

Good Afternoon Premier,

We have four items to update you on today:

- Session-End with the Canadian Press
- Ambulances
- Benzie Story
- French, Ethnic and Chinese Media Update

Session-End with the Canadian Press

Your session-end interview with Allison was moved on the CP wire today. Allison touches on a variety of areas in her story, such as poll numbers, the upcoming election and the comments made by Greg Sorbara. Allison also writes about your theme of fairness and how this theme ties into our most recent budget policies. Her story ends with a quote from CEO Eli Yufest: "The provincial Liberals will not give up without a fight. There's no doubt that what they're doing, what they're unveiling in terms of policy is resonating among the electorate."

We have included Allison's story below for your reference:

Ontario's Liberal premier sets focus on fairness one year away from the election ***By Allison Jones***

Kathleen Wynne is all about the F word.

Listen to Ontario's premier speak these days and chances are she'll talk about fairness. It has become her mantra, an idea she ties to nearly every big announcement she has made lately, from a \$15 minimum wage to a basic income pilot to housing market cooling measures and rent control.

Expect that to continue through to next year's election on June 7, 2018.

"Everything we've done will be part of the re-election (bid), but I certainly hope there will be a discussion in the election campaign about how to have a fairer society," Wynne, 64, said in a recent interview.

Wynne said she is "being very intentional about fairness," whether it's by raising the minimum wage, giving low- and middle-income students free post-secondary tuition, a youth pharmacare plan or cutting electricity bills.

Hydro is where the renewed focus on fairness and affordability seems to have started. With voter anger over rising hydro bills reaching a fever pitch, Wynne first admitted at a Liberal convention in November that she made a "mistake" by paying too much attention to the larger problems in the electricity system and not enough to how costs were accumulating on people's bills.

She has always fought for "social justice," Wynne said, but what's changed is how she communicates her plan.

Wynne used the word fair and variations of it about a dozen times while unveiling a basic income pilot project in April and about two dozen times while talking about a \$15 minimum wage last month. She has unveiled the Fair Hydro Plan, the Fair Housing Plan and the Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs plan.

"Making sure that we do everything that we can to make people's lives fairer, make the province a fairer place to live, yeah, that has been a focus," Wynne said in the interview.

Greg Sorbara, who was finance minister under Wynne's predecessor Dalton McGuinty, called that platform a game changer.

Sorbara made headlines earlier this year for saying on TVO's "The Agenda" it was "extremely unlikely" the Liberals could win the next election with Wynne at the helm. Her approval ratings have been dismal of late.

"The night I was on 'The Agenda' the prospects looked very dim indeed," he said in an interview. "I think there's more light at the end of the tunnel...There's a sense that the premier herself and the government is really getting its act together and that bodes well in the last year of a mandate."

There is a renewed focus on vulnerable populations, which is often a political strategy of the left, Sorbara said.

"Is (Wynne) occupying all of the space of Andrea Horwath's (NDP) party?" he said. "I think she's occupying a lot of it and I'm not sure that's a bad political strategy."

Wynne swears she is still "leading from the activist centre," her phrase of 2014, but many others have noted her shift to the left. A recent newspaper editorial called her a great NDP premier.

The next election will be the most difficult the Liberals have faced in a long time, Sorbara said.

Anger over hydro bills has not gone away, and opposition politicians will be sure to remind voters that the Liberal plan to cut bills in the short term means ratepayers will end up paying more in the long term. Wynne's decision to partially sell Hydro One to raise infrastructure cash remains unpopular.

In September, not one but two trials begin involving Liberals. One in Sudbury on Election Act bribery charges and another in Toronto on mischief and breach of trust charges over the alleged deletion of emails about gas plant cancellations.

And by that time, the Liberals will have been in power for 15 years. One of their biggest challenges will be fighting an appetite for change, said Genevieve Tellier, a political science professor at the University of Ottawa.

