

Transcript of Provincial Question Period
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Unedited Transcript

The following is a partially edited transcript of Question Period.

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MPP Smith to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro One Exec Salary

>> MPP Todd Smith: Thank you and good morning. My question this morning is for the Premier. Does the Premier believe that a \$6 million salary is acceptable for the C.E.O. Of Hydro One?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, we recognize that executive salaries are high compared to the vast majority every Ontario ss and you know, Mr. Speaker, we remain committed to Hydro One's regulationccountability and transparency through our government's involvement as a majority shareholder, Mr. Speaker. And that said, we've already seen the chaos created bythe man in the white House who's governing by firing people all the time and that's not working too well. You know, Mr. Speaker, the opposition's gimmick and their leader's gimmick will drag us down into that same mess and actually won't do anything to reduce hydrobills either. As the company and its rates continue, Mr. Speaker, to be regulated by the Ontario energy board, the member opposite knows that as well, Mr. Speaker. The Ontario energy board is our province's independent regulator. Who has a mandate to probe province's electricity consumers and it continues to deliver on that mandate, Mr. Speaker .

>> MPP Smith: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has said in the House on numerous occasions that, with the sale of Hydro One, the very unpopular sale of Hydro One, she retained an the government retained the right to remove the board and ultimately remove the C.E.O. So I'll ask the Premier again, does she believe that a \$6 million salary for the C.E.O. At Hydro One is acceptable? Yes or no?

>> Minister Thibeault: Again, Mr. Speaker, making sure that we reduce rates for the people of Ontario, that's what this government chose to do and that's why, Mr. Speaker, we brought forward the fair hydro plan that reduced rates by 25%. What they're talking about on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, what their leader is talking about, won't reduce anything off of anyone's bills, Mr. Speaker. We actually brought forward a plan that they voted against, Mr. Speaker. They voted against a 25% reduction. That reduction, Mr. Speaker, they then decided to keep in their people's guarantee. And then immediately -- well, not immediately, a couplf months later, Mr. Speaker, they actually tossed that out and are now back as the party that has no plan when it comes to the electricity sector and -- Helping people reduce their rates, Mr. Speaker. We came forward with a plan, reduced those rates by 25%And we'll continue to advocate for the people of Ontario.

>> MPP Smith: Thanks, Speaker. The salary that they're paying the C.E.O. At Hydro One is five times the salary of the previous C.E.O. It's ten times the salary of his peers in other jurisdictions across Canada. \$500,000 is the average salary for a C.E.O. At a provincial run utility. Why in the world -- and it astonishes me,

Mr. Speaker, that the Liberals will stand up in the House and defend this outrageous salary and compensation package of \$6 million for the C.E.O. Of Hydro One. So why won't the Premier stand up in her place, after saying on numerous occasions that she retained the right, the government retained the rights to remove the board and the C.E.O. At Hydro One? My question for the Premier is why are you defending your \$6 million man?

>> Minister Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, . It's actually this Premier and this government that is defending the people of Ontario from cuts that that party wants to bring in, Mr. Speaker. It is this party that is making sure that we brought forward a plan to reduce bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker. They voted against it. It is very clear, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear what they will continue to do. They will continue to cut. They will bring forward bumper sticker slogans, Mr. Speaker, while we will bring substantive policy that actually helps the people of Ontario when it comes to the electricity sector. We've reduced rates by 25% right across the province. Hydro One customers have seen a reduction of anywhere between 35 and 50%, Mr. Speaker, and they have voted against it. Each and every time. We will put policy over bumper stickers, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Smith to Minister Thibeault Re: Hydro Rate Reduction Plan

>> MPP Todd Smith: Thanks, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of energy this morning. There remains serious questions, Mr. Speaker, about the Liberals' very expensive hydro plan that the Minister was just talking about. In regards to Ernst & young, deloitte and KPMG, the auditor general has said the sum of all this work does not equate to the approval of the accounting of their scheme and the financial books. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of energy, is the auditor general correct?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So let's be cle, Mr. Speaker. Families in this province asked for real and immediate relief on their electricity bills, and that's what we delivered, Mr. Speaker. We made a policy choice, not a bumper sticker slogan but a policy choice, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we continue to have clean, reliable and affordable electricity for ratepayers of today and the ratepayers of tomorrow. Fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, keeps the cost of borrowing within the rate base, not the tax base, because that's the logical thing to do, Mr. Speaker. Elety financing should remain within the electricity system. So officials from the treasury board, finance, O.P.G., the ieso and the Ontario financing authority, along with external advisors, that included Ian wise, KPMG and deloitte, worked with the accounting related to the fair hydro plan. They along with the office of the. Provincial controller, ensured that this plan was in accordance with public sector accounting, Mr. Speaker .

>> MPP Smith: Thank you, Speaker. That was a lot of rubbish that really said nothing at all, Mr. Speaker. The fact that the Minister can evenefer to this very expensive hydro plan as fair is unbelievable to the people of Ontario who are going to be paying record high electricity rates after the next election because they're doing nothing to address the costs of electricity in Ontario. So to the Minister of energy. He said this a while ago -- our plan has been approved by her, speaking of the auditor general -- by her peers at some of Canada's top accounting firms like kg, Ernst & young and deloitte. The auditor general has said that that's not true, Mr. Speaker. Did the accounting firms really approve the plan? That's what we want to know. To the Minister of energy. Did those accounting firms really approve the plan?

