percentage of those kids would not be there if we hadn't put the free tuition in place. Just think about that.

- Or whether it's, starting in January, parents being able to get free medication for their kids. They don't feel that yet but they will. It will make a huge difference to them. Or whether it's the Fair Hydro Plan, and I have to say, I have heard people who has said to me, "You know what? My bill's come down. I've seen it and it's helping me and my pocketbook."

- Or whether it's the Fair Housing Plan to make sure that people have access to a place to live. It was interesting to me this morning to hear in the news how young people are saying "yeah, I still want to be able to buy a house." Of course they want to be able to buy a house. It was one of those things like, I don't think this is news. Yes, young people want to be able to buy a house, they want a place to live and that's what the Fair Housing Plan was about, was to create the conditions so that they could do that. \$15 an hour is about having a fairer society. That's what it's about. Because another of the big challenges that we're facing is that really, really rich people are getting a lot richer and people who are not really, really rich are not getting ahead and that gap is real and we have to confront it and the \$15 an hour minimum wage is part of confronting that gap; closing that gap.

- So the overarching point that I want to make to all of is that, as I have travelled the province this summer and listened to people and talked to people and talked about the specific parts of our plan, it occurs to me that the big challenges that we are facing as a society are about making our society fairer, making Ontario a fairer place to live, and that the things we are going right now are designed to take that on. But even when all of the initiatives we've got in place are implemented, even when every young person can go to post-secondary regardless of their family's income, even when every kid can get free medication, even when we have enough home care for seniors, even when child care is available to everyone in the province, there will still be more to do.

- There will still be more to do. We can't pretend that either we're there or when we finish implementing this plan we'll be there. There is more to do and that's what our value system will help us to discover. That's what our value system will drive us to do and so that's what we're going to talk about today and tomorrow as we come together now at the end of the summer. So I am thrilled to be back with all of you. I always feel

in the summer that we stay connected in a way but that coming back together is so important so what we are here to talk about is creating that fairness, that opportunity. At the core of that is making sure that our economic growth does not ever ignore the need to create opportunity and growth. That is what this is about. That's what our plan is about and I look forward to working with you on it as we go forward. Thank you. Let's get to work!

RECENT PAIKIN BLOG POST

Face facts, Ontario: It's Kathleen Wynne to the finish line - Steve Paikin

Published on Aug 22, 2017

Last Wednesday, the premier's office e-blasted out Kathleen Wynne's daily schedule, as it does every day — but there was a curious entry this time.

Wynne would address her caucus in the middle of the summer and allow the media to broadcast this presumably special announcement to the masses.

Maybe it's a genetic flaw in journalists, but I know what raced through my mind: the last time I could recall the premier's office inviting the press to a caucus meeting, it was so Dalton McGuinty could announce he was stepping down. Apparently I wasn't the only one whose mind went there, because [Twitter exploded with rumours](#) that Wynne was planning to exit stage left.

I emailed a source, who assured me nothing of the sort was in the cards. I was patiently told, probably for the eighth time over the past year, that Wynne was going nowhere, and that she would lead the Liberals into next June's election.

And of course, the Twittersverse was all wrong. Wynne was *not* announcing her departure. In fact, [she was attempting a sort of reboot of her government's message](#), saying she wanted, over the next 10 months, to focus on making the province "fairer" and provide better opportunities to those Ontarians the economic recovery had left behind.

It was part pep rally, part reminder of the specific policies the Liberals had advanced in previous months (a balanced budget, pharmacare for kids, free post-secondary tuition for eligible low-income students) that Wynne wanted her troops to get out there and promote.

When the polls repeatedly suggest the premier is [the least popular in the entire country](#), it's understandable that Queen's Park observers would look for a more intriguing narrative than "Wynne isn't going anywhere and will lead the Liberals into the next election because the party believes she is the best person for the job" — as numerous sources have repeated over the past many months.

So many people who follow Queen's Park (journalists, politicians, lobbyists, special interest groups) were adamant that there were two possible options for Wynne: either she was going to call a snap election to get out in front of [two separate September court cases alleging Liberal malfeasance](#) (one of which she's agreed to testify in), or she was going to announce her retirement from politics and let a new leader try to rebrand the party.

But we are all now going to have to get our heads around the notion that sometimes, politicians actually mean what they say — and in this case, the premier and her advisers have been consistent and categorical in stating there will be no snap election and no early departure.

Yes, the Liberals are trailing the Progressive Conservatives in the polls and have been for a long time. But they are still within spitting distance of the Tories and remain competitive with Ontario's other centre-left

option, the NDP. It's not as if the Grits are polling miles behind the other major parties.

Also, given Wynne's hyper-competitive instincts, I believe she thinks she can beat Patrick Brown and Andrea Horwath. After all, Brown is a 39-year-old rookie [embroiled in intra-party allegations about crooked nomination meetings](#) (one of which is [the subject of a police investigation](#)) and something of a mutiny by social conservatives and disaffected Tories. And then there's Horwath, whom Wynne already bested in 2014.

So perhaps instead of wondering why Wynne might choose to stay, we should ask why *wouldn't* she want to stay, given her confidence in her campaigning skills and her belief in what the Liberals have done.

Of course, it's also true that Liberals are hardly tripping over themselves to fight for nominations for the 2018 election the way Tories are. Brown is correct that some of the shenanigans surrounding PC nomination battles stem from the fact that lots of people think the Tories are going to win, making a party nomination worth something. You don't fight like heck to win a Liberal nomination if you think the party is about to go down in flames. Look no further than the daughter of a former prime minister, Caroline Mulroney, [who has chosen the Ontario PC Party and this next election to make her entry into public life](#).

Where are the prominent Liberals taking similar risks? So far, we haven't seen any. In fact, the most influential cabinet minister of this government, deputy premier Deb Matthews, has yet to officially announce whether she will run again and hasn't scheduled her London North Centre nomination meeting. That seems a curious thing to do if you're confident in your party's destiny.

Furthermore, the Liberals, [unlike the Tories](#), are desperate for cash [and having a devil of a time raising it](#), thanks to the party's unpopularity and to new fundraising rules that almost everyone except the premier thinks have gone overboard.

All of which means there will be lots to talk about when Wynne joins us the day after Labour Day as the first guest on the first program of this, our 12th season of *The Agenda* on TVO.

I have a pretty good idea of what I'd like to ask the premier during our interview. But if you've got any ideas, I'm all ears. Send your suggested questions to AgendaConnect@tvo.org and I'll happily consider what's been sent in.