"It's to send a message that it's not the old Liberals that are in power, but they have new ideas and they're a dynamic and efficient and responsible government and they deserve to be re-elected," she said.

That messaging was on display this weekend as 600 Liberals did a mass canvass in 54 ridings, knocking on 60,000 doors to promote their plan.

Polls have suggested they have a long way to go, but Wynne's laser focus on pocketbook issues could still pay off.

One of the latest polls put the Liberals ahead of the Progressive Conservatives, though within the margin of error, and Wynne's own dismal approval rating saw a slight uptick, though still below 20 per cent.

The Campaign Research poll is an outlier right now, but CEO Eli Yufest said announcements such as youth pharmacare, basic income and a balanced budget have helped the Liberals pull ahead in his polling for the first time in a long time.

"The provincial Liberals will not give up without a fight," he said. "There's no doubt that what they're doing, what they're unveiling in terms of policy is resonating among the electorate."

Ambulances

The Canadian Press reports that the province is planning to revamp its ambulance system to redirect some patients with less pressing needs to places other than emergency rooms. The government announced today that its new system would start rolling out in March 2018 and would better prioritize calls based on patient need.

It says more than one million patients were transported by land or air ambulance in 2015, and only one per cent of them were the most critically ill and required immediate emergency transportation. The government says it plans to update the Ambulance Act to allow paramedics to provide on-scene treatment and refer patients to primary care or community care, instead of hospitals, if appropriate. The government says increased flexibility would reduce unnecessary trips to emergency departments, lessening overcrowding and easing wait times. It's estimated that fully implementing the system will take two years.

Benzie Story

Benzie filed a story today reporting a Progressive Conservative vice-president has resigned from the party executive in protest after the appeal of a questionable candidate nomination was denied.

We have included Benzie's story below for your reference:

Tory VP quits in protest of questionable nomination
By ROBERT BENZIE Queen's Park Bureau Chief
Mon., June 5, 2017

A Progressive Conservative vice-president has resigned in protest from the party executive after officials glossed over a questionable nomination amid allegations of ballot-stuffing, the Star has learned.

Robert Elliott quit as the Tories' third vice-president and policy chair after a raucous weekend meeting of PC brass in Toronto, where leader [Patrick Brown](#) was given the power to rubber-stamp contentious candidates.

"It did happen, but with respect to it I have no further comment," Elliott, a consultant with Temple Scott Associates, said Monday from Ottawa.

"I understand you have a job to do and I appreciate that — I know your work — but I don't have any further comment," he said politely.

Conservative insiders said Elliott — a party vice-president for the past nine years and the chief returning officer for the 2015 PC leadership [contest](#) won by Brown — was troubled by shenanigans in Ottawa West-Nepean.

In the May 6 nomination race there, Karma [Macgregor](#) won by 15 votes over runner-up Jeremy Roberts even though there were 28 more ballots in the boxes than had registered.

Roberts, whose formal appeal of the result was rejected by the party executive Saturday, said the contest "contained highly suspect irregularities."

"There were clear indications of fraud undertaken," he said in a statement, noting "the events that transpired here send a very dangerous and potentially damaging message about our cause."

Despite the shambolic nomination in Ottawa — and similar [problems](#) in Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas and Newmarket-Aurora — the party executive opted against holding new contests.

"As you know, there have been concerns raised about due process in a handful of nomination contests. They've elevated quickly," PC Party president Rick Dykstra said in an internal email obtained by the Star.

"Unfortunately there is no procedural answer that will satisfy everyone. Replacing one appellant with another is not productive. There could be endless appeals," he wrote.

"Rather than constantly looking in the rear-view mirror, we simply need to move forward . . ."

Dykstra pointed out that the party is implementing "new processes . . . designed to make nominations and appeals more transparent and fair and to ensure full and fair compliance with established procedures."

These measures include [retaining](#) private-sector auditors PwC to oversee nominations and having a neutral observer from the Tory executive in attendance.