>> Minister Thibeault: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The official opposition is again up here criticizing a plan that has reduced electricity rates by 25% on average for all families and as many as half a million small businesses and farms, Mr. Speaker .that plan is savg families in eligible and rural and northern communities up to 40 and 50% on their hydro buys. First, Mr. Speaker, they voted against it and then they included in their own platform just a few months back and now their five-month-old people's guarantee is absolutely gone and so is any type of plan for the electricity sector, Mr. Speaker. But let's see, Mr. Speaker, what two world-

class accounting firms had to say in their statements regarding rate regulated accounting. Mr. Speakepmg said -- on the basis of our extensive research, deliberations and an opinion from another major accounting firm, we believe that the accounting policies adopted by the ieso. Are in accordance with the Canadian public sector accounting. Deloitte concluded that regulatory assets and liabilities recognized are appropriate to the applications of these policies -- and I'll have more in the supplementary.

>> MPP Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of energy said and I quote -- of course we work with KPMG. We worked with Ernst & young. We worked with deloitte. All of them agree that the accounting standards are accurate. The auditor general, the independent officer of the legislature, has said that that's not true. You know, I think anybody looking at this will realize that we can trust the auditor general a heck of a lot more than we can trust the Liberal government in Ontario. So my question, Mr. Speaker, is was the Minister telling the truth when he said these things?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, KPMG said, on the basis of our extensive research, deliberations and an opinion from another major accounting firm, we believe that accounting policies adopted by the ieso are in accordance with the Canadian public sector accounting standards. Deloitte concluded that any regulatory assets and liabilities recognized through the appropriate application of these policies would meet the criteria for recognition under the Canadian public sector accounting standards. Additionally, Ernst & young is o.p.g.'s financial auditor and has Sult -- is consulted on an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker. And finally the officials that work within these departments, the treasury board, finance, O.P.G., ieso and the Ontario financing authority worked on the accounting related to the fair hydro plan, Mr. Speaker, and all agreed with the Canadian accounting standards that we've moved forward, Mr. Speaker. So we'll continue --

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Naidoo-Harris) Re: Child Care

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My question's for the Premier. Why does the Premier believe that a mom who wants to go back to work should have to wait 'til her child is 2-and-a-half years old before having access to child care that she can afford?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And the to say to the leader of the third party I did read her platform in the dark early morning this morning, and I have to say that, you know, as I went through the document, I had my -- all right. We're already doing that. That's in our plan. Oh, we disagree there. But overall, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of common ground between what we're putting forward and what the NDP Has put forward, Mr. Spker. I'm happy to talk about some of the differences but, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very, very clear that the real threat to the caring, supportive province that has been built up over decades, Mr. Speaker, is coming from Doug Ford, is coming from the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker. But I'm happy to talk to the leader of T third pty about where we differ, Mr. Speaker, because we do differ on a number of points.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, yesterday at the launch of the NDP Platform, a young woman talked to me, a young mom with her little baby in arms, talked to me about wanting to make sure that her son had access to high-quality not-for-profit child care so that she could go back to work confident that her son was getting the best possible child care. But she also talked about how hard it would be to pay for it. Now I don't think that that mom or any parent should have to wait for 2-and-a-half years for child care that they can afford. Why does the Premier?

>> Premier Wynne: You know, I believe that what the leader of the third party is putting forward will actually reduce choice for people in this province, Mr. Speaker. My grandchildren went to a great little child care in Orangeville before they, all three of them went there before they got into full-day kindergarten, Mr. Eaker. Under the leader of the third party's plan, Mr. Speaker, that child care would not be funded, according to her plan. So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that parents need to have choices. We know that 2-and-a-half years is when there's a real bulge of demand, Mr. Speaker. That's why what we're proposing is free preschool child care for 2-and-a-half to 4-year-olds and continue to subsidize for 0 to 2-and-a-half, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there needs to be choice and there's more common ground between us and the NDP Than not and so -- I appreciate, I appreciate that she has stepped up and has put child care in her platform.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the reality is that Ontario has the most expensive child care in Canada. And here in Toronto, it is the most expensive in the entire province. Now that didn't just happen out of nowhere, Speaker. It's because the

Liberals have ignored the expensive child care in this province for 15 years. If this government, if this Premier were serious about affordable child care, we would have it already in Ontario. Liberals ignore, ignore all of those parents for those 15 years and not bring affordable child care to Ontario for 15 years?

>> Minister Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the leader opposite for this important question, the leader of the third party. So I just want to make it clear that, on this side of the House, our Premier designated someone as Minister responsible for early years and child care. And I want to point out that that's the first time that it happened provincially in the history of this province. So we recognize more than a year ago, almost two years ago, that this was a priority and we made it a priority. and so while, you know, I'm pleased to see that the third party platform is embracing a number of key policies and priorities, many of them put forward by our party, we're a little disappointed by the plan that they have put forward actually puts at risk many of the Progressive policies that we're moving forward with. So let me just tell you some of the things that we've done. We've done an affordable study. We've done a work force study. We're building capacity for 100,000 more children in child care, and we are building a solid foundation to move to the next step. Happy to answer more.