AGENDA TRANSCRIPT FROM MATTHEWS/BROWN/HORWATH SPRING INTERVIEWS

The Agenda: Deputy Premier Deb Matthews On Re-Election

Source: TVO

Jun 7, 2017 8:00 PM (1)

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Steve: I want to know what you think the most important thing your party has to do in order to be re-elected one year from tonight.

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Deb Matthews: I think what we have to do is tell the story of what we're doing and how we're making life better for ordinary Ontarians, whether it's free tuition for over 200,000 students, whether it's free drug coverage for people under age 25, whether it's the changes we've announced on minimum wage, 100,000 more child care spaces. We're doubling the capacity of child care across the province over the next 5 years. A range of things that we've done that we need to get out and talk about. People need to understand what our values are and how we're acting on those values.

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Steve: I know you guys think you have a good news story to tell, and yet the polls suggest – and I know polls are worth, you know, what you pay for them – but they suggest either the word is not

getting out or people are not on side with your agenda. What do you think is going on?

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Deb Matthews: You know, I don't pay a lot of attention to polls between elections and if you actually did a study and looked at what the polling numbers say a year before an election, what they say at the beginning of an election, and what the results are – if there's any correlation, it's a negative correlation. So I think for us, we know what we want to do. We're Liberals. We've worked really hard to get to balance. You know, we had the first balanced budget this year in –

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Steve: Almost a decade.

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Deb Matthews: In almost a decade. And the economy is growing faster in Ontario than anywhere else in the country, leading the G7 countries so we're doing a really good job on economic growth. We've got our books in order. And that gives us the freedom to do the things we've been wanting to do for a long time.

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Steve: Let's grant you all of that but then ask the following question: Then why are the Premier's popularity numbers personally so in the tank?

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Deb Matthews: So I get to work with Kathleen Wynne every day. I am a huge admirer of her. And my caucus, my cabinet colleagues, we all think the world of her. I've given up trying to understand how some politicians are popular and some aren't. She is a remarkable woman with a remarkable work ethic; she really leads with her values. She's got all the ingredients, and I look forward to the campaign and the lead-up to the campaign where she is going to get out and talk to more people and they're going to be able to say, you know what? That is the woman I want to lead my province.

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Steve: You may have stopped asking the question but I have not because I'm truly intrigued by the fact that Liberals everywhere tell me they really like her, they think she connects with people; she's a hard worker, all of the above. So I'm really curious about this. You were a demographer before you got into politics so you understand a lot about people and how they think. Do you think her gender has anything to do with the fact that she's not more popular?

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Deb Matthews: You know, I've asked myself that question many times and I don't know what the answer is. I just don't know what the answer is. But the reality is, she's a woman and she's fantastic and she is going to work hard, we're all going to work hard, and see what the people say a year from today.

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Steve: So you're dodging that one. Let me try another one. Do you think her sexual orientation has anything to do with her low popularity?

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Deb Matthews: I don't think so. I think the people who had a problem with that had a problem with it and still have a problem with it, but I don't – I don't think so. I think it's just part of who she is.

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Steve: Let me try another option here. Because I do hear this criticism – and I ask people this question every day. What do you think of the Premier –

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Deb Matthews: Do you have an answer?

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Steve: You know, I'm exploring. I really am looking into it. And the criticism I do hear fed back to me

most frequently is, she's not who we thought she was. She got elected 3 years ago on "I'm different. I'm nicer. I'm not going to be like what came before me" and then some things have taken place over the intervening 3 years to make people conclude, god, she's just like every other bloody politician who has broken our hearts. Do you hear that?

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Deb Matthews: What I hear – go back to what she did on pension reform. We want people to have a comfortable retirement. We went from having an Ontario retirement pension plan to the nation now is going to have enhanced pension, free tuition – child care spaces, doubling the number of spots available. All of the initiatives. You know, we've announced the – increased the minimum wage, paid sick days –

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Steve: This is all true. You've also got –

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Deb Matthews: These are the expression of her values. It's who she is.

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Steve: I hear you.

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Deb Matthews: She is bold, she is brave, and driving change.

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Deb Matthews: Steve: There's also police investigations and also a coming court case in September and there's also, you know, still fallout from gas plants and there's also, you know, a lot of monkey business around the Sudbury by-election that took place that got Glen Thibeault into your government and all of that gets fed back to me like, oh, she is just like everybody else.

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Deb Matthews: She is an extraordinary person and unlike anybody I've worked with.

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Steve: I wasn't expecting you'd change your mind but I thought I'd put that out there and see what you had to say about it. You know Greg Sorbara?

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Deb Matthews: I do know Greg Sorbara.

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Steve: You sat in caucus and cabinet with Greg Sorbara for a while. He was on this program not too long ago and here's what he had to say about your future prospects. Roll it, please.

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Greg Sorbara, Former Politician: Unless things change dramatically, the Ontario Liberal Party sadly is going to lose the next Ontario election. If that happens, the Premier will resign after that and there will be a leadership and a renewal of the person at the top. So I would say you have to ask yourself, premier, whether, given that scenario, it's better to step down before the next election, and do what Dalton McGuinty did and let someone else give it a try, or to stay and try and pull it through. But, you know, I have – I've talked to a lot of Liberals who are, frankly, despondent about their prospects. Sitting members and ministers who say, if the election were held today, I'd come in third.

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Steve: How despondent do you think your party is right now?

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Deb Matthews: You know, I don't think we're despondent. I think – we've had a rough go, no question about it. But we were all out canvassing on the weekend and I've spoken to some of my colleagues who were out knocking on doors and I was out myself, and it feels a lot better than I actually expected, to be honest.

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Steve: You just came third in the Sault Ste. Marie by-election. How can it feel better?

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Deb Matthews: You know, these by-elections are not predictive of anything. But I think people are starting to hear exactly what we're doing on the agenda for making life better for people.

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Steve: Do you run into people who think Kathleen Wynne ought to step down before the next election, give somebody else a turn?

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Deb Matthews: Oh, of course I do. And everybody does. And that would be true no matter who our leader was. But she's staying, and I'm really happy she's staying, and we'll be back and you'll see how terrific a campaign she ran.

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Steve: You have made – your government has made numerous “good news announcements” that ought to have found a lot of favour in a place like Sault Ste. Marie where a higher minimum wage would be welcomed, where a balanced budget would be welcomed, where labour changes, you know, extra vacation time, and you want to change the shift, there's going to be a financial penalty for doing so, all that kind of stuff. You would think those announcements would find favour in Sault Ste. Marie and your candidate lost 30 points, 35 points, I think, from the last time David Orazietti won the seat just 3 years ago. How do you account for that?

