

Media Prep Sheet: Interview with Rob Gillies, Chief of Bureau Canada, Associated Press

Phone: Premier to call Rob (416) 346-5257

Wednesday, November 15; 3:15-3:20pm Briefing / 3:20-3:30pm Interview

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Premier,

On Wednesday afternoon, you'll be speaking with Rob Gillies, the Canadian Bureau Chief at The Associated Press. Rob is based in Toronto and you will be speaking to him over the phone.

Rob reached out looking to talk about Ontario's Basic Income pilot for a feature he is writing on the program that will be distributed across the U.S. and overseas. As part of his feature, he is also looking to speak to people taking part in the pilot and is in the process of tracking some of those people down.

This is a great opportunity to tie the Basic Income pilot into your broader plan for fairness and opportunity in Ontario. So, in addition to talking about BI, you should also highlight other programs like OHIP+, Free Tuition, and Minimum Wage. Draw on that fairness and opportunity messaging you've been using in your recent speeches and will use again tomorrow at the United Way event.

As always, please let us know if you have any questions.

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 pay-cheques.

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

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.

BASIC INCOME PILOT

Our economy is in a strong position, however some people in our province are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living.

That is why we are launching a Basic Income Pilot Project this spring.

4,000 participants across the three pilot sites; 1,000 participants in the Hamilton, Brantford and Brant County region; 1,000 in the Thunder Bay and the surrounding area and 2,000 in Lindsay.

Over 400 people received a basic income payment in October, with more applications currently being processed. Enrollment in Lindsay began in October.

In a separate but parallel process, an Indigenous Basic Income Pilot for First Nations is being co-created and designed in collaboration with Indigenous partners.

To assist with the evaluation of the Pilot, the government announced the appointment of Dr. Kwame McKenzie as Special Advisor for the Basic Income Pilot Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee.

The Special Advisor will provide advice to the government on how to best evaluate the outcomes of the Basic Income Pilot.

The other members of the research and advisory groups as well as the consortium of evaluators will be announced shortly.

Study participants will be:

- o randomly selected to receive an application package
- o 18 to 64 years old
- o living in one of the selected sites for the past 12 months or longer
- o living on a low income

Individuals chosen for the study could receive:

- o up to \$16,989.00 per year or \$1,415.75 per month for a single person
- o up to \$24,027.00 per year or \$2,002.25 per month for a couple
- o plus a payment top-up of up to \$6,000.00 per year or \$500 per month for a person with a disability.

Participants will be able to increase their total income with income they earn through work. The basic income amount will decrease by \$0.50 for every dollar an individual earns through work.

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