

Message

From: Energy In The News (ENERGY) [energynews@ontario.ca]
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To: @ENERGY-COMM-Issues_and_MediaRelations [ENERGY-COMM-Issues_and_MediaRelations@msgov.gov.on.ca]; Anderson, Alexandria (OPG) [alexandria.anderson@opg.com]; Armstrong, Hillary (ENERGY) [Hillary.Armstrong@ontario.ca]; Barbaro, Rachel (ENERGY) [Rachel.Barbaro@ontario.ca]; Berg, Denna (ENERGY) [Denna.Berg@ontario.ca]; Bergen, Tom (OPG) [Tom.Bergen@opg.com]; Mary Bernard [/O=IMO/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=Mary Bernard42a]; Berry, James (ENERGY) [James.Berry5@ontario.ca]; Biggs, Megan (ENERGY) [Megan.Biggs@ontario.ca]; Bozzo, John (OEB) [John.Bozzo@ontarioenergyboard.ca]; Buccilli, Lina (OEB) [Lina.Buccilli@ontarioenergyboard.ca]; Tim Butters [/O=IMO/OU=EXtErnal (FYDIBOHF25SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=072ac0faf6f741e2a0c18a1cacaf3f82]; Alexandra Campbell [/O=IMO/OU=MSX1/cn=Recipients/cn=Alexandra Campbell]; Campbell, David (ENERGY) [David.Campbell2@ontario.ca]; John Cannella [/O=IMO/OU=EXtErnal (FYDIBOHF25SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=20db4b5a136d438883367eb6060c2578]; Carson, Cheryl (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI) [Cheryl.Carson@ontario.ca]; Cayley, Daniel (ENERGY) [Daniel.Cayley@ontario.ca]; Chatterjee, Jeet (ENERGY) [Jeet.Chatterjee@ontario.ca]; Coker, Meaghan (ENERGY) [Meaghan.Coker@ontario.ca]; Cooper, Sarah (ENERGY) [Sarah.Cooper@ontario.ca]; Crawford, Paul (OEB) [Paul.Crawford@ontarioenergyboard.ca]; Dade, Christine (ENERGY) [Christine.Dade@ontario.ca]; Andrew Dow [/O=IMO/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=Dowa]; Dykxhoorn, Sandra (OPG) [Sandra.Dykxhoorn@opg.com]; Esdaile, Trevor (ENERGY) [Trevor.Esdaile@ontario.ca]; Evans, Karen (OEB) [Karen.evans@ontarioenergyboard.ca]; Chuck Farmer [/O=IMO/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=Chuck Farmerfa1]; Feather, Adam (ENERGY) [Adam.Feather@ontario.ca]; Gibbs, Diana (ENERGY) [Diana.Gibbs@ontario.ca]; Gruetzner, Ted (OPG) [Ted.Gruetzner@opg.com]; Hill, Allyson (ENERGY) [Allyson.Hill@ontario.ca]; Ho, Larissa (ENERGY) [Larissa.Ho@ontario.ca]; Hume, Steen (ENERGY) [Steen.Hume@ontario.ca]; Imbrogno, Serge (ENERGY) [Serge.Imbrogno@ontario.ca]; Imlay, Patrick (ENERGY) [Patrick.Imlay@ontario.ca]; Johnson, Paul (ENERGY/MEDEI/MRI) [Paul.Johnson3@ontario.ca]; Kacaba, Jennifer (ENERGY) [Jennifer.Kacaba@ontario.ca]; Katona, Keley (ENERGY) [Keley.Katona@ontario.ca]; Kelly, Neal (OPG) [Neal.Kelly@opg.com]; Kinapen, Donna (OEB) [Donna.Kinapen@ontarioenergyboard.ca]; Kitchen, Matthew (ENERGY) [Matthew.Kitchen@ontario.ca]; Kovesfalvi, Sylvia (OEB) [Sylvia.Kovesfalvi@ontarioenergyboard.ca]; Landmann, Peter (ENERGY) [Peter.Landmann@ontario.ca]; Lars Hansen [Lars.Hansen@ontarioenergyboard.ca]; Latto-Hall, Arla (ENERGY) [Arla.Latto-Hall@ontario.ca]; Lazakis, Chloe (ENERGY) [Chloe.Lazakis@ontario.ca]; Jane Leckey [/O=IMO/OU=EXtErnal (FYDIBOHF25SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=e6d8e8002e2d4e27ace9fa4c15df6606]; Leung, Thomas (MOF) [Thomas.Leung@ontario.ca]; Lindsay, Ken (ENERGY) [Ken.Lindsay@ontario.ca]; Linington, Brenda (MOI) [Brenda.Linington@ontario.ca]; Mackie, Richard (OPG) [Richard.Mackie@opg.com]; Maguire, Lauren (ENERGY) [Lauren.Maguire@ontario.ca]; McGoey, Eric (ENERGY) [Eric.McGoey@ontario.ca]; McGrath, Jessica (ENERGY) [Jessica.McGrath@ontario.ca]; Montgomery, Kaitlin (MOF) [Kaitlin.Montgomery@ontario.ca]; Naveed, Fatima (ENERGY) [SOM.Fatima.Naveed@ontario.ca]; Nikolaichuk, Colin (ENERGY) [Colin.Nikolaichuk@ontario.ca]; Nelms, Scott (MOF) [Scott.Nelms@ontario.ca]; O'Donnell, Cheryl (ENERGY) [som.Cheryl.O'Donnell@ontario.ca]; O'Riordan, Eamon (ENERGY) [Eamon.O'Riordan@ontario.ca]; Pagel, Alexa (ENERGY) [Alexa.Pagel@ontario.ca]; Pelkey, Bryan (ENERGY) [Bryan.Pelkey@ontario.ca]; Jordan Penic [/O=IMO/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=Penicj]; Pitkeathly, Doreen (ENERGY) [Doreen.Pitkeathly@ontario.ca]; Poirier, Linda (ENERGY) [Linda.Poirier@ontario.ca]; Rehob, James (ENERGY) [James.Rehob@ontario.ca]; Reid, Michael (ENERGY) [Michael.Reid@ontario.ca]; Rowe, Jennifer (OPG) [Jennifer.Rowe@opg.com]; Ruttan, Craig (ENERGY) [Craig.Ruttan@ontario.ca]; Sermat-Harding, Kaili (ENERGY) [Kaili.Sermat-Harding@ontario.ca]; Shear, Dan (ENERGY) [Dan.Shear@ontario.ca]; Simmons, Valerie (ENERGY) [Valerie.Simmons@ontario.ca]; Spence Lair, Marlo (ENERGY) [Marlo.SpenceLair@ontario.ca]; Spence, Marcia (ENERGY) [Marcia.Spence@ontario.ca]; Stoiko, Andrea (ENERGY) [Andrea.Stoiko@ontario.ca]; Sweet, Edward (ENERGY) [Edward.Sweet@ontario.ca]; Syed, Usman (ENERGY) [Usman.Syed@ontario.ca]; Teliszewsky, Andrew (ENERGY) [Andrew.Teliszewsky@ontario.ca]; Thompson, Erin (ENERGY) [Erin.Thompson@ontario.ca]; Todd, Brian (MOI) [Brian.Todd@ontario.ca]; Tretiakov, Ilia (ENERGY) [Ilia.Tretiakov@ontario.ca]; Visheau, Vanessa (ENERGY) [Vanessa.Visheau@ontario.ca]; Waddell, Colleen (MOF) [Colleen.Waddell@ontario.ca]; Wall, Vanda (OEB) [Vanda.Wall@ontarioenergyboard.ca]; Whittington, Matt (ENERGY) [Matt.Whittington@ontario.ca]; Wright, Lindsay (ENERGY) [Lindsay.Wright@ontario.ca]; Yadav, Saurabh (ENERGY) [Saurabh.Yadav@ontario.ca]; Terry Young [/O=IMO/OU=MSX1/cn=Recipients/cn=Terry Young]
Subject: MEDIA EVENT: MINISTERS' PRE-CAUCUS SCRUMS
Attachments: March 28 - Ministers' Pre-Caucus Scrums.doc

