

FW: OWD Media Brief: September 12, 2016 (PM Edition)

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Articles of Interest

[Ontario government to knock HST off electricity bills, increase child care spaces: Throne Speech](#) (National Post (Online))

Date: Sep 12, 2016

A promise to knock the provincial sales tax off electricity bills and create 100,000 new child care spaces anchors the Ontario government's Throne Speech delivered Monday.

[Wynne announces 8 per cent HST cut from hydro bills in throne speech](#) (Toronto Star (Online))

Date: Sep 12, 2016

Electricity ratepayers will no longer be charged the 8-per-cent provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax on their hydro bills, Premier Kathleen Wynne's government has announced.

[Liberals promise to remove Ontario portion of HST from hydro bills](#) (CTV News (Online))

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TORONTO -- Ontario home owners, farmers and small businesses will get some relief from soaring electricity prices starting in January when the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax is removed from hydro bills.

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TORONTO -- Ontario home owners, farmers and small businesses will get some relief from soaring electricity prices starting in January when the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax is removed from hydro bills.

[Dad feels 'helpless' after daughter targeted for human trafficking](#) (CBC News (Online))

Date: Sep 12, 2016

The father of a teenage girl in Ottawa who police say was targeted to join a prostitution ring says the mental health system has failed her.

[Pole-arizing issue: London Abused Women's Centre withdraws from Take Back the Night](#) (CTV News (Online))

Date: Sep 12, 2016

The London Abused Women's Centre (LAWC) will be withdrawing its support from Thursday's Take Back the Night march over what it says includes a group that condones violence against women.

[Sault gets new housing program for victims of domestic violence](#) (Soo Today (Online))

Date: Sep 12, 2016

Sault Ste. Marie was selected as one of only 22 communities in the province to take part in the Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit Pilot program, the Ontario Ministry of Housing announced last week.

[NEWS | 'Silence is Violence' launches at McGill](#) (McGill Daily (Online))

Date: Sep 12, 2016

The McGill chapter of Silence is Violence (SiV) launched on August 26, describing itself on Facebook as "a survivor-led collective of community members at McGill to advocate for institutional accountability and tackle rape culture on campus." The group is part of a wider national network,

[Toronto Star's View: Ontario patients deserve better protection](#) (Our Windsor (Online))

Date: Sep 12, 2016

There's a conspicuous and troubling gap in the Liberal government's plan to protect Ontario patients from sexual abuse by doctors. Missing is the core recommendation of a task force on this issue calling for creation of a special Ontario Safety and Patient Protection Authority .

Articles of Interest

Ontario government to knock HST off electricity bills, increase child care spaces: Throne Speech

National Post (Online)

By: Ashley Csanady

Date: Sep 12, 2016

Section: Canadian Politics

Photo: No

A promise to knock the provincial sales tax off electricity bills and create 100,000 new child care spaces anchors the Ontario government's Throne Speech delivered Monday.

Premier Kathleen Wynne is targeting voters' pocketbooks and family concerns with a mid-mandate legislative refresh that is clearly aimed at boosting her and her Liberal party's popularity before the 2018 election.

Lieutenant-Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell read her first Speech from the Throne Monday, which included promises to improve the elementary math curriculum and more home and nursing care.

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Ontario Liberals hope prorogation and Throne Speech will hit 'reset' button after bad-news summer((news.nationalpost.com»))

Ontario wineries worry cost of selling their bottles in grocery stores will be prohibitively high((news.nationalpost.com»))

The move comes after the summer included a byelection loss for the Liberals in Scarborough and months of polling that showed Wynne's approval at an all-time low. It's also an overtly political

throne speech when compared to the party's post-election victory speech in 2014.

