

REACTION TO THE 2017 BUDGET

Newspapers Surveyed: Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, National Post, Toronto Sun

11:00 PM Edition Television Broadcasts Surveyed: CFTO, City, Global, CBC, CHCH, CJOH, CKWS, CKVR, CKCO, CFPL, MCTV, CKPR

Categories: Balanced Budget, Basic Income, Child Care, Deficit, Education, Finance, Health, Housing, Revenue Tools (Taxes), Transit, Other, Opposition

BALANCED BUDGET

Negative

Editorial, Toronto Sun, "Chef Sousa's in Hell's Kitchen," page A18

- No matter how much the Liberals try to dress up what they say is their first "balanced budget" since 2008, you can't put lipstick on a pig.
- The pig is the staggering public debt the Liberals have racked up since taking power in 2003, now at \$311.9 billion.
- But as PC finance critic Vic Fedeli pointed out Thursday, through sleight-of-hand, the Liberals are actually using this money to meet their daily operating expenses.
- Small wonder Ontario's finances under the Liberals are a train wreck and the government they lead is the world's most indebted sub-sovereign (non national) borrower.

Lorrie Goldstein, Columnist, Toronto Sun, "Liberals hiding their deficit," page A6

- Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown rightly called Wynne's budget a "Hail Mary pass" Thursday, cooked up by a Liberal government desperately trying to clean up the financial mess it's made of the province's books for the past 14 years, in time for next year's election
- Brown said that despite Wynne's claim of a balanced budget - the first since 2008 - the Liberals are actually hiding a \$5-billion operating deficit
- Public debt is simply deferred tax hikes and service cuts to be paid by future generations - our children and grandchildren - who will pay tomorrow for the reckless spending of Ontario's Liberals today

Shawn Jeffords, Piling On The Debt; Liberals to increase borrowing to cover \$145B budget, "article title," page A6

- Ontario's Liberal government plans to finance next year's election spending spree with millions in new debt.

BASIC INCOME

Mixed

Jennefer Laidley, *Income Security Advocacy Centre, Toronto Star*, "Welfare improving, but not enough," page A13.

- These increases will really matter in terms of creating resilience and ensuring people don't have to be destitute before qualifying for support, and they are welcome changes. But government also needs to recognize that it hasn't done nearly enough to address the deep poverty that people on social assistance continue to experience, particularly those who don't work and don't have family who can help them.

CHILD CARE

Positive

Matt Lundy and Tom Cardoso, *Globe and Mail*, "Budget Highlights: 10 Things You Need To Know," page A10

- The Ontario Liberals will spend more than \$200-million over the next fiscal year to increase the accessibility and affordability of licensed child care

Negative

Andrea Mrozek, *Director Family Care Cardus, CITY*, 11:40 PM

- Between 2009 and 2017 you see a 90 percent increase. If we remove the first three months of 2017 because it's incomplete then you still see a 45 percent increase. Only really helping one type of care situation and it's not the care situation parents prefer. So I think it's missing the mark by a long shot.

Mixed

Giorgio Mammoliti, *Toronto City Councillor, CITY*, 11:40 PM

- If you give people subsidies they're a little happier because they can take it towards child care and find the provider that they want.

DEFICIT

Negative

Nathan Denette, *Columnist, National Post*, "Balanced budget won't matter a whit," page A8.

- So while Kathleen Wynne's government is boasting of a "balanced budget" this year, the reality is that public borrowing will increase by another \$10 billion - on top of the \$180 billion the Liberals have already added to the debt to date.

Shawn Jeffords, *Piling On The Debt; Liberals to increase borrowing to cover \$145B budget*, "article title," page A6

- Ontario's Liberal government plans to finance next year's election spending spree with millions in new debt.