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Deb Matthews: So, as I said earlier, by-elections are by-elections. They're tough on government for sure. I think the NDP is probably wondering what went wrong there for them. We've – I don't put a lot of stock in by-elections. We'll see what happens in the general election.

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Steve: Yeah, that's all true. But it's an important – I mean, it's beyond a poll, it's an actual tangible piece of evidence –

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Deb Matthews: But it is not a barometer of who you want to be your Premier, and that's what a general election does. It chooses a government. It chooses a Premier. A by-election doesn't. It gives you an opportunity to send the government a message, and our message is, we've still got work to do but we've got the right things in place. I mean, bringing the price of hydro down by 25 per cent and significantly more than that for people who pay the highest prices, people in rural and remote areas.

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Steve: That's a new policy that just went in June 1st. Do you think that has now solved the hydro crisis in the province?

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Deb Matthews: People aren't seeing that yet. They saw the first 8 per cent. The remainder will come in the summer time on their bills. So when people start to see that, I think that will definitely – people will take notice of that.

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Steve: You know, it's a little inside baseball, but there's a job at Queen's Park called the Financial Accountability Officer and his job is to look at government policies and basically cost them out and give it the once-over. And it is his view that this policy of essentially making electricity cheaper today will, over the next almost three decades, cost us an additional \$21 billion as we kick those costs down the road. Is that a wise expenditure of \$21 billion, in your view?

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Deb Matthews: Yes, I think it was what we had to do. It's like extending your mortgage. You might, when you buy a house, think I can pay this off in 20 years, but then as you make those monthly payments, you think, you know, I'm going to refinance that. I'm going to have a longer period of pay-back. Of course that costs more money. And anybody who has ever had a mortgage knows if they added up their monthly payments it would be far more than the price they paid for their house.

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Steve: I hear that analogy all the time and the difference is that's you making a decision for yourself to charge yourself more in the long run. I hear the Premier talk all the time about wanting to make this province better for her children and grandchildren, but she's just added \$21 billion not to her costs but to her children's and grandchildren's costs. Is that fair?

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Deb Matthews: It is absolutely fair and it's fair because those kids are going to be able to benefit from the infrastructure that we've invested. We've spent \$50 billion building a stronger electricity system. It's not something anybody sees unless you're driving down a country road and you see the new hydro poles, the new wires. That's what this infrastructure is all about, and it'll be there for a long time, and so we'll spread the payments out over the life of that infrastructure.

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Steve: Let's talk about the Premier and the mayor of her capital city.

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Deb Matthews: Yes.

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Steve: Of which she represents. She has a seat in it. I remember when John Tory got elected the mayor of Toronto, she was quoted – she was overseas I think at the time. She was quoted as saying hallelujah. She is not saying hallelujah anymore. They're not getting along so well. How come?

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Deb Matthews: Well, I think that – of course, I'm not from Toronto but I do watch this with significant interest. Somehow, I think the government of Toronto, the mayor, has forgotten that we're paying 100 per cent of the Eglinton crosstown. That's a big, big, big expenditure.

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Steve: Six billion.

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Deb Matthews: If you look at all the investments we've made in transit in Toronto, it's a very significant investment. The things we're doing on housing. Very significant investment. So I don't know whether he overpromised and whether he can't afford to deliver what he said he would deliver so he's got to find somebody to blame that on. But I can tell you that my constituents in London think that maybe Toronto's getting too much attention, too much.

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Steve: Of course, everybody outside Toronto thinks that and, you know, that's fine. But the Premier, after giving the mayor of Toronto every indication that he was going to be allowed to toll two of the highways that he's responsible for, she did a 180 and said, "Not gonna happen." How damaging do you think –

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Deb Matthews: At the same time –

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Steve: Okay, gave him more gas tax money.

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Deb Matthews: The equivalent that he projected he'd get in tolls is how much he's getting in gas tax

money.

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Steve: The difference is he has to beg her for that money instead of being responsible for raising it himself.

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Deb Matthews: He doesn't have to beg for it. It's there. Double the amount of money going on gas tax to every municipality across the province, and he starts to collect that money immediately instead of having to put all the infrastructure.

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Steve: It's there until some future Premier or maybe, who knows, even this Premier, decides I can't afford to do it anymore and can claw it back.

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Deb Matthews: That argument would apply if somebody took away the right to toll.

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Steve: Which she did.

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Deb Matthews: She never granted the right to toll.

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Steve: Okay. Bottom line, politically speaking, was that a big mistake and did it end up damaging her relationship with him.

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Deb Matthews: No, I think it was absolutely the right decision. At the core, John Tory and Kathleen Wynne share a lot. She beat him in an election, but they have a lot of respect for each other, and I think they share a lot of values. So I think we're in a funny little dance right now but I think the foundation is a lot of mutual respect and we'll find our way through this.

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Steve: Okay, but it's my job to suggest that, I don't know. You say you've done a lot on social housing, and that is true.

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Deb Matthews: Yeah.

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Steve: I hear the mayor of Toronto say, you know, there's a billion dollars' worth of repairs needed by the Toronto Community Housing developments.

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Deb Matthews: Yeah.

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Steve: And there's no money coming forward so far from the province of Ontario to deal with that. That's his position. Is that not true?

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Deb Matthews: You know, some of the money that we're collecting through cap and trade, a significant amount of that money is going to retrofit social housing. That work is underway now, to make them more energy efficient. That's a significant saving and I don't think anybody is factoring that in to that whole calculation of how much we're investing in housing. No question, social housing, repair backlog is an issue across the province and we are working to address that.

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Steve: I think one of the reasons John Tory won his election as he did – how long is it now? Three years ago, I guess, that he won. – Was because a number of people in the capital city got tired of seeing the premier and the then-mayor not on speaking terms and they thought that the

dysfunctional relationship was probably harming the smooth running of things. And I suspect they're concerned today that the deteriorated relationship between the premier and the mayor is causing similar problems. Is it?

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Deb Matthews: We've got a very good relationship. As I said, Eglinton crosstown, 100 per cent benefit –

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Steve: It's one minute outside the studio. I know it.

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Deb Matthews: The tunnel is through now –

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Steve: It's going through.

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Deb Matthews: It's moving forward. I mean, why –

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Steve: What about the relief line? Where is the money for the relief line?

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Deb Matthews: We're in constant conversations with the city of Toronto on what we can do. But I think to suggest that Ontario is not doing its share is just wrong.

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Steve: One last question on this. You know he's had Patrick Brown and Andrea Horwath down to his office and down photo ops with him. Do you object to that?

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Deb Matthews: Of course not. I think he can meet with anybody he wants to.

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Steve: She's the premier, Kathleen Wynne, and, you know, one could infer from this that he's trying to kind of thumb his nose at her a little bit by doing so.