With the books set to be balanced by the end of March 2018, the government is making a pitch to invest "in the things that matter most to you and that help you in your everyday life," including:

A pledge to remove the provincial portion of the HST - eight per cent - from all electricity bills, both residential and commercial. That should save the average consumer about \$130 a year, the government estimates. Rural consumers, who face steep transmission charges, will be offered additional relief, which could save as much as \$45 a month when combined with the HST savings. And industrial consumers will be offered even more programs to keep their hydro costs down, as many bemoan those rates as one of many factors pushing manufacturing jobs out of the province;

A promise to create 100,000 child care spaces over five years, starting in 2017, is ambitious - and extends beyond the government's current mandate. Importantly, this "will double the current capacity for the 0-4 age group," a government backgrounder notes, addressing concerns that demographic has suffered from fewer spaces since all-day kindergarten rolled out across the province;

Adding up to 350,000 home care nursing hours and 1.3 million hours of personal support, a pledge intended to increase support especially among 35- to 65-year-olds who are caught between kids and aging parents in need of support on the other;

An effort to improve math skills, in particular numeracy, by "having up to three math lead teachers in all elementary schools" - a move that comes after last year's standardized test by the Education Quality Alliance of Ontario found half of grade 6 students failed to meet the provincial standards.

The speech also includes a pledge to continue with many programs, including the new Ontario Student Grant. The OSG will merge many existing programs, and remove a tax credit that benefits wealthier families the most, to offer essentially free tuition to low-income students and increase post-secondary support for all but the wealthiest families.

A promised \$160 billion for infrastructure will help build or repave 5,000 kilometres of highways - almost half in the north - and 350 kilometres of new rapid transit in city centres such as Waterloo Region, Ottawa and Hamilton. And plans to enact a cap-and-trade system in Ontario will go ahead as planned in early 2017.

Speech from the Throne now online for all you nerds who want to read it for yourself
news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2016/09...(news.ontario.ca)) #onpoli(twitter.com))

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Ashley Csanady (@AshleyCsanady) September 12, 2016(twitter.com))

Over the summer the government's negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association to create a new physicians services agreement - the fee schedule for doctors' visits - spectacularly broke down when a well-financed coalition challenged the deal and eventually swayed enough votes to kibosh the deal. But the Liberals aren't looking to make nice with the highest-paid doctors; instead the speech includes a specific attack that precious health-care dollars won't be spent on "the highest-billing physicians or highly paid administrators."

It's just one of many overtly political aspects of a speech usually reserved to outlined the government's legislative agenda.

Wynne's push to be a "social justice premier" is furthered by a promise to follow-up on a plan to ensure parental equity in Ontario, so same-sex parents don't have to legally adopt their own children, an issue highlighted by New Democrat Cheri DiNovo and currently being challenged in the courts.

The two-year legislative agenda also includes a lengthy defence of the government's energy plans alongside its promise to lower electricity bills.

"Over the course of the past decade, Ontario electricity ratepayers have helped cover the costs associated with removing dirty coal-fired generation from our electricity system," the speech reads. "And while these investments have resulted in increased costs associated with generation, they have also created savings of more than \$4 billion a year in health and other costs associated with smog and pollution from coal-fired generation."

It also notes the government "renegotiated" its Green Energy Investment Agreement to reduce contract costs by \$3.7 billion and created a new Large Renewable Procurement process, which saved another "\$4.1 billion as compared to previous forecasts" - meaning the government says it's saving money that has not yet been spent.

All this comes after years of criticisms that the Liberals' green-energy policies have driven up costs across the province, with Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk finding last year that Ontario consumers paid \$37-billion more than necessary on their hydro bills from 2006 to 2014.

[Read the complete article.](#)

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Wynne announces 8 per cent HST cut from hydro bills in throne speech

Toronto Star (Online)

By: Robert Benzie

Date: Sep 12, 2016

Section: News | Toronto Star

Photo: Yes

Electricity ratepayers will no longer be charged the 8-per-cent provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax on their hydro bills, Premier Kathleen Wynne's government has announced.

In a bid to jolt their flagging popularity(www.thestar.com), Wynne's Liberals delivered a consumer-friendly speech from the throne Monday that also promised 100,000 new child-care spaces over the next five years.

"Whether in Kenora, Sudbury, Belleville, London, or Barrie, your government has listened to and has heard your concerns," said the speech, which was read in the Legislature by Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell.

"It recognizes that the cost of electricity is now stretching family budgets," the speech continued.

Eliminating the 8-per-cent provincial share of the 13-per-cent HST as of Jan. 1 will save the average household \$130 a year.

Many rural ratepayers, who cannot take advantage of the inexpensive natural gas for heating that urban Ontarians can, will receive an additional \$540 annually.