Toronto Sun, "5 Things To Know," page A7

- The province may have eliminated the deficit in the 2017-18 budget, but net debt continues to grow

Beneisen and Charleslammam, Analysts with the Fraser Institute, Column, Toronto Sun, "Budget opens spending tap, drowns Ontarians in more debt," page A7

- But a deeper look at the numbers beyond this year's operating bottom line shows the Wynne government has thrown any semblance of spending restraint to the wind, with the consequence being billions of dollars in new debt to be placed on the shoulders of future generations
- The province's net debt burden has approximately doubled over the past decade and there's no end to debt accumulation in sight, as the government plans to load up the province with new debt from debt-financed capital spending in the years ahead
- But the bigger picture shows a lack of spending restraint and continued growth in provincial government debt that will be passed along to future generations of Ontarians

Antonella Artuso, Columnist, Toronto Sun, "Balanced or not, Ontario budget has still grown," page A8

- They'd rather you not look at the actual charts that show how much is coming in and how much is coming out
- That's a \$7.2-billion increase, which is a lot of money to tack on to a province with notoriously shoddy financial health. It's 5.5% of the total budget
- That's \$200 million that can be put toward something else, regardless of your political leanings and policy priorities. The long-term goal should be to keep bringing that number down even more

Karl Baldauf, Vice-President of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Globe and Mail, "Ontario bets strong economy will keep budget balanced ;Sousa dismisses concerns that forecast, based on robust U.S. demand and soaring tax revenue, is too rosy," page A1

- With U.S. President Donald Trump demanding major changes to NAFTA and Brexit looming in Europe, the province's forecasts are likely too optimistic, according to Karl Baldauf
- "There are reasons to be cautious based on the comments made by Donald Trump. That's why projecting to be at zero with no deficit and no surplus over the next three years, we see a lot of uncertainty around that," Mr. Baldauf told The Globe.

Justin Giovannetti, Globe and Mail, "Ontario bets strong economy will keep budget balanced ;Sousa dismisses concerns that forecast, based on robust U.S. demand and soaring tax revenue, is too rosy," page A1

- Ontario has balanced its budget for the first time in a decade, pouring billions into health care and other social spending while wagering that a fast-growing economy propped up by strong U.S. demand will keep the province's books in the black through next year's election
- The flow of new spending comes as Ms. Wynne's approval rating has tumbled close to the single digits in recent months and polls show widespread dissatisfaction with her government

Mixed

David Parkinson, Globe and Mail, "Balanced budget is laudable, but where's the plan to tackle debt?," page B1

- [...]But the deficit for the just-completed 2016-17 fiscal year came in at a tiny \$1.5-billion, and the government is budgeting for a balance not only for this fiscal year, but also for the two years after that.
- Much more significant, though, is the terrific run of economic luck that has paved the path to this budget balance: Years of low interest rates; a booming housing market; a weak

dollar that has helped exporters; and strong growth in the United States, the province's chief export market.

- Mr. Sousa's bet is that the government's continued use of debt now to invest in infrastructure, while its budget is under control and borrowing costs are near historic lows, will enhance the economy's productivity in future years to offset the looming demographic drag and spur enough growth to keep the debt manageable. If he's wrong, this may be remembered by future generations as the time Ontario had a chance to deal with its debt problem in a concrete way, but instead kicked the can down the road

EDUCATION

Mixed

Gayle McFadden, Canadian Federation of Students, Toronto Star, "Kick-start' fund aims to get students on-the-job experience, but critics say overall cost of education not addressed by new measures," page A12.

- The theme that we've seen is that while these new programs are exciting for some students, we need to address the overall cost of education and recognize that, in Ontario, students pay the highest fees in the entire country.

FINANCE

Negative

Bob Neale, CHCH , 11:08 PM

- We've had record low interest rates for a long period of time. When you look at the information in the budget document, they note they've been able to prudently manage their interest expense in that the interest cost for the last several years has been in fact less than what they expected it to be. At some point in time, it's going to be more than what they expect it to be and that's the problem with having accumulated debt. It's sort of like having a mortgage on your house and never paying off the principal, but only paying the interest only and then having the interest rates go up and then suddenly you're affected each and every month.

HEALTH

Positive

Editorial, Toronto Star, "Drug plan for young is solid start," page A16.

- This is a big step in the right direction. It's a push toward universal pharmacare, the most glaring gap in Canada's medicare system. Far too many Canadians aren't covered by drug plans and can't afford to fill their prescriptions. The Ontario plan will go further than any other in Canada towards extending drug coverage to all. Something like it is long overdue.

Martin Regg Cohn, Columnist, Toronto Star, "Anxious Liberals come bearing budget gifts," page A1.