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne Re: Hospital Overcrowding

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My next question's for the Premier. "Toronto life" cover story is about a woman who spent 47 hours waiting for surgery in sunnybrook's E.R., with shattered wrists, broken elbow, cracked ribs and internal bleeding. She was stuck in a hallway that was, and I quote -- noisy with machines constantly beeping and people talking. There was nowhere for her husband and son to sit where they weren't in the way. It was like parking in a fire route. She was entirely dependent on the nurses who, despite being clearly overloaded, she says, took excellent care of her rather than venting or getting snippy, they just kept apologizing. Does the Premier believe that that's acceptable in Ontario in 2018?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, you know, it's not ok whenever someone has a frustrating, difficult experience in a health care setting, Mr. Speaker, whether it's in a hospital or whether it's at home. Of course that's not acceptable. And, Mr. Speaker, we know, everyone in this House knows that our front line health care workers work every single day to make sure that they provide the care that people need when patients walk into their facilities, Mr. Speaker. And our responsibility as government is to make sure that those frontline workers have the tools that they need. So, Mr. Speaker, we have continued to increase funding. We have continued to put supports in place for hospitals, but we recognize that there's more that needs to be done. \$500 million, Mr. Speaker. This year in our budget we're including \$822 million to support front line to support hospitals, Mr. Speaker.

>> Andrea Horwath: I would suggest to the Premier that one of the tools that our frontline health care workers need in hospitals is beds and rooms for the patients. Tools, Speaker. The Ontario hospital association says this -- all across the G.T.A. You have seen hospitals spike as high as 140% at any given moment. This is in reference to the occupancy rate, Speaker. Hospitals need stable funding that recognizes the realities that they face. Getting people out of hallways means funding hospitals. I have a plan to do that, Speaker. The Conservatives under Doug Ford will privatize and further cut our hospitals and health care. Why did this Premier create this crisis in the first place, Speaker?

>> Premier Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I actually didn't create an aging demographic. I may be part of that aging demographic but I didn't create it, Mr. Speaker. I think that was a post war baby boom that created an aging demographic, Mr. Speaker. And what we have worked to do is put in place a continuum of care. So, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the leader of the third party. We need to put more funding into hospitals. We have \$822 million that we recognize needs to go into hospitals, on top of every year the increases that we've made, \$500 million last year, but we recognize that there is more that's needed. But, Mr.

peakers have been investing in home care. The reality is that more people are looking for care at home. They want to stay at home, which means that they are at home longer and then when they get into long-term care or supportive housing, Mr. Speaker, they are actually sicker and older and so we need to make sure that we build those long-term care beds. And continue, Mr. Speaker, to put supports in place so that people can get the care where they need it when they need it, including in hospital.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, correct me if I'm wrong but the aging demographic didn't just start this year. It was there 15 years ago when this government should have been planning for proper investments in- long-term care. Health care, in our hospitals. But instead they froze and cut our hospital budgets. And here's what the "Toronto life" story continues to say, quote -- overstuffed hospitals are not just short on comfort and long on bad optics. Crowding actually leads to more deaths. As Premier, I will call the crisis what it is, a crisis, and I will fix it. The Premier won't even admit that there's a crisis, Speaker, and so she won't do anything to solve it. And we know, for sure, that as bad as things are with the Liberals, Doug Ford will make it even worse. Why did this Premier allow things to get this bad, Speaker ?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, you know, when I looked at the platform that the leader of the third party is bringing, that their P is bringing forward, there's a lot of common ground in terms of what we think the solutions are, Mr. Speaker. So we've said \$822 million we need to put into hospitals. There are a few million more that the third party is suggesting needs to go into hospitals. We recognize, Mr. Speaker, that there need to be long-term care beds built. The third party says we need to build long-term care beds. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the leader of the third party that -- I agree with the third party there's more to be done, Mr. Speaker. But the fact is that objective organizations have looked at our health care system and have said we have the best wait times in the country. We have a system that has the best survival rates for prostate, breast. Colorectal and lung cancers and life expectancy is higher than average, one of the highest in the oecd, Mr. Speaker. There's more to be done. But we have an excellent health care system in Ontario.

MPP Wilson to Premier Wynne (Naqvi) Re: 2018 Budget

>> MPP Jim Wilson: My question's for the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Liberals hosted four campaign-style events. Three more scheduled for today. They are clearly paigining on the payer dime each and every day. So I ask the Premier, will the Liberal party reimburse taxpayers for their campaign-style events?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite I comely understand why he doesn't want me to be talking about a fair wage policy in this province, Mr. Speaker. I completely understand why he doesn't want me to be talking about child care or care for seniors or more funding for hospitals, Mr. Speaker, because none of those things would be pole under the leader, under their leader Doug Ford, because he's going to cut across government. Mr. Speaker, when we bring in a budget, every year we bring in a budget, we go out into the province and talk about that budget. That is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker. That is what their party did, Mr. Speaker. That is what the third party did. That is what governments do to make sure that people understand what is in the budget so that they will know what to expect, Mr. Speaker. That's how it works, and I know the member opposite knows that.

>> MPP Wilson: Back to the Premier. Premier, you have told the people of Ontario that the budget that you just presented in this House is your campaign platform. So that means every event you have is promoting your campaign platform using your own -- stop doing t.it's wrong and repay the taxpayers. The Liberal party owes the taxpayers for thousands and thousands of dollars on these campaign style events. Will you do the right thing and pay back the taxpayer?