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Energy Content Highlighted

MEDIA EVENT: MINISTERS' PRE-CAUCUS SCRUMS

March 28, 2017

Location:

Outside Cabinet Meeting Room, Legislature

Speakers:

Ministers Thibeault; Matthews; Hoskins; Sousa; PC Leader Brown; PC MPP MacLaren; NDP Leader Horwath

Media Attendance:

Print – 12

TV – 7

Radio – 0

Media Outlets:

Jones – CP; Smith Cross – CP; Benzie – Star; Ferguson – Star; Rushowy – Star; Cohn – Star; Globe; Jeffords – Sun; Zochodne – QP Briefing; Nanji – QP Briefing; Crawley – CBC Radio/TV; Brule – Radio Canada/CJBC; Global; Golding – CTV Ontario; Rath – CHCH Television; Tumelty – City TV; Wu – Fairchild TV; Fortin-Gauthier – TFO; Cruickshank – iPolitics; Smith – QP Today

Media Questions:

Minister Thibeault:

Q: Zochodne: Hydro One just tabled its financial statements, it is getting ready for its annual shareholder meeting. It showed that the CEO collected about \$4.5M in total compensation; pension, stocks, incentives; is that the right move right now when your government is going about trying to reduce hydro rates to have the CEO of the province's main transition company making out pretty well for himself in all this?

So it's a publicly traded company now and so you know the shareholders involved in this will have to judge where they see their CEO taking the company. They are a better run company since we've brought forward the IPO. We've seen you know with the disconnections, they are really focusing on customer service and you know they are a better run company in terms of you know with getting their financials in order, they have to do this as a requirement under the Ontario Securities Commission.

Q: Zochodne: But it is out of touch to pay someone that money and when people people are trying to scrape by on their hydro bills?

The one thing that you know I look at is our you know our fair hydro plan is bringing forth that 25 percent reduction. So you know people won't have to worry about as you're saying, scrapping by. We recognize that some people are having difficulty with their hydro bills but when it comes to Hydro One, the Ontario's Security Commission now requires that they get their finances in order to publicly disclose all of those abuses.

Q: Zochodne: And for the record you're still committed to going through with the other 30 percent sell off of Hydro One?

So nothing's changed.

Q: Ferguson: Just a quickie on Andrea Horwath's plan for Hydro. She's saying in the House today that people have to stay up late to do their laundry. Now it's my understanding that time of use rates get cheap at 7:00 p.m. So...

Yep.

Q: Ferguson: Does she understand timing?

Well that's part of what I think you know the NDP's proposal. I'm not even calling it a plan anymore because there's not much to it. You know there's some possible maybe groups that will get together and we'll look at trying to find savings in the futures. They talk about the time of use plan. And while I do recognize that you know the time of use can you know be looked at because I have talked about in speeches that I know you've attended. You know how a single condo dweller

and the seniors living in Sudbury for example are on the same retail price plan. We can evolve that but the time of use plan actually saves us all money. It conserves power and obviously to me she has no idea how the system works because again they keep talking about Hydro One and buying back shares which will only spend billions of dollars buying that back and not remove one cent, not one single penny off of anyone's bills.

Q: Ferguson: Is it helpful though when a leader of the opposition gives out misleading information about ... Tim Hudak used to do the same thing saying people would have to stay up 'till midnight to do their laundry. Or whenever when the cheaper rates apply at 7.

The cheaper rates apply at seven. You know time of use, there's mid peak as well. And so you know one of the things that we continue to do is we have to counter those, you know that that information that's not accurate and make sure that people know the facts and that's what we've been doing.

Q: Zochodne: When are you going to table the legislation that backs up the Fair Hydro plan?

So we're still working with our lawyers and all of the experts to make sure what it's going to be legislation or what's going to be regulation so obviously as soon as we can.

Q: Zochodne: Is it going to be in the budget, sort of in the budget, after the budget or pre-budget?

We're still working on trying to get all those details done you know.

Q: Ferguson: So it might not be in April? Wait until May?

Well it's got to be soon. That's the one thing I can tell you because we are committed to the summer timeline so to ensure that we can get this done done by then is paramount. Thanks everyone.