- The NDP noted that the government's allocation of \$465 million for pharmacare is mysteriously missing from the budget document... Fair point on pharmacare, but if that's what it takes to get started on free prescription drugs, so be it. The truth is that

pharmacare makes sense on so many levels - medical, ideological and economical - that political will matters more than precise estimates at this point.

Kelly Grant, Globe and Mail, "Ontario Liberals unveil major boost to health-care spending, free prescription drugs for youth in budget;" page A10

- The Wynne government is lifting some of the financial pressure off of Ontario's beleaguered health-care system with a budget that promises the largest health-spending boost in five years and free prescription drugs for all children and youth.
- The centrepiece of the nearly \$53.8-billion health budget is a \$465-million program that will provide free prescription medicine to everyone 24 and under, regardless of their household income or whether they have access to private health insurance through their parents. It's the first program of its kind in Canada.

Anthony Dale, President of the Ontario Hospital Association, Globe and Mail, "Ontario Liberals unveil major boost to health-care spending, free prescription drugs for youth in budget;" page A10

- The 3.1-per-cent increase works out to an additional \$518million for hospitals this year. "It's going to help maintain system stability and help strengthen access at a very, very critical time," Mr. Dale said.

Andrew Pyle, Money Matters , CHEX, 11:02 PM

- We saw heavy focus on healthcare, heavy focus on education. A few surprises on healthcare side they are spending billions of dollars obviously on healthcare initiatives I think the big surprise today was the unveiling of new program whereby people under the age of 25 will now receive free Pharmacare, free drugs covering about 4400 prescription drugs. I think that was big surprise for people. It is great news people across Ontario including Peterborough. I definitely see some initiatives for seniors' specific reference to people with dementia and again Peterborough being a slightly older population related to average of Ontario that is a great news.

Negative

Martin Regg Cohn, Columnist, Toronto Star, "Anxious Liberals come bearing budget gifts," page A1.

- The bigger gap in the government's pharmacare plan is that while completely free, it essentially excludes adults between 25 and 65. That's not just tough luck for middle-aged adults, it's also bad news for the bulk buying benefits that are the hallmark of truly universal pharmacare scaled up to the entire population.

Dr. Kulvinder Gill, Pediatrician and President of Concerned Ontario Doctors, Toronto Sun, "Health-Care Code Blue; 'After gutting system, cosmetic changes not enough'," page A8

- "This is simply a drop in the bucket," Gill said
- She said conspicuously absent was funding to front-line care, especially considering doctors are now in their fourth year without a contract and have been treated like dirt by the Kathleen Wynne Liberals
- "There was lots of smoke and mirrors, a lot of numbers thrown around," Gill said. "Frankly after the gutting of the health-care system, cosmetic changes will not be enough."

Matt Woodward, leg amputated, CKCO, 11:30 PM

- I think that they should up the age because there's a lot of people out there that can't afforded it and they do need to help

Mixed

Martha Friendly, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Toronto Star, "Liberal government earmarks millions to improve the well-being of children across province," page A13.

- I think that putting money into the subsidy systems, where wait-lists are so long, is the right thing to do in the short term

Natalie Mehra, Ontario Health Coalition, Toronto Star, "Prescriptions free for residents 24 and under," page A13.

- We're pushing the country on this issue and it's vital. How does it make sense that you can get your diagnosis publicly covered, but you can't get your treatment publicly covered? What the NDP did last week and what the government has done this week is really make the dream of pharmacare in Canada one giant step closer to reality.

Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition, Toronto Sun, "Health-Care Code Blue; 'After gutting system, cosmetic changes not enough'," page A8

- As for the hype around increasing operating budget funding to hospitals by 3% per year, Mehra said the reinvestment will only barely meet inflation (at 2%) after a "decade of hospital cuts" amounting to billions of dollars
- "There is no money to restore services (from 10 years of cuts)," Mehra said. "What this means is that patients will remain lying on stretchers in hallways and frail seniors will continue to be kicked out of hospitals. "All the suffering we're seeing now will continue," Mehra added.
- Mehra said the only bright spot in the budget is the new pharmacare program, which will give free coverage for "all needed drugs" to everyone 24 and under - a costly manoeuvre (no doubt to win the 18-plus vote) at up to \$500 million a year.