>> Minister Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province is the elected leader of the province and of the government. In her capacity, she attends many events. In her capacity, she is out talking about important government policy that is going to improve the lives of Ontarians every single day. In that capacity, Speaker, she will speak about the budget that is pviding plan for care and opportunity. I totally get it why the opposition is all worked up on this because they know they will be cutting all those important programs. They know if they come into government they're going to cut ohip plus that is going to provide pharmacare for youth under the age of 25 and for seniors over 55. If they're in government, they're going to cut funding for our hospitals. So that they can reduce wait times. If they're in government, they will cancel the osap program, Speaker. That's why -- They don't watt the Premier --

MPP Gelinas to Premier Wynne Re: Health Sciences North

>> MPP France Gelinas: [Speaking in French] Voice of Translator: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. [End of Translation] Sudbury depends on our local hospital health sciences north and everyone who works there helps to provide excellent care each and every day. But this Premier's inadequate hospital funding has forced health sciences north to plan to cut 113 jobs. That's on top of the 352 jobs that have already been cut at northeastern hospital because of this Premier's cuts and freezes to hospital budgets. Let me be clear. More cuts and layoffs at health sciences north are completely unacceptable to the good people of Sudbury in the northeast. Why doesn't this Premier get it? And why is she still underfunding northeastern hospitals?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I just want -- I don't know if the member really knows that over the past two years we've actually increased funding to health sciences north by \$10 million. There's been a substantial increase in funding to this organization. I know that the ministry has been working to understand the financial pressures that have been identified at health sciences north, Mr. Speaker. That work is ongoing and the ministry's working to support the health sciences north efforts to deliver patient centered quality care, as well as to achieve financial sustainability. But, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that this hospital, this system has not been supported is just not accurate, Mr. Speaker.

>> MPP Gelinas: I saw something that I had never seen in my ten years as health critic. On Wednesday, the board chairs of health sciences north, Timmins district hospital, Sault Ste. Marie hospital and North Bay regional health centre wrote an unprecedented step of going to the northeast IHN about the lack of hospital funding to save, and I quote -- basic financial survival. It's worth repeating. Tressent basic financial survival. The leaders of our northern hospitals are ringing the alarm bells. Their resources are shrinking and they face huge shortfalls once again this year. We all know what that means. It means longer wait lists. It means hallway medicine. It means fewer services for the people of the northeast. Frankly, Speaker, this is the last thing we need. As the Premier enters her last 50 days in office, does she care enough. To stop the damage that she's done and finally do something to help northern hospitals?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care will want to talk to the member. But what the member has said really does not accurately represent the situation. So \$10 million over the last two years, Mr. Speaker. The ministry is working to understand the financial pressures that have been identified at health sciences north. We've been working closely with the IHN and the hospital to ensure that there's no impact on patient care in the community, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly why the ministry is supportive of the IHN's decision to not support health science north's proposed plan and hospital

we require to undertake an independent third party review to look at potential strategies, mitigate any broader health system and patient impact. We've advised the hospital we're fully supportive of the decision. The ministry is working closely with them. We do care absolutely about patient care in Sudbury, Mr. Speaker.

MPP Qaadri to Minister McGarry Re: Kipling Mobility Hub

>> MPP Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. My question's for the Minister of transportation. Speaker, in addition to the many developments in Etobicoke north, for example Etobicoke general hospital, humber College and schools, I know about the pressing need to improve transit in the west end of Toronto. That's why the strategic investments in transit will improve options for commuters regardless of where they live in Toronto or in fact the W region. Speaker, I know that our government's moving forward on a number of projects that will make transit a more efficient option. For example in my own riding of Etobicoke North we have right now under way the finch west L.R.T. A billion-dollar expansion with eight stops from humber College west T Kipling and islington. But beyond that I'd like to ask the Minister could she provide more information on how our government's making more progress connecting more Etobicoke residents to our regional transit network through the Kipling mobility hub?

>> Minister Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Speaker, and I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for his question and his unrelenting advocacy on behalf of his community. Speaker, the way people move around the g.t.h.a isn't the same as it was a decade ago, let alone five years ago. And as a former resident of Etobicoke I see the changes in the west end of Toronto. More and more people are making the switch to transit because they see it's a convenient alternative to them taking their car. But we know that there's more work that needs to be done and a huge part of that is bringing together different forms of transit, including the bus, the G.O. Train, Toronto subway system and cycling in an integrated way. That's why the Kipling mobility hub is such an important project and why I'm so pleased to say we now Ave shovels in the ground to see this project to completion. Speaker, this project will not only serve commuters in Etobicoke but also those coming from surrounding communities like mississauga. It's a great day for transit riders and for those looking to hop on board. I look forward to say more in my supplementary.