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Deb Matthews: I wouldn't read anything into that at all.

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Steve: That's what I do for a living. Okay. Let's try this in our last few minutes here. You got elected in 2003.

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Deb Matthews: Yes.

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Steve: Which means you have only ever been in provincial politics on the government side of the legislature.

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Deb Matthews: On the government side, yeah. Which suits me just fine, by the way.

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Steve: Don't you think it's bad for democracy to have the same party in power for five straight elections?

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Deb Matthews: Not if the party is doing good things.

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Steve: Are you committed to running for re-election?

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Deb Matthews: Yes, I am planning to run again.

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Steve: I can drive a Mack truck through that sentence, "I am planning to run again"?

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Deb Matthews: I'm planning to run again. That is my plan. It is such an exciting time to be a Liberal in Ontario. I love what I do. I love the team I work with. Why would I give that up?

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Steve: We are recording these interviews. You know we can play this tape back.

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Deb Matthews: Absolutely.

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Steve: When somebody says I'm planning to run again, that's not saying 110 per cent guaranteed I'm on the ballot next election.

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Deb Matthews: I'm running again, Steve. Guaranteed.

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Steve: 110 per cent?

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Deb Matthews: 110 per cent.

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Steve: How come you haven't called your nomination meeting?

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Deb Matthews: It's a year out. I've been out canvassing. Things are happening.

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Steve: It would be understandable, I think, if there were a bunch of Cabinet Ministers and/or backbenchers who are now in their 60s, as you are –

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Deb Matthews: As I am.

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Steve: Or even 70s.

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Deb Matthews: As I am not. Not yet.

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Steve: But as some of the others are. Not to run again. What are you hearing in terms of who's not going to come back?

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Deb Matthews: You know, I think a lot of people are starting to give it some thought now. It's a big commitment. You know. I don't know that the public knows. It's a tough job. It's very demanding. We work hard, long hours almost every day of the week usually. So, yeah, I do think that there are people who have been around a long time, will choose not to run, and that will give us the opportunity to do that revival, the renewal, which I think is really important in politics as well.

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Steve: That's Deb Matthews, she's got a long title, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, Minister Responsible For Digital Government, Chair of the Cabinet, Deputy Premier, MPP of London North Centre. We're now out of time. Thank you, Ms. Matthews, for coming in to TVO tonight.

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Deb Matthews: Thank you.

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The Agenda: PC Leader Patrick Brown On Running A Province-Wide Campaign

Source: TVO

Jun 7, 2017 8:19 PM (2)

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Steve Paikin, Host: It was two years ago at age 37 that Patrick Brown became leader of the Ontario Tories. One year from today, he hopes to parlay that into becoming the province's 26th premier. How prepared is he for that job? Does he yet know where he wants to take Ontario? Let's find out and welcome the MPP for Simcoe North and the leader of the official opposition, Patrick Brown. Good to have you here on TVO.

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Patrick Brown, Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader: Great to be here.

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Steve: Let us do some business off the top. A full disclosure. My wife is the volunteer co-chair of your health policy platform development committee, so we put that out there in the ether for everybody to know in the interests of full disclosure. Okay. First question: David Peterson, Bob Rae, Mike Harris, Dalton McGuinty – they all started on the opposition benches before they got into the Premier's Office. So I want to first find out: How well does the job you currently have prepare you for the job that you ultimately want?

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Patrick Brown: I think you certainly grow in the job and frankly you learn in the job. You travel the province, every corner of the province. You study the government's books. You get a sense of where there are shortcomings and frankly you get a greater appreciation for where there's no longer value for money. So it's very instructive being leader of the opposition, and you get significant insights.

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Steve: You know, if you do win the election a year from today, you won't be the youngest premier ever. And we put the graphic up here to show this. But you will be the youngest premier in 84 years. Mitchell Hepburn became premier of Ontario in 1934. He was 37 years old. Edward Blake back in the 19th century was 38. Then you've got Bill Davis, David Peterson, and Ernest Drury who were all 41 and Bob Rae was 42 years old. Does Drury's grandson work for you?

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Patrick Brown: He's a good friend.

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Steve: Good friend. Anyway, for those who question whether a guy who has not yet seen his 40th birthday has the experience or the maturity to do this job, what do you say?

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Patrick Brown: I never believed age is a barrier in public service. It's about getting Ontario back on track. It's about creating jobs in Ontario. Making Ontario a place where you want to raise a family and create a business, and so I think that is the question, is how can we get more competent government in Ontario. I don't think it's an issue of age or any other characteristic.

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Steve: Okay. But people look at you and they point out that you weren't a Cabinet Minister when you served as an MP, you weren't a parliamentary assistant, you weren't a chair of a committee, you've had no Cabinet experience obviously at the provincial level. You know, compare that to the experience on the other side, or with the third party, Andrea Horwath, and they may ask, I don't know if this guy's seen enough or done enough to warrant getting the second biggest job in Canadian politics. How do you respond?

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Patrick Brown: I think the same old same old in Ontario is broken. Frankly, Kathleen Wynne and this Liberal government has had a lot of experience in 14 years and that experience taken us in the wrong direction. Do we need more of their experience on hydro? No. Do we need more of their experience on receiving equalization payments and being a have-not province? Absolutely not. I think we need a new approach, a new way, and Ontario can do better and should do better.

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Steve: I remember when Mike Harris came in in 1995, and within days of having the job, he cancelled four things that the previous Bob Rae government had done. Have you got an informal checklist in your head already that if you win a year from now, this, this, this, they're all out?

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Patrick Brown: It's a pretty long list of areas we say we're not getting value for money. Let me give you an example off the top. Hydro. Some of the atrocious contracts the government has signed and are continuing to side. There are some contracts they're hiding. They won't give us the details. We know where the notice to proceed has not gone out, we can absolutely get out of it with no legal cost and so immediately I'm going to look at these bad contracts. The fact we've given away \$6 billion in surplus electricity. The fact we continue to give it away to Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York. I want to look at those contracts and as quickly as possible deal with the hydro fiasco.

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Steve: The last party leader who said they could cancel a contract for electricity and it would only cost \$40 million, that ended up costing us \$1 billion. Are you sure that as you sit there, you can tell us with a straight face, that you can cancel these electricity generation contracts with no harm to the taxpayer?