Nav Persaud, a Physician-scientist at St. Michael's Hospital, Globe and Mail, "Ontario Liberals unveil major boost to health-care spending, free prescription drugs for youth in budget;" page A10

- Nav Persaud, a physician-scientist at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, said that research has shown the cost of medications continues to prevent plenty of uninsured Canadians from filling their prescriptions.
- "Even small co-payments and deductibles deter people from appropriately using medication, and it's more likely for families with a lower income. But it's still true for families with moderate incomes," Dr. Persaud said.

HOUSING

Negative

Joe Cressy, Toronto City Councillor, Toronto Star, "No new provincial cash for city's social housing," page A12.

- The complete absence of money for TCHC is a kick in the gut to the city of Toronto and the residents of Toronto Community Housing.

Justin Giovannetti, Globe and Mail, "Ontario bets strong economy will keep budget balanced ;Sousa dismisses concerns that forecast, based on robust U.S. demand and soaring tax revenue, is too rosy," page A1

- The budget won't patch up the Liberal government's rocky relationship with Toronto Mayor John Tory. The spending document provides little new money for affordable housing or infrastructure in the province's largest city.

John, Tory, Mayor of Toronto; Toronto Sun, "Piling On The Debt; Liberals to increase borrowing to cover \$145B budget," page A6

- In a statement, Tory said he was disappointed with the lack of transit and social housing investments in the budget

John Tory, Toronto Mayor, Toronto Star, "No new provincial cash for city's social housing," page A12.

- The provincial government appears to have missed an opportunity to partner in the historic investments made by the federal government in much needed future transit expansion and repairs to our vital social housing.

REVENUE TOOLS (TAXES)

Negative

Antonella Artuso, Columnist, Toronto Sun, "Significant tax breaks MIA," page A7

- The Ontario budget is noteworthy for what's not in it - significant tax breaks at a time when U.S. President Donald Trump is cutting taxes for individuals and businesses

TRANSIT

Negative

John, Tory, Mayor of Toronto; Toronto Sun, "Piling On The Debt; Liberals to increase borrowing to cover \$145B budget," page A6

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John Tory, Toronto Mayor, Toronto Star, "No new provincial cash for city's social housing," page A12.

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OTHER

Positive

Shawn Jeffords, Toronto Sun, "Budget In Broad Strokes," page A6

- \$1.3 billion to reduce waiting times, \$890 million for surgical procedures and \$245 million to improve specialist access.

- Ontario's plan to cut hydro rates by 25% and \$200 million for 24,000 new child-care spaces.

Jim Watson, Ottawa mayor, CJOH, 11:30 PM

- Today's budget is positive news for the residents of Ottawa.

OPPOSITION

Patrick Brown

Toronto Star, "Sousa delivers pre-election tonic for Liberals," page A12

- It's a scam. The numbers do not add up. The Liberals have no plan to get debt under control.

Toronto Star, "Prescriptions free for residents 24 and under," page A13

- Of course, everyone wants greater drug coverage . . . I want to make sure those precious taxpayer dollars are going to the people that really need it," he added. "You've got a millionaire family that has no problem with drug access and you've got kids that desperately need drug treatment that can't get it . . . That doesn't seem right."

National Post, Ontario government promises billions in health-care outlays," page A8

- This budget is a patchwork attempt by a desperate government to fix the mess they've created before the next election. If they lose this next election this is spending they'll never have to be accountable for.

Toronto Sun, "Piling On The Debt; Liberals to increase borrowing to cover \$145B budget," page A6

- "It's a Hail Mary pass by a government that's run the province into the ground for years."
- One-time asset sales, capand-trade revenues, and a "Trudeau trust fund" - in the form of new federal cash - are just a few of the measures the government is using to balance the books, he said
- "This debt does nothing but erode the services Ontario families depend on and place a burden on the future generations that they do not deserve," Brown said

Globe and Mail, "Ontario Liberals unveil major boost to health-care spending, free prescription drugs for youth in budget," page A10

- "Under this plan, [those] precious funds would go to pay for millionaire kids," he said. "That doesn't seem right."