>> MPP Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister not only for the answer but also for the integrated plan, which will benefit so many residents in the gtha. Speaker, this past Friday I know Colleagues, for example Minister of housing, Minister responsible for poverty reduction and member for Etobicoke Centre were excited to join TTC Chair Josh Colle. Mississauga mayor Bonnie crombie and metrolinx C.O.O. Greg Percy to make an exciting annouement. Kipling already brings together G.O. Transit, TTC And miway buses so of course it is a natural next step to bring them together in a more seamless commuter-friendly way. I've heard from members in my own community who are excited to see how this project will unfold. Speaker, while our government has a prove track

record of investing in projects like this one at the future Kipling mobility hub, not all parties see the value of investing in transit. As an example as you might anticipate, Speaker, the Ontario Conservative party is just running on empty. Ready to slash, cut, claw back and trump up our social deficit. My question is account Minister please provide the members of this House. With more information?

>> Minister McGarry: Speaker, I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for that supplementary question a also like to thank the Minister of housing and the Minister responsible for poverty reduction strategy for making this project a reality. As a city councillor, he fought tirelessly for the Kipling mobility hub, which I used to live nearby, and I'm so happy to see that his hard work is paying off. When this project's complete, it will seamlessly bring together municipal and regional transit systems to make it easier to move, for example, from mississauga's miway on a subway or to the Milton go line. At the same time it will improve connections for those commuters who are looking to access the station on -- by bike or by foot. It's a huge step forward, but it's only one part of the plan. We're moving forward with a historic \$21.3 billion transformation. Of our go network and at the same time we're making their commute more affordable through initiatives like reducing the cost of transferring between go and the TTC Thank you. The Speaker thank you. New question. Member from Elgin Middlesex London.

MPP Yurek to Premier Wynne Re: OHIP+

>> MPP Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. My question's to the Premier. Speaker, earlier this morning I was joined by the Canadian cystic fibrosis society and cystic fibrosis patients who urgently require access to lifesaving drugs. Unfortunately this government's Ohip plus coverage has resulted in children like Victoria, who's here today, unable to receive the lifesaving treatment that she needs. My question to the Premier is why is the Minister of health doing nothing to help the thousands of children requiring these lifesaving drugs? And please refrain from talking about the exceptional access program.

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we have every sympathy for people who are struggling to look after themselves, look after their families, Mr. Speaker. Cystic fibrosis patients and their families struggle with debilitating effects of this disease, and look for hope in E newrug that comes forward I understand that, Mr. Speaker, and we empathize. We want these people, we want these individuals and families to know that we are committed to finding solutions, Mr. Speaker. If we weren't, we would not have put in place ohip plus, which provides free prescription medication for young people from their birth 'til their 25th birthday for 4,400 medications, Mr. Speaker, for all of the medications that are on the formulary. If we didn't care about this, we wouldn't put that forward, Mr. Speaker. What we -- you know, what we know is that there is obviously more that needs to be done as drugs are tested and more drugs come on the formulary, Mr. Speaker. We are committed to finding those solutions working with the scientists and with the sector to make sure that children and families get what they need.

>> MPP Yurek: Speaker, back to the Premier. Premier, ohip plus has caused many Barriers and actually reduced access to lifesaving treatments for children across this province. Thank you, Speaker. If the government truly cared about children with cysticosis, it's been over two years since this government's even tried to sit down with the makers of cam buy Yann and come up with a price. Have you to negotiate to get these medications onto the formulary. Millimetre every day we hear of ohip plus failing Ontario's youth. Children aren't able to get their antiseizure medications. Children aren't able to get their medication to help them to breathe. They're losing access to medications they've had for years. Contrary to this government's talking points and this Premier no one here -- Youth coverage. We want to see ohip plus dealt with in a competent manner. My question to the Premier, will you stand up now and admit your policy has failed and

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect the member opposite must have taken his chutzpah medicine this morning to have the nerve to stand up and to challenge this government on our record on putng in place supports for

children getting access to medication, Mr. Speaker. It's quite unbelievable. I mean I understand -- I understand that there are other medications. That will need to go on the formulary, Mr. Speaker. But fact is that -- Party that "A". Does not support the plan we've put in place and "B" is going to cut any access that young people would have to any of those medications, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Armstrong to Premier Wynne Re: Mental Health Services

>> MPP Teresa Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Dawn and Dave Warren have spent years trying to get better mental health services in London, and they have experienced firsthand the crisis of hallway medicine too. When needed urgent care, she was rushed to the hospital by ambulance, but instead of getting a proper bed, she was put on a gurney and not just for a few hours but for five days that is completely unacceptable. When people like Dawn and Dave need urgent mental health care, they need to be able to get it. No one, no one who needs mental health services should ever fall through the cracks. So why does the Premier keep letting this happen and keep letting families in London suffer without the mental health care services that our city needs?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the member opposite that that should not happen, and as I've said many times in public that, you know, as a society, we are -- we are building a mental health care system that really hasn't existed in the past, Mr. Speaker. 40 years ago, Mr. Speaker, there was not the awareness of mental health challenges. We have put more money in mental health, Mr. Speaker, but we have, as part of our budget, we've announced the single biggest investment in mental health and addictions care in Canadian history, Mr. Speaker, \$2.1 billion in new funding for programs that will literally reshape the mental health care system and provide more access for points of care that will provide more ability to navigate the system, Mr. Speaker, and we've had expert advice on how to do that. I have my question to the member opposite is why, in their platform -- Are they promising \$500 million less, Mr. Speaker, than we have put forward?