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Patrick Brown: First of all, you're comparing two very different situations. You're talking about the gas plant where, for the sake of a seat, despite advice otherwise, they blew \$1 billion and there's now going to be a criminal trial. There's going to be a criminal trial where the Liberals' chief of staff and Deputy Chief of Staff are going to be before the courts. That's a very different matter. Saying that right now we've signed bad contracts that the government's hiding, the fact that they're signing new ones, LRP 2 hasn't provided with a notice to proceed. They just proceeded with 1,100 contracts the day after their unfair hydro plan. Absolutely we can get out of some of these bad contracts. But never would I do anything that would have significant exposure to the taxpayer. We know on the Samsung deal, we couldn't get out of all of it but we could have got out of a billion and a half. Whatever bad contracts the Liberals signed that I can get out of, I will. Let me be clear about this. These 30 mega contracts that we know and talked about, the Liberals got \$1.3 million in donations. The auditor general highlighted we've overpaid by \$9.2 billion for renewable energy. I understand why they're not going to look at it. I understand why they're hiding their contracts. These are their friends and donors. Day one if I'm premier, that next morning, 6 A.M., I'm going to be asking the civil service, I want to make sure I can see these contracts. I want to know what routes we have as taxpayers. We're not getting value for ratepayers, that has to change. What I want to work on right away, absolutely hydro.

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Steve: At what point will we get to see what your plan is to reduce electricity prices since we're talking about hydro here?

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Patrick Brown: We have already put out our structural changes to hydro, what the structural changes that need to be made immediately. And of course we're going to have a fully costed platform in the election. Let me say what I've already put on the record. We're going to stop signing new bad

contracts. We're going to look at the existing bad contracts. We're going to rein in exorbitant executive salaries. We need to stop spilling water power. We spill water power every day. This is important to highlight. Because the Liberals will say they had to do these bad contracts. They had to do the green energy act. They said it was about investing in green energy. Our own green energy in Ontario – green Ontario water power we are spilling. It was 4.8 billion kilowatts we spilled last year. Incredible.

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Steve: Do you support the Liberal government's plan to reduce hydro prices by 25 per cent, potentially costing us \$21 billion more over the long haul but depressing prices for the moment?

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Patrick Brown: It's a horribly short-sighted plan. Let me be very clear on that too. Their unfair hydro plan is not a plan. It's simply borrowing money. Hydro prices will skyrocket. They will skyrocket after the next election. In what world do we think spending upwards towards \$93 billion to get \$21 billion back makes sense? I would never sign off on that. I would never support that.

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Steve: What would you do?

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Patrick Brown: What I would do? Absolutely. So let me be very clear on this. The 30 bad contracts I'm going to look at –

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Steve: I heard the list a second ago. But, for example, if you don't agree with their plan, and I know you voted against it, to reduce electricity prices by 25 per cent, which kicked in just a week or so ago, what's your plan for reducing electricity prices if in fact it's even possible?

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Patrick Brown: It is possible. We can get electricity prices dramatically down. You look at the global adjustment. So the global adjustment is where you see it visibly sort of on your commercial bill, it's blended in the residential so you don't see it. In some cases it's half the bill. The global adjustment is a huge part of your bill. If you can get at the global adjustment, you can see significant cost savings. Now, this is where the bad contracts come in. I can't get the gas plant money back. That's gone. That billion's wasted. But in terms of all these surplus generation that we have, all the surplus generation we have to pay for and give away, we can get at that. We can reduce the global adjustment, and by reducing the global adjustment you're saving rate payers.

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Steve: Mr. Brown, I want to ask you about the fun challenge it is to be the leader of the conservative forces, and by that, you know, I'm talking about red Tories, libertarians, social conservatives, slash-and-burn conservatives, economic conservatives – they're all at the moment co-existing sometimes less peaceably, sometimes more peaceably, under a big blue tent. How difficult it is for you to satisfy all the disparate elements underneath that big blue tent?

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Patrick Brown: Listen, you can never make everyone happy. All you can do is be true to yourself and do what you think is in the best interests of the province. I've always said I think there's no monopoly on a good idea, and a good idea can come from any corner, whether it is a Liberal idea, a NDP idea, red Tory, blue Tory, if it makes sense for Ontario, I'm going to push it and do what I feel is right.

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Steve: Social conservatives certainly do not feel the love from you anymore. Are they right to feel that way?

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Patrick Brown: Listen, social conservatives – any Ontarian is welcome in the Ontario PC party. I want to be inclusive. What I've said very clearly is my version of being an inclusive party means this: It doesn't matter where you're born, it doesn't matter who you love, it doesn't matter the colour of your skin or what god you worship, you have a home in our party. For those who want me to not welcome people because of sexual orientation or who they love, it's not on. I was proud to walk in the Toronto Pride parade to be very clear that that's our modern inclusive PC party.

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Steve: Here is former PC MPP from Thornhill, Peter Shurman, writing on OntarioNewsWatch.com a couple of weeks ago:

"The wild card is Patrick Brown and allegations popping up of wrong-headed policies, insufficient policy development, undesired centralized control of riding nominations and questionable tactics inside this old and proud institution. All parties are going to have to clearly solidify their positions long before June 2018. If strong voices emerge from unanticipated newcomer groups running counter to what Ontarians have come to expect, the political landscape could look different than the pictures being painted by mainstreams media and polling organizations."

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Steve: There is a lot to unpack here let's get to this. Does your party at the moment plead guilty one year out to insufficient policy development so far?

Patrick Brown: First of all, Steve, I think you're giving me too many softball questions. In all seriousness, we're having a policy convention in November and it's going to be the most wide-ranging grass roots policy consultation process we've ever had. We've seen enormous growth. A few years ago the party had 10,000 members. We're well over 100,000 now. So it's more difficult getting everyone's opinions but we have really opened up the policy development process and it's exciting. In terms of nominations, right now in the NDP and Liberals you see acclamations. You don't see contested nominations. The fact we have so many people running for the party and so much interest, and the party speaks to that sense of change that is developing in the province. People want change at Queen's Park and that's a good thing. Now, it also means there are acrimonious battles, but the fact so many want to run for the party is a great thing.

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Steve: I appreciate that is. With that added interest of contested nominations do come some bad sides. I want to point out one to you. In Richmond hill, apparently at the end of the day, it was a tie. The person who could have broken that tie was a guy who needs a wheelchair to get around and the party apparently could not get him into the building so that he could have casted his vote for the candidate he wanted who therefore would have won. The person who did sort of flipped the coin and made the decision about who would win was the local party president, and apparently he chose the other candidate. You have potentially, right now, in Richmond hill a candidate therefore that is an illegitimate Victor. Do you plan to look into this?

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Patrick Brown: Every allegations will be looked into, and that's an allegation you have repeated.

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Steve: I spoke to the guy who used the wheelchair so it's not an allegation. I know who he would have voted for.

