

Queen's Park Today – Election Report May 15, 2018

Day 7: Today on the campaign trail.....	1
Topics of Conversation	4
Today's events	5
News from the campaign trail.....	5

Quotation of the day

“I’m also not willing to stand back and say, ‘the NDP shares somewhat of a value system with us, so we’re not going to ask questions about whether what they’re saying they can do, they can actually do.’ That’s irresponsible. This is an election campaign.”

Liberal leader Kathleen Wynne tells reporters that despite being closely aligned with the New Democrats on policy, her party will continue to fact check their platform promises.

Day 7: Today on the campaign trail

Wynne campaign

Ontario Liberal Party leader **Kathleen Wynne** began her day in York Centre with Finance Minister **Charles Sousa** and Treasury Board president **Eleanor McMahon** to discuss what the Liberal Party identified as a \$3 billion miscalculation in the NDP’s budget. Wynne made an unscheduled stop in her rival **Andrea Horwath**’s Hamilton Centre to campaign with Liberal candidate **Deirdre Pike** and long-time Hamilton-region MPP **Ted McMeekin**.

Wynne was then off to Kitchener-Waterloo to meet with supporters in the new riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler at Carpenters’ Local 785 and speak in Kitchener Centre, the riding currently held by Tourism, Culture and Sport Minister **Daiene Vernile**.

On Tuesday, Wynne will make a morning announcement at “Internet of Things” company eleven-x in NDP MPP **Catherine Fife**’s riding of Waterloo. She will make a second announcement in the afternoon at marketing firm sagecomm, located in **Deb Matthews**’ former riding of London North Centre.

In the evening, Wynne will head to the riding of Guelph, another riding recently vacated by a senior Liberal, **Liz Sandals**, to visit Wellington Brewery.

Ford campaign

PC leader **Doug Ford** met with reporters at the Marriott On the Falls hotel in Niagara Falls Monday morning alongside Niagara Falls-area PC candidates **Chuck McShane** and **Sam Oosterhoff** to discuss the Tory's plan to cut regulations as a way of stimulating business growth.

In the afternoon, Ford travelled to Oosterhoff's Niagara West riding to tour packaging company Stanpac before meeting supporters in Liberal candidate **Jim Bradley**'s long-held riding of St. Catharines. Ford ended the day with a rally in Niagara Falls, a riding currently represented by the NDP's **Wayne Gates**.

On Tuesday, Ford will hold another rally outside of the Hydro One shareholders' annual general meeting in downtown Toronto. Expect the PC leader to use the opportunity to repeat his call for "\$6-million man" CEO **Mayo Schmidt** to resign.

Horwath campaign

On Monday, NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** announced her party's plan to expand the Peel Memorial Centre into a fully fledged hospital. The Peel Memorial Centre, a lightening rod for hospital overcrowding complaints, is located in the new riding of Brampton South, a riding last held in 1999 by PC cabinet minister **Tony Clement** before it was absorbed by nearby ridings.

In the afternoon, Horwath toured a dairy farm in PC MPP **Monte McNaughton**'s riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex before holding a health care focused town hall in Sarnia—Lambton, a riding currently held by PC MPP **Bob Bailey**.

On Tuesday, Horwath will overlap with Premier Wynne when she also makes an announcement in London North Centre, before heading to Brantford—Brant for a campaign stop in Paris, part of the riding once held by Speaker **Dave Levac**. Horwath ends her day with a town hall in Kitchener Centre, the southwestern Ontario riding currently held by Tourism, Culture and Sport Minister **Daiene Vernile**.

Liberals battle NDP over budget numbers

Flanked by Finance Minister **Charles Sousa** and Treasury Board president **Eleanor McMahon** at a campaign stop in North York, Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** accused the New Democrats Monday of building their platform around a "significant and undeniable error" that would omit roughly \$3 billion in funding for programs and services.

NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** "presented a platform, inviting people to judge them, using this as a blueprint for governing," Sousa told reporters. "But when you look closely, it fails to meet that standard. The NDP built their platform and their entire economic plan for the province on a major mistake. A significant, sizeable, and undeniable mistake."