CFTO, 11:06 PM

- Let's be clear... This is not a balanced budget. They are, in fact, running an operational deficit worth more than \$5 billion.

CITY, 11:11 PM

- It is a shell game they're using to hide a \$5 billion operational deficit.

Global, 11:00 PM

- At the end of the day, we have to remember that a Liberal is a Liberal, they always go back to their old ways, and that is what they will do if they win the next election. They are going to raise taxes even higher, cut even more in healthcare.

Global News, 11:02 PM

- This is not a balanced budget. They are in fact running an operation deficit worth more than \$5 billion. They are using every trick in the book to achieve this.

CHCH, 11:00 PM

- The province's debt has more than doubled to \$312 billion since the Liberals took office. This is higher than any province in the country, higher than any province or state in the world. Yet the Liberals have no plan in this budget to get debt under control for the next four years we will pay nearly \$12 billion each year servicing the debt \$one billion a month and each year we are paying \$1 billion more in interest and the debt than we did three years ago. We're spending more servicing the debt each year than spending in all transit and provincial highways.

CHCH, 11:03 PM

- I want to make sure that those precious taxpayer dollars are going to people that really need it and one of the questions asked of the Finance Minister is why should the government be paying for the kids of millionaires?

CHCH, 11:05 PM

- Here is the reality that they don't explain in their budget and it's not only have they closed 600 schools there are 300 more on the chopping block.

Andrea Horwath

Toronto Star, Sousa delivers pre-election tonic for Liberals," page A12

- Ontarians are desperate for change. We didn't get the pharmacare plan that the people of this province deserve.

Toronto Star, Prescriptions free for residents 24 and under," page A13

- Nobody should go to a doctor, get a prescription and then leave that doctor's office holding that prescription knowing that there's no way they're going to fill that.

Toronto Sun, "Piling On The Debt; Liberals to increase borrowing to cover \$145B budget," page A6

- NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said this budget was Premier Kathleen Wynne's chance to turn things around for her government
- The Liberal plan is a "halfmeasure," Horwath said. "It kind of smells a bit like a back of the napkin plan," she said. "This is a very meagre measure that falls far short of what the people of Ontario deserve."

Globe and Mail, "Ontario bets strong economy will keep budget balanced ;Sousa dismisses concerns that forecast, based on robust U.S. demand and soaring tax revenue, is too rosy," page A1

- "This budget doesn't even come close to undoing the damage Kathleen Wynne and her Liberals have done over the last 14 years," she said

CFTO, 11:35 PM

- With this budget the Premier is choosing to look away. She's closing her eyes to what every day families need, what patients need, what young people need.

CITY, 11:11 PM

- On the contrary. Look, if I'm a young person, maybe this will impact me but it won't impact my parents. If I'm a young person like my son who's 24 years old now, this will not have an impact on him whatsoever. This is a very meagre measure that falls short, very short of what the people of Ontario need and deserve.

Global, 11:00 PM

- At it smells like me to another back of the napkin plan that they shoved out the door last minute. It was made clear to us that the best way to get started on a universal Pharmacare plan is to provide an array of medications that are the most commonly prescribed for the most common ailments. That is where you get your biggest bang for the buck.

Global, 11:02 PM

- To be blunt, this budget doesn't even come close to undoing the damage that Kathleen Wynne and her Liberal government have done over the past 14 years.

CHCH, 11:00 PM

- This budget continues to sell off Hydro One and puts our power system even further in to the hands of private and foreign for profit corporations. And while our hospitals are overcrowded, and patients wait for days on stretchers and hallways the announced hospital funding will barely keep up with the rate of inflation. It falls over \$300 million short of what hospitals say they need to maintain services.

CHCH, 11:03 PM

- If I'm a young person, maybe this will impact me, but it won't impact my parents. If I'm a young person like my son whose 24 years old now, this will not have an impact on him whatsoever.

CHCH, 11:05 PM

- Funding 50 percent of transit operating costs and something entirely absent from this budget.

Steve Clark

CKWS, 11:00 PM

- Regardless of how this government spins this budget, Ontarians, I think will see through it. They know over the last fourteen years, life has become harder for families under this Liberal government.

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