

## **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 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.

I've just come back from a mission to Washington so that is also top of mind because our economies are so closely linked and I know our businesses and workers in Ontario are worried about free trade and the renegotiation of NAFTA.

I will stand up for the people of Ontario and defend free trade at every opportunity because we all know that it is good for both economies and for workers and businesses here and in the U.S.

I have had conversations now with XX U.S. governors who do a high volume of trade with Ontario

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

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

No one has any illusions that the NAFTA negotiations will be easy

But I do believe we have an opportunity at this moment to protect the free trade that benefits both of our economies and also find ways to make that agreement even better for Ontario – so we will be actively engaged in that process