According to documents released by the Liberals comparing the NDP platform to the Liberals' 2018 budget, the New Democrats confused the government's 2017 spending numbers with the new funding commitments in the 2018 spring budget.

At issue is whether the funding discrepancies between the parties should be considered "cuts," as the Liberals attest, or whether the NDP has just chosen to allot future spending differently than the government. Affected programs include apprenticeship training; investments to help seniors stay in their homes longer; post-secondary STEM programming; and increases to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

"I think that this is about the NDP making a mistake," Wynne told reporters. "It's not about a value system. I think that the NDP believes that the things that they've left out are important, but the fact is they're not included in their plan, and there's no way when you look at their plan to be able to discern how they would pay for them. That's the difference between what we're saying and what they're saying."

The New Democrats quickly [shot back](#) that the accounting difference revealed by the Liberals was "no mistake," saying the differences in funding priorities can simply be attributed to a fundamentally different vision for the province. "It's all there in black, white and orange," said a NDP press release that accused Wynne of "fear mongering."

Line-by-line, the NDP [rebutted](#) the Liberal claims, saying its platform promises hundreds of millions in funding for apprenticeships, women's shelters, combating the opioid crisis and supports for autism services. "Wynne's pathetic attempt to discredit the NDP only reminds Ontarians how badly they've been let down by her."

Ford promises red tape reduction to foster business growth

Overlooking Niagara Falls and a large truck reading "Open for Business" in LED lights, PC leader **Doug Ford** expanded Monday on his commitment to cut regulations in order to stop Ontario job-creators from fleeing to the United States.

"Instead of picking winners and losers we're going to lower business taxes for everyone, we're going to stabilize business hydro rates, we're going to cut red tape and we're going to bring good jobs back home," he said. Ford also claimed U.S. manufacturers in Buffalo and upstate New York have been "bragging" about having taken more than 2,000 jobs from Ontario workers in recent years.

A key part of the PC job-creation plan is cutting red tape, including what Ford called the "staggering" figure of 380,000 regulations currently governing Ontario companies. "That's unacceptable," he said. "That's going to stop."

Ford also said that, if elected, he would expand the Small Business Access Initiative and create a "one window" business portal to make it easier for businesses to navigate Ontario's regulatory system.

Ford's comment about the government "picking winners and losers" is aimed at the Liberal government's years of corporate welfare, which has awarded hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to companies through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund and other regional funds.

The Liberals were quick to remind Ford that Stanpac, the food packaging company he visited Monday afternoon, was a recent recipient of \$4.5 million in FedDev Ontario funding as part of a \$45 million expansion project that created 50 jobs in southwestern Ontario. The kind of "corporate welfare" that Ford has long railed against is responsible for creating more than one million jobs since 2003, the Liberals claim.

The New Democrats, meanwhile, warned that Ford's pledge to halt the proposed minimum wage increase to \$15 per hour in January 2019 will take \$1,100 out of the pockets of the workers that Ford shook hands with at Stanpac.

"Doug Ford doesn't believe 1.7 million Ontarians deserve to be paid a living wage," NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** said in a statement. "Instead he would rather give corporate tax cuts to wealthy businesses like his own. His plan to stop the increase in the minimum wage will leave minimum wage workers worse off — a lot worse off."

Topics of Conversation

- Women now make up [more than half](#) of all candidates in the NDP and Green Party rosters. While 56 per cent of NDP candidates for the June 7 election are women, the Greens are running a slate of candidates that is 52 per cent female. For the Liberals that figure is 46 per cent, while the Tories are running just 32 per cent female candidates.
- Toronto Real Estate Board president **Tim Syrianos** is accusing Ontario Real Estate Association head **Tim Hudak** of politicizing the real estate organization and the issue of home affordability in the GTA. Hudak, a former leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservatives, has overseen OREA's creation of the "**Ontario Realtor Party**," an imaginary, 70,000-member political party that advocates for home ownership in provincial politics.
 - In a letter [obtained](#) by *The Canadian Press*, Syrianos also expresses concern about OREA's recently launched "Keep the Dream Alive" campaign that spoke openly about the unaffordability of homes for young people in the GTA.
 - "The negative tone reflected in the recently released commercial could have psychological consequences for consumers and could provoke further unwarranted negative government intervention," Syrianos wrote, warning Hudak to "stay in your lane" and promote the province's housing market overall.
- Ontario, Quebec and California will hold their second joint carbon auction of 2018 on Tuesday.