>> MPP Armstrong: Speaker, our city needs transformation of mental health care services. The mental health unit at London health sciences centre is so overcrowded, it's been running up to 165% occupancy. That's more than double the safe occupancy level. Local psychiatrists have gone public saying that mental health supports continue to deteriorate, especially as the demand for services grow. And people like Dawn and Dave Warren, who count on our hospitals to provide the care they need, have been left bitterly disappointed by the overcrowding crisis that left Dawn on a hallway gurney for five days. It shouldn't be this way. New Democrats have a plan to end hallway medicine in our hospitals and transform mental health care for the better. Why doesn't the Premier?

>> Premier Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I've said that, on top of the mental health supports that we have already put in place, that there's more that needs to be done. \$2.1 billion is what we have been advised is needed. That is the investment that we're going to make, Mr. Speaker. The NDP is proposing to put less money than that into mental health supports, Mr. Speaker. It makes no sense. And flies in the face of the question that the member opposite is asking.

MPP Hoggarth to Minister Ballard Re: Fighting Climate Change in Ontario

>> MPP Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the ministry of environment and climate change. Speaker, as this week is Earth week, I urge all members of the legislature to encourage their constituents to do their part in protecting the environment. This could include small actions like -- actions like I used to do in my classroom to take the class out clean up in the neighbourhood, like recycling, taking public transit and reducing energy consumption. In Ontario we're making it easier for everyone to do their part by investing in cycling infrastructure -- to do their part by investing in cycling infrastructure and energy efficiency retrofits. Our cap on pollution for businesses has so far generated \$2.4 billion in funding for green programs that help Ontarians participate in the fight against climate change while saving money. Speaker, can the Minister please explain to the House how Ontario is taking action to protect our environment?

>> Minister Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the member from Barrie for that important question and highlighting that this indeed is Earth week, Sunday, this coming Sunday is Earth day. As the member mentioned, we've taken a number of significant actions to help protect the environment here in Ontario, and that includes our cap on climate changing air pollution. That cap, through the cap-and-trade system, has raised \$2.4 billion in proceeds in just over a year, Speaker. And by -- we are investing every single penny of those proceeds in green initiatives to fight climate change. Let me tell you about one. Our green on retrofits, which is allowing residents to make their homes more efficient at an affordable cost. And helping folks fight climate change.

>> MPP Hoggarth: Speaker, third party experts agree that our cap on pollution is the best plan to reduce pollution at the lowest price possible. We know that now is not the time to back away from action on climate change. Just yesterday California governor Jerry Brown was here in Toronto and he said, look, the scientists are clear, the world is clear through the Paris agreement, the biggest country in the world China is clear. So that's where the world is headed. Speaker, governor Brown also said -- scrapping cap and trade would be foolish. I repeat would be foolish. Who would do that, Speaker? In Ontario, we're proud that climate change activists around the world are acknowledging the work our province is doing to reduce pollution and fight climate change. Can the Minister please explain what action this government is taking to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and fight climate change.

>> Minister Ballard: Thank you, again, Speaker, to the member from Barrie for that important question. We were delighted today have the governor Brown here in Toronto yesterday to talk about the importance of fighting climate change and the

inevitability of fighting climate change. It is a real thing, Speaker, as much as the P.C.S might like to turnail and hide from it. It is here. It is real. We have to deal with it. We would have enjoyed having governor Brown in the House, as all folks would have, but, Speaker, the P.C.S denied the opportunity to have governor Brown come S about climate change in the legislature. You know, climate change should be a nonpartisan topic, Speaker. All parties should agree climate change is real. Speaker, the Conservatives have abandoned their carbon tax and they're walking away from any action to deal with climate change.

MPP Yakabuski to Minister Flynn Re: Bill 148

>> MPP John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of labour. Yesterday the "Globe and mail" ran a story describing the negative impacts that bill 148 has had for Ontarians with intellectual and physical disabilities. Jobs for people with disabilities are being lost as a result of the rapid increase in the minimum wage, combined with the slib -- Liberals' elimination of the sheltered workshops program. As Susan wallrot, a mother of an adult with down syndrome, who lost his job, said in the "Globe" article and I quote -- but for those workers, having a job, even one with a smaller pay cheque, gave them a sense of purpose, close quote. Speaker, how account Minister justify playing crass political games with the minimum wage when the Liberals' policies are clearly hurting some of the most vulnerable among us, Ontarians with Collect Wal and physical disabilities? All across Ontario.

>> Minister Kevin Flynn: Well, Speaker, crass political games is not what was intended by bill 148. What bill 148, Speaker, was intended to raise the living -- Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, the premise of the question, as I understand it, is that despite the human rights code this in this province, that the member opposite is prepared to pay somebody who has a challenge, whether that be physical or mental, is prepared to pay them less, to further treat them less, Speaker. Speaker, what bill 148 did and what the Conservatives voted against was that if you were working he province of Ontario and you were putting in your 35r 40 hours a week, Speaker, that you would be able to pay your way, that you would be able to pay expenses for your family, that you would be able to pay the rent. That you would be able to put food on the table, buy diapers for the kids. We're in favour of that on this side of the House. It's a shame they aren't, Speaker .