But in a controversial move, the party announced Brown was certifying all 64 nominated Tory [candidates](#) — including Macgregor, the mother of his deputy chief of staff — regardless of the allegations of irregularities.

“Any further process or reconsideration in these 64 ridings is accordingly rendered moot, as these 64 individuals will be our candidates, regardless of any meeting or reconsideration,” wrote Dykstra.

In the same internal party email, Brown strongly endorsed his slate.

“They . . . are all excellent representatives of our party and each one of them will make a fantastic MPP. Even those who have questions about the way certain meetings were run agree that all 64 are excellent candidates. That is not in dispute,” the leader said.

Sources, speaking on background to discuss the high-level deliberations, said that was the last straw for Elliott, who tendered his resignation.

While others on the executive shared his concerns, insiders said they were urged to rally behind Brown.

Polls suggest he could topple Premier Kathleen Wynne’s Liberals in the June 7, 2018, provincial election and the Tories, fresh from winning the Sault Ste. Marie byelection Thursday, do not want to hurt their chances.

Dykstra, for his part, declined to comment on Elliott’s departure other than saying “he has decided to move on from the executive team but he intends to continue on as a hardworking volunteer for our party.”

French, Ethnic and Chinese Media Update

French

The organization #OttawaBilingue published an open letter in TFO to explain its support to Nathalie Des Rosiers’ PMB, a gesture that they have long awaited. They recognize that the PMB, if becomes law, would acknowledge the bilingual character of Ottawa for the first time. They consider it as a big step and are thankful to Nathalie Des Rosiers for it.

Le Droit reports that Madeleine Meilleur will appear before the Senate tonight to defend her nomination to Commissioner of Official Languages in Canada. At the same time, the Société de l’Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick, said they will file a complaint to the Federal Court to block this nomination.

Ethnic

There continues to be extensive coverage of the minimum wage announcement across the board in multicultural outlets. The coverage is generally positive and focuses on the minimum wage increase and other labour law changes that were introduced last week. Hamdard, Punjab Star, and The Weekly Asian Connection are some of the South Asian print outlets that carried the story. The Weekly Asian Connection reports that “Ontario is proposing the largest increase to minimum wage in the province’s history, raising it to \$15 an hour. This will provide more than a quarter of employees in the province a pay increase.”

South Asian, Portuguese and Italian talk radio shows also covered the announcement. Most of the radio shows had extensive discussions with listeners calling in. Though the general consensus is that this is a good idea, many callers were concerned with how small businesses will handle the increase. A main concern is that the cost of the wage increase will increase the purchase price of basic needs, such as groceries.

Chinese

Racism against non-English speaking Chinese raised its ugly head in a Chinese supermarket up north, the dailies reported in their front page or page 2 leads. Reporting from a video post on the internet, the papers said a Western woman on a scooter visited Foodymart (a supermarket Premier Wynne officiated at its opening) at the junction of Steeles and Warden last Friday.

FYI – Quebec announced today it will table cannabis legislation in the fall, after holding extensive public consultations. Public Health Minister Lucie Charlebois said the province will meet with national and international experts before carrying out public hearings across the province.

FYI – After U.S. President Donald Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the Paris climate accord, the mayors of Toronto and Mississauga say cities can and must pick up the slack. In a joint interview on Metro Morning, John Tory and Bonnie Crombie pointed to public transit and local emission reduction plans as powerful tools in the fight against climate change.

FYI – Minister Matthews joined Alan Carter on AM640 today to talk about the end of the session.

FYI – CP24 went live during your press conference today.

FYI – Media have been reporting all day on the Prime Minister's appearance on 'Live with Kelly and Ryan'. Trudeau talked about his "sex appeal", his thoughts on Canada's relationship with the U.S., and how he'd like to see a woman lead the country.

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

Kate, Jenn, Gurvinder and Ronan