While that rebate will cost the treasury about \$1 billion a year, the Liberals insist they are on track to balance the books in the 2017-18 budget expected for March.

"Ontario's economy is still in transition, but our recovery is firmly track," Wynne(www.thestar.com)) said in a statement.

"While many are benefitting from the growth we've achieved, others have yet to share in Ontario's resurgence," the premier said.

The Liberals, who will mark their 13th anniversary in power next month, are smarting from the loss(www.thestar.com)) of the Scarborough-Rouge River byelection to the Progressive Conservatives on Sept. 1.

Mindful that Ontarians head to the polls in spring 2018, Wynne(www.thestar.com)) is desperate to give her majority Grits a reboot.

"Our government understands the challenges people face and shares their concerns," she said, vowing to deliver "real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help more people in their everyday lives."

That "everyday" theme permeated nearly every one of the throne speech's 17 pages.

"With economic growth and a balanced budget, your government will continue to build Ontario up, investing in the things that matter most to you and that help in your everyday life," said the address, entitled "A Balanced Plan to Build Ontario Up for Everyone."

"It will do that, first, by enhancing child care."

Building upon the 56,000 new daycare spaces in the past three years, the Liberals will fund an additional 100,000 over the next five.

"Your government will also make it easier for parents to find and use the services their children need, whether they are before-and-after school programs, drop-in centres or more licensed child care spaces."

When the government announced it would ban day care wait list fees that range from \$20 to \$200 as of Sept. 1, child-care activists said Wynne needed to create more spaces so new parents wouldn't face a mad scramble to find spots for their kids.

Competition for spaces is tight, particularly in Toronto, where there are spots for just 21 per cent of children under the age of 5. Ontario now spends more than \$1 billion a year on 350,000 licensed day care spaces.

Stinging over the recent Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) tests that found half of Ontario's Grade 6 students failed to meet the provincial mathematics standard this year, the government plans to emphasize math skills.

"To help students improve their mathematics skills, your government is implementing a renewed math strategy, including having up to three math lead teachers in all elementary schools."

The falling EQAO scores - 58 per cent of Grade Six students met the standard in 2012 - has been blamed on kids' anxiety over math and teachers' lack of proficiency in the subject.

Beyond math, the government is "also setting a goal for every young person to have at least one opportunity for experiential learning."

Pocketbook issues such as hydro and daycare dominated the speech.

The Liberals remain committed to selling the Hydro One transmission utility to bankroll public transit and roads and bridges.

The government's carbon-pricing scheme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, which will cost the average household \$13 extra a month starting in January, is still on track.

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown, who attended Tory MPP Raymond Cho's swearing-in earlier Monday, and NDP Leader Andrea Horwath will offer their critiques of the government's plan later in the afternoon.

Both have been urging the Liberals to tackle soaring hydro prices; Horwath((www.thestar.com»)) has been pushing for the scrapping of the HST from bills since 2010.

Ontario Public Service Employees' Union president Warren (Smokey) Thomas didn't wait to hear the speech to blast it; he said in a news release that Wynne's government needs "the boot, not a reboot."

"After two years of lurching from mistake to mistake, the Liberals don't need to 'refresh their brand.' They need to call an election," said Thomas.

"Kathleen Wynne's sudden interest in the needs of everyday Ontarians is all about her political survival, nothing more."

All government legislation on the order paper when the House was prorogued Thursday will be reintroduced, starting on Tuesday.

The first bill will be the campaign finance reform law sparked by a Toronto Star series last March.

Under the legislation, corporate and union donations to political parties will be banned, MPPs and candidates will be forbidden from attending party fundraisers, and contribution limits will be reduced to \$1,200 from \$9,975.

The new law will introduce public subsidies of the major political parties by giving them \$2.71 for every vote they received in the 2014 election.

Starting in January, annual payments will be \$5.06 million for the Liberals, \$4.09 million for the Conservatives, \$3.1 million for the New Democrats, and \$630,000 for the Greens.

Caption: Illustration: • Hydro bills: Eliminating the 8-per-cent provincial share of the 13-per-cent HST as of Jan. 1 will save the average household \$130 a year.

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