Questions for Minister Matthews:

Q: Rushowy: (Joined in progress) his comment about zero tolerance being dangerous, what do you think about that?

Well this is a throwback to another era where misogynist opinions were the norm and I just think that this isn't the first time for Jack MacLellan and we're seeing a real pattern. Obviously these are comments that no one in our caucus would consider making. So I think Patrick Brown has to deal with the rogue members of his caucus who continue to be a throwback to an era that frankly I thought was behind us.

Q: Nanji: Do you think Jack MacLaren needs more sensitivity training? Did he learn his lesson?

Clearly not, I mean he did have to take sensitivity training after he made those outrageous comments at an earlier event. So that sensitivity training doesn't work either. I don't know if there is such a thing as remedial sensitivity training. But I think it is a really deep problem. And you'll notice that while most of the caucus stood up to support the notion of zero tolerance, not all members stood.

Q: Smith Cross: Is there is a basic trend here with Cambridge Club, the (inaudible) comment, this?

Sure looks like that to me. I mean this is this is a pattern.

Q: Smith Cross: is this part of a strategy on your part to ensure people outside Queen's Park know about them?

I think people have a right to know what the attitudes within that party are.

Q: Smith Cross: So this is an intentional strategy?

I think it's our job to point out the problems that exist.

Q: Rushowy: What do you think Patrick Brown needs to do now?

He had to deal with it. This is as I say this is not the first time when that particular caucus member. As I say other members of his caucus did not stand up to support the notion of zero tolerance. He has to figure out how to deal with that. I'm not going to give him advice on how to deal with his caucus. But what I can tell you our caucus that would be simply unacceptable. It would not, it would not be, it would not happen. It would be dealt with.

Q: Smith Cross: With the Cambridge Club incident. It turns out Patrick Brown isn't speaking at the Cambridge Club, he is speaking at the athletic club (Inaudible). Did you misstep there?

We can split hairs if you want. The Cambridge Club is a men and men only club and they are the ones who have organized this event. So you know I think it just shows poor judgment. Thank you.

Questions for Minister Hoskins:

Q: Tumelty: medical studies have been done with the development of a teenagers mind. When is it safe for them to smoke drugs?

Well I'm glad you're asking me that question. You know, as the federal government works towards drafting their legislation, which we expect shortly - and that will provide important guidance and information to the province as we develop our strategy alongside. My focus as Minister of Health has and will be on harm reduction and safety; and there is clear evidence that that young brains. Take time to develop, and that consumption of marijuana at a young age can have negative impacts on the proper maturity and growth of the

Q: Tumelty: What have those studies shown for age?

Well, you know, there is, I think, some debate in the scientific community and in the health community in terms of what an appropriate restriction might be, or a cut off. It's difficult to, I think, establish that precisely without looking at all of that evidence. I'm confident that the federal government is doing that, and I would imagine that in their legislation they will articulate what they believe is a minimum age for safe consumption.

Q: Tumelty: Is 19 too young?

Well, you know, I'm not going to declare myself in advance of that is federal legislation.

Q: Tumelty: But the studies show –

Well I think I've said that there is clear evidence that at a young age that certainly brains do constin, ah, the various aspects of brain development continues and in most cases well into your early 20s. But, (inaudible) the correct balance and I'm confident the federal government is taking that under consideration

Q: Wong: So what is the province considering, then, for an age - because I know (inaudible) setting that age, so are you saying early 20's - are you saying 23, 24?

Well, we're looking, you know, we're looking to the federal legislation to give us guidance on all the parameters, how they're going to be approaching this issue. I think that that will help us determine - and I'm as well, I believe that the federal government -will certainly the expert group that they put together to provide them with advice as well has provided advice in this regard. So we'll wait for that legislation to come out.

Q: Ferguson: what did those studies say about the volume of use and brain development. Like, a little bit OK. You know, and what they describe as, like, too much use that affects the brain. [

Ya, I mean, I wish I knew the answer to that. I'm not an expert in this field in terms of the effects of or potential effects of marijuana on brain development. But, again, I think as we look to the federal changes that, that ah, and the legislation that will be introduced shortly - I think it's important that we, and myself as minister of health, focus on harm reduction. So we take into account what those impacts might be and get the appropriate approach. But I don't - to answer your question - I don't know specifically ah, in terms.