>> MPP Yakabuski: More of the political games. The Minister knew that playing politics with the minimum wage was going to hurt vulnerable Ontarians. Witnesses repeatedly told Liberals exactly that last summer during committee hearings. One such person mark waver, widely known for his work advocating for and employing people with intellectual disabilities. There are few people who would have more exp Erience and a greater understanding of the workplace realities that they face. He clearly -- As I said there are few people with more exp Erience and greater understanding of the workplace realities they face than mark waf. He clearly stated that it was almost a certainty that they would be the first to lose their jobs. But once again Liberals put. Before people. Speaker, account Minister tell us why he has failed to protect Ontarians with intellectual disabilities?

>> Minister Flynn: Thank you, spea. Thank you to the member for that question. Speaker, I sat down with mark wafer on -- Speaker, I've sat down on a number of occasions with mark wafer and he's a fine individual, Speaker. He's got the best

interests of people dealing with challenges whether they be physical or mental is right at the core of his being, Speaker. What he has always maintained is that he doesn't hire people with challenges because he feels sorry for them. Not because he pities them, Speaker. It's because they're excellent -- excellent workers and they deserve to be paid fairly. What the member is suggesting, Speaker, is that we have one level of pay for people that are dealing with challenges and another level of pay for the rest of us. That is shameful Speaker. That is what Doug Ford and the Conservatives are all about, Speaker. This side of the House, we're not.

MPP Mantha to Premier Wynne Re: Healthcare Access in Northern Ontario

>> MPP Michael Mantha: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Steven glaibrook has been taking prescription medicine for 24 years after experiencing a workplace accident at a steel plant. Steven no longer has a family doctor and has to go to the E.R. In Sault Ste. Marie three days a week for prescription refills. That's a 70-kilometre round-trip the costs are piling up. Sn receives odsp and is struggling to pay for his travels to the Sault. He has been on a waiting list for a new family doctor but there is a lack of doctors and other medical services in northern Ontario. This government has failed many people in the same situation all across northern Ontario. When will this government invest in northern Ontario's health care to ensure everyone has the same quality of care?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I don't know the specific circumstances of this individual, but I know that, if there are specific issues, I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care would like to address those, Mr. Speaker. But what I do know is that we recognize that, across this province, Mr. Speaker, there must be the highest level of care, and that doesn't matter whether you live in the north, Mr. Speaker, whether you're in the southwest, eastern Ontario, Mr. Speaker, or in central Ontario. And so that's exactly why in our budget, Mr. Speaker, we have increased funding across the board to all of the hospitals across the system, Mr. Speaker. We've increased the northern Ontario -- the northern health travel grant, Mr. Speaker, because we know that it's a challenge when you have those distances to travel. We will continue to work to make sure there is equitable distribution of care across -- across the province.

>> MPP Mantha: Again to the Premier, Speaker. Steven's quality of life has drastically shifted since losing his family doctor, as he cannot get out of the House some days due to so much chronic pain. The Sault area hospital -- the Sault area hospital will not accommodate Steven's case since he has to go through the E.R. And sees a new doctor every time. Health care connect and ccac cannot prioritize him higher on a wait list and he does not live in Sault Ste. Marie so he cannot utilize some services as they are not open on the days that he is able to travel. Steven is also on a wait list for different family health team and primary care clinic. This happens all across my riding. People do not have access to family physicians and nurse practitioners. How is this government going to ensure people in northern Ontario have access -- To primary care?

>> Premier Wynne: As I said, Mr. Speaker, we have been working to increase those supports, make. We've been working towards a system-wide health equity by addressing specific health inequities in the north, Mr. Speaker. The patients first action plan, health equity is a fundamental part of that, and it's part of the

mandate of each of the local health integration networks which are the planning bodies regionally, Mr. Speaker, that their work is to address the needs of underserved populations and Barriers to equitable access. Nurse practitioner-led clinics, Mr. Speaker, are a perfect example of the way we are working to get that kind of primary health care to all parts of the province. We also introduced new Ontario public health standards in January that require public health units to embed equity throughout their work. Mr. Speaker, we recognize challenges. We recognize, because we raised the travel grants, we recognize there's more to be done.

MPP Potts to Minister Del Duca (Moridi) Re: Life Science Sector Investments

>> MPP Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of economic development and growth. Now, Speaker, we know that this government continues to make strategic investments in businesses across all sectors, and since 2004, this government has invested some 3 billion in various businesses, leveraging ten times that amount in private sector investments helping to create and retain 185,000 jobs across the province. And together the people of Ontario and the government have helped make Ontario a world leader in many sectors. We continue to lead the G-7 in economic growth and we have the lowest unemployment rate in 17 years, as we have helped create 820,000 new jobs since the recession. And just today, Speaker, Toronto, Waterloo and the Kitchener-Waterloo corridor was named one of the top 20 technology hubs in the world. With our world leading institutions, Ontario has become a world leader in medtech. Account Minister, please tell us what we're doing to support the med tech sector?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much, Speaker. Of course I want to begin by thanking the member from Beaches- East York for his question and advocacy. He is 100% right. Province of Ontario is in fact proudly a leader in the med tech industry and we've made it a priority, as our government, to advance health care innovation. We are home to North America's third largest med tech research cluster, with 37,000 people working and more than -- at more than 1,400 companies across Ontario. And our government has been making strategic investments to further this sector's footprint in every corner of the province. Just last week I was very happy to announce that Ontario will be investing \$50 million in response to a \$500 million investment by Sanofi to build state of the art vaccine manufacturing facility here in Ontario. This will help create and retain over 1250 jobs, Speaker. It will help Sanofi more than double its production capabilities and support its largest manufacturing investment worldwide, Speaker. Also last week we announced we were supporting a \$7 million grant and \$9 million loan --