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Patrick Brown: At these meetings, anyone who wants to vote is permitted to vote. Having said that, every allegation will be taken seriously. There are so many people who throw their hearts into these nomination campaigns and I know it is tough to lose a nomination campaign. But the party takes every allegation seriously, they investigate them, and I actually went to the length, because we have such enormous nomination meetings right now, that I actually asked PWC to monitor them, to make

sure we're getting best practices. That's certainly further than other parties have gone and I am proud to have done so.

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Steve: You know the quip I heard about that, though. These were the guys who screwed up the Oscars and you brought them in to oversee your political process?

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Patrick Brown: I think the PWC has a stellar reputation other than the Oscars. They did do the federal NDP leadership and have been used in the political process before.

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Steve: Let me ask you about all the fun you've been having with Jack MacLaren. He is one of your MPP s who, over the last several years, has gotten himself into some difficulty with you. He either quit the caucus and joined the Trillium Party or you expelled them, I think there are different versions on what happened here. I don't necessarily need to go through chapter and verse on that other than to raise it as an example of whether or not you're concerned that some of the more right-wing, and in some cases more social conservative voices within that big blue tent of yours, are feeling like you don't listen to them and therefore they can't be happy in that big blue tent and may need to join other forces, thereby, you know, splitting off votes that potentially would go to you and hurting you a year from today? What do you say about all that?

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Patrick Brown: Well, Steve, I'm very serious about building a modern, inclusive PC party. As I've said many times and I said to you earlier today, it doesn't matter who you love, it doesn't matter where you're born, what your skin colour is, what god you worship, what language you speak, you have a home in our party and, you know, I've been patient with Jack MacLaren, but three strikes, four strikes, five strikes, you're out, and frankly, he tested my patience too long despite warnings and there was just – there was too many concerns that he did not share the values that I hold and the party holds, and it's difficult to fire a caucus member, but, frankly, he did not share the same perspectives of the party.

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Steve: Let's look ahead. You have been in a very interesting spot for the last two-plus years inasmuch as you have been leading the public opinion surveys for people's choice to form the next Government of Ontario. So the temptation may be to play it a bit safe, lest you risk losing your lead. Is that the plan?

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Patrick Brown: No. The plan is to do what's right. It's to not put partisan blinders on, it's to be open-minded, reasonable, pragmatic, and collect good ideas from every corner. People are surprised. Sometimes I'll vote for an NDP idea or a Liberal idea. I'm acting that way, governing myself on that mainly because that's what I believe. If there's a good idea put forward by Sherri DiNovo of NDP on PTSD or a Liberal idea on expanding hospice, I'm going to speak in favour of it because it makes sense for Ontario. We're not playing it safe. We're doing what's right. We're being comfortable in our own skin and speaking from our heart, and frankly, I think what we could benefit from right now in Ontario is less partisan blinders and focusing on how we're going to get this province back on track because I think right now the big question in this province is: How did the province that, under Bill Davis was the envy of the country, that for decade after decade the province that was the envy in Canada receives equalization payments, has had its credit downgraded? The government has faced five OPP investigations. How are we going to turn this ship around? That's what I'm going to work on day in and day out to make sure this province can be the envy of Canada again.

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Steve: That may all be true. The reality is, I'm sure you've looked at the history and we'll finish up on

this, rookie leaders, which is what you are, have a very difficult time winning. There's only been one rookie leader in 43 years who has won first time out the gate and that's the woman who holds the job today. What do you have to do to break the rookie curse?

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Patrick Brown: You're a big fan of Bill Davis, he won the first time out.

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Steve: It was 1971, a long time ago.

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Patrick Brown: I'm a big Bill Davis fan so I hope we can replicate Premier Davis and make sure that by being honest, being transparent, speaking to that modern, inclusive, Progressive Conservative vision for this province that we'll be able to be successful in the next general election and get down to work at making this province an economic engine within Canada again.

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Steve: That can't be a coincidence, though. Apparently people like to kick the tires the first time, but they're not, generally speaking, prepared to give a rookie leader the keys to the Premier's office at Queen's Park until the second time. There are lots of people who have had it on their second go-around. Precious few on the first.

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Patrick Brown: I'm sure the Liberals will try that line in the election campaign, but the reality is, for 14 long years, for 14 long years, they've been in charge of Ontario, and they have let us down. And I think it's long overdue to have a new approach and my pitch to Ontarians is going to be, you deserve value for money. You deserve a government that works for you. You deserve a government that's focused less on their own partisan interests and more focused on what's in the best interests of the province of Ontario.

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Steve: And we will keep focused on the year to come. Patrick Brown, leader of the PCs. It's good of you to show up tonight at TVO and thank you for taking our questions.

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Patrick Brown: My pleasure.

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The Agenda: NDP Leader Andrea Horwath On Party Platform In 2018 Election

Source: TVO

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Steve Paikin, Host: As we count down exactly one year until the next provincial election, the leader of the NDP may very well have two different expressions in her head. This will be the third time she leads her party into political battle. Will it be third time's the charm? Or three strikes and you're out? Let's find out from Andrea Horwath, leader of Ontario's New Democrats and the MPP for Hamilton Centre. We welcome you back into that chair here at TVO.

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Andrea Horwath, Ontario NDP Leader: Hi, Steve.

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Steve: I want to just get a little touchy-feely off the top here and ask you what you think you know today that you didn't know two elections ago that you think prepares you better to be premier today, if that were to happen a year from today?

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Andrea Horwath: Well, I mean, for one thing, I've certainly listened to a heck of a lot of Ontarians between when I first became leader and today. I've gotten a sense of where people are at, what their thoughts and concerns and worries are, and that's always been my priority, frankly. But the other piece that I have is the experience of having been a leader through a couple of campaigns now, the minority parliament, I think, was an opportunity for me to learn a lot more about how you work to actually effect real change, having the power to do so in that kind of scenario. So that gives me a lot of insight into the workings of government, if you will, when you're more at the table than not, as simply a third party leader. I think there's a great deal that I've come to learn over the years, but I go back to the fact that, for me, it's always about people and listening to people and finding the ways to come up with ideas and solutions to the concerns that they have in their daily lives.

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Steve: There's every possibility it could be – who knows, right? It's a year away. It's possible it could be a minority government next time out as well.

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Andrea Horwath: Possible.

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Steve: And who knows whose minority government it might be. Give us a better understanding, those three years when Dalton McGuinty was Premier and you held the balance of power in the Legislature, how do you negotiate your way around all of that to, as you put it, be able to put the people's agenda first?

