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To: Terry Young [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group
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Subject: Queen's Park Update - Thursday, April 13, 2017

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Thursday, April 13, 2017

In the News

Yesterday, Finance Minister **Charles Sousa** acknowledged anger over "bidding wars" in the real estate market and hinted that government action on housing prices will target real estate speculators. Meanwhile, Premier **Kathleen Wynne** told Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) mayors that the government would consider both demand- and supply-side policy prescriptions to address the housing market. The Premier also affirmed that policy prescriptions will aim to "protect the value in people's homes" while "[working to] increase the supply of housing units". PC Leader **Patrick Brown** also acknowledged that there was no "one silver bullet" to deal with the housing issue and urged the government to loosen rules that prevent the construction of new housing supply.

Meanwhile, PC Leader **Patrick Brown** asked Finance Minister **Charles Sousa** create a "long-term plan to get the debt under control". **Brown** noted that total spending on interest payments for Ontario's debt has eclipsed total spending on "post-secondary education, community safety, and five other ministries combined". PC Finance Critic **Vic Fedeli** also argued that debt-servicing charges for the \$300-billion debt will "crowd out" spending on other priorities. In response, Minister **Sousa's** office defended the government's decision to enter a deficit during the global financial crisis and affirmed the province's commitment to a balanced budget.

Education Minister **Mitzie Hunter** announced plans for a four per cent increase in total education spending in the next school year, bringing the province's spending on the school system to \$23.8 billion. Part of the increase will hire more special education teachers and support workers based on local need, while also capping class sizes in full-day kindergarten and grades 4 through 8.

Today, a new poll by Forum Research found that the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party led voter preferences in Toronto, followed by the Ontario Liberals and Ontario New Democrats. Among decided and leaning voters, 38 per cent would cast their ballots for the official opposition, while 31 per cent and 22 per cent would back the Liberals and the NDP respectively.

Opinion Highlights

- The populist versus the wonk in a tale of two premiers. (Martin Regg Cohn, *Toronto Star*)
 - Police oversight isn't broken, it was built this way. (Desmond Cole, *Toronto Star*)
 - Uber can't save Ontario from its transit woes. (John Michael McGrath, *TVO*)
 - Liberals try to fix Toronto's housing market without sinking it. (David Reevely, *Ottawa Citizen*)
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Question Period Highlights (April 13)

Hydro One

- PC Leader **Patrick Brown** noted that there were 10,000 complaints lodged about Hydro One. Brown also criticized the government for not informing the public about the vacancy in the Hydro One ombudsman role.
- Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** said that Hydro One was doing well and it is a customer-focused organization. Minister Thibeault also confirmed that the Ombudsman's Office is operating with an interim Ombudsman while the search for a permanent replacement is underway.
- NDP Deputy Leader **Jagmeet Singh** indicated that museums face high hydro bills yet will not receive relief from the government. **Singh** then accused the government of prioritizing its political agenda over Ontarians' interests.
- Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** replied that the government's Fair Hydro Plan will help everyone, and all ratepayers will see significant electricity cost reductions starting in the summer months.

Judicial training

- PC Leader **Patrick Brown** asked why the government has rejected mandatory sexual assault training for judges. **Brown** speculated that the government did not want to adopt the policy because it was a proposal from PC MPP **Laurie Scott**.

- Premier **Kathleen Wynne** reacted that the government supports sexual assault training for judges but will examine if the province can mandate the practice without interfering with judicial independence.
- Attorney General **Yasir Naqvi** stated that the government should respect judicial independence and examine if the bills were within the scope of government to adopt.

Housing affordability

- NDP Deputy Leader **Jagmeet Singh** stated that renters in the province with homes built after 1991 were completely unprotected from unfair rent increases. Singh implored the government to immediately close the post-1991 "rent control loophole".
- Premier **Kathleen Wynne** replied that the government is looking at all options and will soon unveil a package that will address all challenges in the housing sector, including rent increases.

Today in the Legislature

Government Business

No government business.

Private Members' Business

Bill 109 - An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 and the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 in respect of elevators and elevating device mechanics, second reading. (**Han Dong**; Liberal, Trinity—Spadina)

Committee Meetings

9:00 a.m. - Standing Committee on Justice Policy will meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 89, An Act to enact the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2016, to amend and repeal the Child and Family Services Act

and to make related
amendments to other Acts.

Social Media Snapshot



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Events at a Glance

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Queen's Park Press Gallery Spring Fling

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Hart House, University of Toronto

Monday, May 29, 2017

Health Minister Eric Hoskins will outline the government's vision for transforming health care.

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Canadian Room, Fairmont Royal York Hotel, 100 Front Street West, Toronto

RSVP: <https://www.empireclub.org/events/honourable-eric-hoskins/>

Queen's Park Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Question Period	Question Period Caucus Meeting	Question Period Cabinet Meeting	Question Period Private Members' Business	No Business

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