>> MPP Potts: Thank you, Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for his clarification of what we're doing and particularly for the \$22.6 million food processing in the riding of Beaches- East York to support 450 jobs in my community. Leveraging, Speaker, almost seven times that amount from the private sector, an excellent investment. Speaker, Ontario's currently the largest life sciences jurisdiction in North America employing over 6,000 people generating something in the order of \$38 billion in revenue in Ontario each year. This sector has attracted the world's top health science companies and billions every year in investments from firms such as Johnson and Johnson, Bayer and as the Minister notes Sanofi. With investments in Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Ottawa and Windsor, it's evident our government is committed to supporting. The life science

sector across Ontario. Speaker, will the Minister please inform the members of this House how we continue to support life sciences sector in Ontario.

>> Minister Reza Moridi: Thank you, speaker. I want to thank the minister for his clarification of what we're doing and particularly for the \$22.6 million food processing in the riding of beaches-east York to support 450 jobs in my community. Leveragg, speaker, almost seven times that amount from the private sector, an excellent investment. Speaker, Ontario's currently the largest life sciences jurisdiction in north America employing over 6,000 people generating something in the order of 38 will -- billion in revenue in Ontario each year. This sector has attracted the world's top health science companies and billions every investments from firms such as Johnson and Johnson, Bayer and as the minister notes sanofi. With investments in Toronto, mississauga, brampton, ottawa and Windsor, it's evident our government is committed to supporting. The life science sector across Ontario. Speaker, will the minister please inform the members of this house how we continue to support life sciences sector in Ontario.

MPP Jones to Premier Wynne Re: Peel Manor Redevelopment

>> MPP Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. My question is for the Premier and I'm asking this on behalf of the region of Peel. Peel region wants to know why the Liberal government has prevented the redevelopment of the Peel Manor long-term care home in Brampton. Peel Manor is over 100 years old, making it the oldest of the region's five long-term care homes. Seniors in Peel region are already waiting two to three years for long-term care beds. How long does the region of Peel have to wait for the Liberals to allow Peel region to expand beds and upgrade services at Peel Manor?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care will want to speak to this. I actually don't know the answer to the specific question about that long-term care home, Mr. Speaker. What I do know is that we are redeveloping thousands of beds across the province, Mr. Speaker, that we are building thousands, 5,000 new beds, Mr. Speaker, and then another 30,000 over the next decade so, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there needs to be investments in long-term care. We have committed to those in our budget, Mr. Speaker, and as I said if the member opposite would bring the specific information about that situation, we'll get an answer for her.

>> MPP Jones: Speaker, Peel region and the Peel hospitals were the epicentre of hallway medicine. The region wants to upgrade Peel Manor to rebuild 177 long-term beds, including areas specialized for needs such as dementia. The plan is also to expand 24/7 adult day programming and respite, making it a hub for seniors care. We need this in the region of Peel. Instead of helping the region expand services for our seniors, the province has so far refused to allow Peel Manor to provide the services Peel region so desperately needs. Why does this government think that redeveloping Peel Manor is not a worthwhile investment?

>> Premier Wynne: I don't think that that is at all the case. The reality is that we are working with Peel Manor, as the member from Peel has said, and we know, Mr. Speaker, that there is more work to be done. And no one, no one on this side of the House has said that it's not a worthwhile project, Mr. Speaker. There are thousands of beds across the province that are being redeveloped, Mr. Speaker. There are long-term care beds that are being built and we recognize that, in Peel, where there is a growing population, Mr. Speaker, and along with that growing seniors' population, that there is more need. We will continue to work with Peel Manor. We'll work with the regional -- the local health integration network, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that, in Peel and across the province, those needs are being met.

MPP Hatfield to Minister Milczyn Re: Landlord and Tenant Tribunals

>> MPP Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. My question this morning is to the Minister of housing. Good morning, Minister. Speaker, landlord and tenant tribunals are essential, but under this Liberal government, tenants are told it will take months and months to get an opportunity to air their grievances. The lineups and the delays are growing longer and longer. Speaker, if a tenant files today in Windsor, they'll be told they can't get a hearing until the 18th of June. Cbc Windsor has done a series on this crisis. We were told that babies swaddled in blankets freezing, shivering in heat-deprived apartments. The Liberals have to answer for this. What do they say to the parents of these babies and children, freezing with no easy access to a tribunal to listen to their grievances?

>> Minister Peter Milczyn: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for the question. When he first raised this with me I immediately looked into the issue of whether there's vacancies on the tribunal. Indeed there are three vacancies. I know they're in the process of being filled and I would urge the opposition to assist that process in not delaying the appointments of any members to the necessary board. But, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are committed to helping tenants. We have a housing enforcement unit that assists tenants if they have an issue with their landlord. We've introduced the standard lease which will also make it easier for landlords and tenants to understand where their rights and obligations are. That's in sharp contrast to Doug Ford who's against rent control and whose housing policy is about handing out \$20 bills in a tchc building and cutting the source of funding that we're offering to help refurbish social housing in this province, Speaker.