

Hansard: Brown to Premier -- Hydro Advertising

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the **Premier**. By now, everyone has seen or heard the taxpayer-funded Liberal advertisement. So, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the **Premier**, through you, Mr. Speaker, when will the **Premier** stop using taxpayer dollars to advertise for the Liberal party of Ontario?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would say to the leader of the opposition, I do understand why he's taking this particular tack in his questioning, Mr. Speaker, because he doesn't have a plan to reduce people's electricity bills. We do have a plan, Mr. Speaker. And that plan will cut people's electricity bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker, by summer. 17% on top of the 8%, Mr. Speaker. And if you are a low-income person in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, or you live in a rural or remote area under Hydro One and a number of other distribution companies, Mr. Speaker, your reduction could be 40 to 50%. Absolutely. That those -- those particular residents. Struggling with their electricity bills to an even larger extent. So we have a plan, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to move forward and implement it.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. The **Premier** speculates why we're raising this issue. Mr. Speaker, using taxpayer dollars to advertise for the Liberal party is wrong. That's why we're bringing it up. It is wrong. The **Premier** knows it is wrong. The Liberals have a fascinating talking point. They say they have to run these Liberal vanity ads so they can use this information to tell people how to manage their budgets. But for 13 years, they raised hydro bills 400%, did they ever run ads saying sorry, we're raising hydro rates 400%? You need to manage your budget? Not for a second. This is about one thing and only one thing and that's selling the Liberal party using taxpayer dollars to do so. It's wrong. My question is, Speaker, to the **Premier** -- you know it's wrong. Do the right thing. Stop running these ads.

>> **Premier Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not speculating on why the member's asking the question. I know exactly why he's asking the question because, Mr. Speaker, if he had a plan, he'd be pushing his plan. He'd be putting his -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So the other part of our plan, which is a real plan, which we are going to move forward to implement, is that we will hold rate increases to inflation for the next four years. So this is not about putting in place a reduction and then not holding those rates. Finally we're creating a \$200 million affordability fund for people who want to make investments -- And aren't able to do that.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the **Premier**. Yesterday the Attorney General alleged that they had strengthened the legislation to provide clear definition of partisan advertising. What auditor general say about this? She said I quote -- we caution when the government changed the law in 2015 that it was opening the door to spending taxpayer money on ads that appear partisan. And then the auditor general said -- sure enough the government walked right through that open door that they created. Clearly the Liberals are using a loophole they created to abuse taxpayer dollars. That's what it's about. They can do all the

talking points they want. They can say they strengthened the laws or about budgeting. They created a loophole. They're driving a truck through t.as' abusive of taxpayer dollars. It's wrong Mr. Speaker, will the **Premier** stop running these ads?

>> **Premier Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, we created the legislation. We put the legislation in place in the first place because Mike Harris's face was all over advertising consistently, Mr. Speaker. But let me tell you about the other part of our plan, Mr. Speaker, which again is a real plan that is going to reduce people's electricity prices, which is the issue that we are dealing with in this province because we have made huge investments. We are in a situation where we have a clean electricity grid, Mr. Speaker, clean air because they're shutting down the coal-fired plants but there's a cost associated with that. So the other part of our plan, Mr. Speaker, is we are removing delivery charges from all on-reserve first nation residential consumer groups, Mr. Speaker. And that is a huge issue at some of the leadership and first nations have said. This will be a huge amount to deal with electricity poverty on reserves, Mr. Speaker. It's a very important step forward.

N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.