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Andrea Horwath: First and foremost, if you recall, the other opposition party decided they weren't going to play ball. They decided they didn't win and that was the end of it for them. They were going to sit on the side lines and whine and complain and not do anything at all to fulfil the desire of the people. The desire of the people was a minority parliament, and that's what we had been given to work with and so we worked hard to try to make a difference. And it was really all about that. It was about trying to wrestle from the government gains for people, gains for Ontarians. So everything from extra funding, for example, for small community hospitals, at a time when the government was not funding them appropriately, to in fact Kathleen Wynne and I negotiated one of those deals as well, if you recall. That was the big piece there was auto insurance. Remember, that was a stretch goal. She, on the one hand, said that she would do it, you know, if she was to get us through that budget and then, of course, here we are, how many years later, we still don't have auto insurance. It's gone down by 15 per cent. It was one of those stretch goals. What that minority parliament did is it really helped to, you know, even off the relationship, if you will, between, you know, the Premier and the party that was prepared to work with them to try to make the province operate in between elections.

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Steve: Let me put you in a weird spot here –

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Andrea Horwath: Not you?

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Steve: Yeah, yeah. Kathleen Wynne has led one province-wide campaign and you have led two and Patrick Brown has never led a province-wide campaign. You, having been through it, what would you recommend he needs to know right now?

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Andrea Horwath: Oh, well, you know what? He's going to have to learn his way through it on his own. I mean, I have no sense that I can give him any particular advice.

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Steve: What are the hard lessons learned the first time out?

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Andrea Horwath: It's a long process. I mean, it seems short. You think, well, it's a 28-day campaign, but in fact that 28 days is jam-packed and the campaign starts far before 28 days. In fact, we've literally started already, as you know, to put some of our policy pieces out there because we believe that leadership – I believe that leadership is about, you know, telling people what you're going to do and then actually doing it.

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Steve: You have put some policy out and we will get to that in a second. Some might argue that the campaign has in some respects already begun inasmuch as we had a by-election in Sault Ste. Marie last week. I presume you are disappointed at the fact that the public clearly wanted an alternative to the Liberals and they picked the Conservatives instead of you guys. What lesson did you take from that?

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Andrea Horwath: I mean, we worked really hard on that campaign. I'm certainly proud of my candidate Joe Krmpotich, he did a fantastic job and our volunteers did a great job on the campaign. But by-elections are interesting. In this by-election, people were wanting to just send a strong message to Kathleen Wynne, and of course, you know, the government fell to third, quite –

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Steve: A bad third.

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Andrea Horwath: Quite a bit back. We did fairly well. Yes, you're right, we didn't come through the finish line at the top which we were hoping to do. But, look, next year is a whole different ball game. I mean, this by-election was about sending that strong message to the government by changing a seat in the Legislature. The next election is about changing the government, and I think people will have quite a different choice to make at that point.

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Steve: Sure. But they chose to send that strong message to the government through a different vehicle.

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Andrea Horwath: Sure.

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Steve: And not through you. And you guys had held the seat more recently than the Conservatives have who haven't held it since 1981. Do you know why they would have chosen that different vehicle as opposed to you?

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Andrea Horwath: Again, it wasn't something we were happy to see, but I'm really proud of Joe. I think he did a great job, our candidate. The folks chose to send a Conservative to the Legislature in the interim. I think that our strong showing in that election gives us a chance to show the people of Sault Ste. Marie, and frankly all of Ontario, that when it comes to the next election, if they don't want to see the Liberals in office, they have a serious choice to make, and that's why we're putting a lot of our ideas out there because we think it's important that people know what it is that they're buying, if you will, what it is that they're getting into. And we have Mr. Brown who is really, even through that campaign, was not very upfront about what his plans are, what his intentions are, what his policy ideas are, where he stands on pretty much anything.

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Steve: Ms. Horwath, I watch Question Period every day. That's how boring my life is.

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Andrea Horwath: I was going to say.

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Steve: And you know what I've noticed over the last many months I've been watching?

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Andrea Horwath: What's that?

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Steve: We have a little clip pack here. Let's roll this, please.

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Andrea Horwath [clip]: Will this Premier and the Liberal Party admit that mandating politically motivated, politically convenient inserts to be included in people's hydro bills during an election campaign is just too far to go even for the Liberals?

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Unidentified: Hear, hear!

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Andrea Horwath [clip]: As I recall, it was the Canadian Association of Retired Persons. It was seniors across the province. It was New Democrats that forced them to back down from increasing prescription costs for seniors. That's what was in their initial budget, Speaker. I think the Minister forgets!

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Steve: Okay. One of the things that you seem to be lately is a lot angrier. Is that an incorrect inference on my part?

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Andrea Horwath: Well, I mean, I don't know if it's anger so much as it's frustration. I hear from the people of Ontario all the time. Folks are hitting a tipping point. They're frustrated. They don't believe that the government is hearing them and understanding what they're going through. I mean, folks are at a situation where the cost of everything – hydro included, hydro especially – is going up.

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Steve: Well hydro is coming down 25 per cent.

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Andrea Horwath: Well we'll see, only to go up again in a couple years' time is what the financial accountability officer was pretty clear about. So that relief is going to be very, very short-term and the system won't be changing. The electricity system is not changing. So the mess that the Liberals have made of hydro is just going to continue to exist and we're just going to be paying more for it because they're going to stretch the cost of paying for it over a longer period of time. But, look, that's what's frustrating. Even when I go across the province – I mean, here in Toronto what I hear from people, the sense is one of extreme disappointment in this Premier, in Kathleen Wynne.

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Steve: Based on what?

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Andrea Horwath: Well, based on what they tell me. Why? They tell me she was one person or Premier before the election and turned into something totally different after the election, and they're very, very disappointed. Around the province, though, in ridings outside of the General Toronto Area, they're angry, they're angry, they're mad as hell, and they're quite tired of Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government.

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Steve: Well, let me ask if there's some anger on your part because – now you guys came out with, you know, what looked like a very thoughtful plan on a pharmacare option that you advanced, and then they kind of scooped you in their own budget and they put out a different plan which, you

know, you could argue which one's better than the other. I've heard experts on both sides. Are you still kind of ticked off they stole some of your thunder on that?

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Andrea Horwath: Well you know what, we are going to continue to put our ideas out there because it's what's good for Ontarians. I mean the people of Ontario deserve a pharmacare plan, frankly, that you don't have to worry about how old you are or how much money you make to be able to qualify for it.

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Steve: Because yours covers everybody?

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Andrea Horwath: Ours covers everybody, whereas the government's –

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Steve: Fewer drugs but more people.