Today's events

May 15 at 8:50 a.m. — Waterloo
Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** will make an announcement at eleven-x.

May 15 at 9:30 a.m. — Toronto
PC leader **Doug Ford** will hold a rally outside of the Hydro One shareholders' Annual General Meeting at 33 Dundas Street West.

May 15 at 9:30 a.m. — London
NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will make an announcement at Innovation Works London.

May 15 at 1:30 p.m. — Paris
NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will hold a campaign event.

May 15 at 2:20 p.m. — London
Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** will make an announcement at sagecomm.

May 15 at 5 p.m. — Guelph
Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** will visit Wellington Brewery.

May 15 at 6 p.m. — Kitchener
NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will hold a town hall at Open Sesame.



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News from the campaign trail

- NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** told reporters she has “[no interest](#)” in working with Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** to form a coalition government should the Tories win a minority government on election day.
- Lambton—Kent—Middlesex Liberal candidate **Ryan O’Hagan** has [dropped](#) out of the election race, citing “personal reasons entirely out of my control.” O’Hagan would have run against Tory MPP **Monte McNaughton**.

Horwath promises new Brampton hospital

NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** was in Brampton Monday to announce her party's plan to expand the Peel Memorial Centre health care facility into a full hospital, if elected.

"After 15 years of Liberal governments, the long waits in Brampton have gotten worse and worse, while the number of patients left on gurneys in hallways has grown," Horwath said in a [statement](#).

"And **Doug Ford** and the Conservatives have promised to cut more than \$6 billion across the board, and privatize as many services as they can," a move she said would increase wait times and crowd local hospitals even more.

According to the NDP, 4,352 patients at the Brampton Civic Hospital, the only other hospital in the fast-growing city, were treated in hallways in 2016-17.

In November, then Health and Long-Term Care Minister **Eric Hoskins** acknowledged the overcrowding by [adding](#) 37 new beds to Peel Memorial. Hoskins' expansion came one week after Brampton Mayor **Linda Jeffrey**, herself a former Liberal cabinet minister, wrote an [open letter](#) to the Liberal government asking that overcrowding at Brampton Civic Hospital be addressed immediately.

"People in Brampton — including health care workers, members of council, and health care experts — have been raising alarm bells about the crisis in area hospitals for years," Horwath said. "So let's do something about it."

Schreiner unveils platform focused on clean tech, poverty reduction and transit

Green Party of Ontario leader **Mike Schreiner** was at Queen's Park Monday to release his party's [nine-point platform](#) heading into the June 7 election. The document, which is divided into three categories — jobs, people and planet — aims to create jobs in the cleantech sector while reducing poverty through broad changes to social assistance.

On the job creation front, Schreiner is promising to boost cleantech jobs and lower payroll taxes to support small businesses, all while helping companies become more energy efficient to save on electricity.

When it comes to societal issues, the GPO is proposing to require new housing developments to contain at least 20 per cent affordable housing; to add mental health services to OHIP's coverage mandate; and to expand the basic income pilot to all Ontarians currently receiving payments through Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

On the planet, the Greens aim to expand the Greenbelt to protect more prime agricultural land and source water supplies; invest \$35 billion in public transit over four years; and put Ontario on a path towards a green energy future.

Parts of the platform would be paid for by cancelling the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan, while implementing a 1.5 per cent increase to the corporate tax rate and a one per cent tax increase on Ontario's highest earners. The Greens are also proposing a series of land valuation charges, parking levies and road tolls, including on all 400-series highways in the GTA, to pay for transit plans and poverty reduction initiatives.

"I'm going to follow what the economists, the business leaders, and the various experts say we have to do in order to raise the money to fund transit," Schreiner told reporters. "I believe voters are tired of the rhetoric. They're tired of the fairyland that our politicians seem to live in where we can spend, spend, spend and not talk about how to pay for it."