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Andrea Horwath: Well initially, initially. I mean the other thing that you can't forget is that the Liberal plan, when you're 24-years-old, you qualify. The minute you're 25-years-old, you no longer get your prescription drugs. Think about all those people leaving postsecondary education right around that age. They are not going to be eligible for drug coverage. Some of them had that in university or college. They won't be able to get it afterwards. You know, people in their 30s, in their 40s, in their 50s, people who, for example, are needing HIV drugs, they're not going to be eligible unless they're 24 or under.

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Steve: So their plan may cover thousands more different medications but only until aged 25, you feel is inferior to yours.

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Andrea Horwath: Extremely so. But also, let's remember, thousands of more medications, the vast majority of which would never be prescribed for youth and for children. So again, the Liberals like to put a lot of numbers out there that make their plan look really great. But one of the important things that it doesn't do, other than the fact that it doesn't cover everyone, which ours does, is that it doesn't provide us with that buying power that will help us to wrestle down the cost of drugs with the pharmaceutical companies. I mean, this is one of the big problems that we have in Ontario and across Canada. And our plan, covering 14 million people with a set budget, gives us exactly that bargaining power and will help us to get the cost of drugs down. And the initial 125 or so drugs is exactly that. It's the initial amount of drugs, which will cover 70 per cent of the drugs that are prescribed for the most common ailments that people have. And so it's quite a comprehensive plan and it's one, again, that deals with the system problems that we have with pharmaceuticals in that they're high in cost because we don't have much bargaining power to get those costs down. Our plan does that.

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Steve: Let's return to the electricity file for a second. You told us what you thought of the Liberal plan; despite advertising and a 25 per cent reduction, you think obviously in the years ahead that the rates are going to come back up. I want to ask you more about your plan. Because if I understand it, you would like the province of Ontario to sort of reacquire, for public ownership, Hydro One, which is the sort of wires company, right? The one that distributes all the electricity out there. How would you purport to do that?

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Andrea Horwath: Well, look. It's very clear online. I mean, anybody can go online to look at both our pharmacare plan and our hydro plan. We're going to use the remaining dividends from Hydro One

that we receive every year, which of course have been whittled down because the government is now giving those dividends away to private shareholders, but we're going to use those remaining dividends to buy back the shares. We know that that's going to be dependent, in terms of how long it's going to take, on a number of things. One is the share price at the time when we form government. The other is, of course, the fact that now the government has sold off the last tranche and so now they've sold off more –

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Steve: It's 50-plus per cent.

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Andrea Horwath: Yeah it's 50 per cent, more than 50 per cent.

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Steve: It's probably going to cost, what, 300 million or 400 million bucks to buy back all the shares?

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Andrea Horwath: Well that depends on the share price. So what we've said in our plan which is online is that the length of time it will take us will be determined by the number of shares or the amount of shares sold off at the time that the plan goes into effect and the share price at the time.

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Steve: What is the value in doing that?

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Andrea Horwath: Well, basically it brings back into public hands the crown corporation that Kathleen Wynne had no right to sell off in the first place. She said nothing about it during the election campaign. 80 per cent of Ontarians or more are firmly against selling off of Hydro One. We just believe it's the right thing to do. How do we keep control of our electricity system if we farmed it off or sold it off to the private sector?

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Steve: Their argument is it may gain you more control over what was once a crown corporation but it doesn't do anything specific to lower electricity prices. Is that true?

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Andrea Horwath: Well no, on the contrary in fact, every case where we've seen privatization of the electricity system – and let's not forget, this started with Mike Harris on the generation side when the Conservative government started deregulating electricity and privatizing the generation. Now we're into the transmission of electricity with the sell-off of Hydro One. Every time there's a sell-off of electricity to the private sector in terms of generation, transmission, whatever you have, prices go up. The costs go up. And that's not just the NDP saying that. I mean, that is borne out in clear studies, whether you're talking about California, whether you're talking about other jurisdictions. Every single time there's a privatization in electricity, the costs go up.

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Steve: So you're 110 per cent confident that prices would come down if we, the province, reacquired Hydro One?

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Andrea Horwath: Well there are a number of other things, though. I mean let's face it. We have over-generation. So we have an oversupply of electricity that we have to deal with. When we do have an oversupply, we basically give that electricity away. In fact, we pay other jurisdictions to technically to take it off our hands at some points because it's sold off on the spot market. There's no system to make sure we get the best price. We're also heading down a path for even further generation of electricity, even though we don't need at this point in time. So there's a lot of work that needs to be done in that system. We would also actually get rid of mandatory time-of-use pricing. Mandatory time-of-use pricing has not worked. It's punished people for making dinner at dinner time, and it's

not shifted the load of electricity consumption in the massive way that the government had expected. That's going to cause prices to go down as well. So our plan is about a minimum of about 30 per cent reduction in costs we will see, but we will also, over the long-term, not have the spikes based on the privatization of Hydro One that we will see with this scheme that the Liberals have put in place.

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Steve: We've got about a minute left here and I want to ask you this: The NDP in the province of Ontario has not won an election since 1990. That's 27 years now. And I want to know, as you travel the province and you look around, what's out there in terms of evidence that leads you to believe that for the first time in more than a quarter of a century, the public is willing to entertain the notion that you guys are an option?

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Andrea Horwath: Well, you know, it's a matter of just watch us. I mean, look, we believe that we will be a serious choice for people in the next campaign. Folks are very unhappy with the Liberal government. As you see, Kathleen Wynne is, you know, trying to be one kind of Premier before she gets elected and another kind of premier after she gets elected. With us, you know, the things that we believe in are things that we believe in before an election and after an election. They're not things that change just because an election is taking place, whether that's the importance of our crown corporations and the value they have to our public, whether that's making sure that we have a pharmacare plan, whether that's a \$15 minimum wage – all of these things are in our DNA. Before elections and after elections, we don't change our mind on these things just because we happen to be falling in the polls or we see an election coming in the next year or so. That's not the case with Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals. So we do believe that we have ideas that make life better for people, that really focus on the issues that people are concerned about. People believe that government should be on their side all the time, not just before an election or not just when you're diving in the polls. And we think that we have a number of ideas that will make life better for folks, that will turn government back into an agent for change for people. You know, government should be about making life better for people all the time, not about, you know, making things good for your friends at the top or your well-connected party members and, you know, top folks on Bay Street, it should be about everyone, and that's not what we've seen here. We've seen for 14 years a government that's done very, very well by their friends in high places but everybody else is paying the price.

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Steve: That's Andrea Horwath, leader of the Ontario NDP. We're grateful you came in to TVO tonight and of course we'll see –

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Andrea Horwath: I can't believe it's over already.

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Steve: We'll see you in that chair before long because the campaign is not that far away.

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Andrea Horwath: I hope so. Thanks, Steve.

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