Q: Ferguson: I was imagine less is better.

Yeah. So there are probably, I'm sure there are many experts including in this province, that can answer that question more effectively than I can

Q: Ferguson: What about marijuana and - a nurse once told me that, you know, smoking a joint or whatever, you're getting a lot of crap in your lungs - just from smoking, which tends not to get a lot of attention. What kind of damage can marijuana do, you know, unfiltered joints or whatever do to your lungs in comparison with smoking a cigarette, for example - is the same kind of effect.

Well there are similar effects. Certainly the chronic use of smoking marijuana can have negative impacts on on on lungs and other organ systems. So it's obviously important as we build a strategy alongside the federal legislation that we look at all aspects of harm reduction; public awareness and education is important. The aspect of Children and Youth

obviously is critically important. And, really, it's about us as a government providing the sufficient education so Ontarians - of whatever age - can make an informed decision.

Q: Tumelty: Are you concerned that the negative - with recreational use of marijuana is going to create a whole bunch of problems in the healthcare system.

Well I think we need to be cognizant of this.

Q: Tumelty: Long term use, (inaudible) development and lung issues or organ issues as a result of -

I think we need to be cognizant of some of the potential negative effects of marijuana use. And, again, that's why I emphasize the importance of taking a public health and harm reduction approach to this, which I think will get some guidance from the federal government. We'll need to make some determinations ourselves, in terms of how protect the most vulnerable - children and youth for example - but education and awareness is critically important, so that individuals can make that informed decision for themselves. It's not the first - what will become a legal substance - it's not the first to have potentially harmful effects, despite its legality. So I think we need to look at it within the context, and that's why education and awareness so that people can make informed decisions is really important.

Q: Ferguson: Do you think some of the harmful health effects don't get enough attention. You know, everyone thinks (inaudible) it's great we can get high, whatever, but, you know, don't think about their lungs for example?

Well, you know, I, I don't know the answer to that. But, however, I suspect that, you know, if and when it becomes legal as the federal government has committed to its legality, I think that there will be greater attention to that aspect. And certainly, that is one of the aims of the provincial involvement is so we can build an awareness and education campaign to alert Ontarians about those potential risks.

Q: Smith Cross: On a separate subject, what do you think Jack MacLaren's comments about zero tolerance with the sexually abused of patients?

Well, you know, I think they were deeply unfortunate. I spoke to - as I did yesterday with the intro - the second reading of Bill 87 that Protecting Patients Act. I talked about how this government unequivocally, without exception, has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to sexual abuse of any kind by anyone, including health care professionals - that I believe is a policy that the vast majority of Ontarians support, and expect their government to be firm on that. So I think it's; I understand. I think that Mr. McLaren apologized as he should for this ill thought out comment that he made yesterday during a debate - which up until that point - was very cordial and respectful; instructive. I attended a significant portion of it, and it was really out of place. But I think it regrettably - well, it was definitely out of place. Regrettably, it seems to be a pattern coming from Mr. MacLaren as well, on the issues of this sort. We have a role as government. I think all of us as legislatures to stand up for victims; for those who are most vulnerable and; particularly when it comes to the issue of sexual assault and sexual abuse by anyone. I would hope - and I think as evidenced by the support that we saw this morning - on my reiteration of that zero tolerance approach. I think that that all legislatures should unequivocally, without reservation, should get behind and express their support and their belief in a zero tolerance policy for those reasons.

Q: Smith Cross: Some doctors - I have a couple other things - some doctors have (inaudible) to push back on that bill as well. do you plan on making any changes to satisfy them, on that front?

Well, you know, I think that there are some misunderstandings about certain aspects of the bill - that we consulted extremely widely in the development of the legislation - And, that being said, that's what this debate is for. We're hearing some of those suggestions in terms of improvements; we'll have, obviously, committee public, ah, hum, ah there, there will be an opportunity to see if there are measures that should be taken to make it stronger. And for me, like I like with medical assistance in dying - on sexual abuse by health care professionals - I would welcome good advice from any source that I think it's incredibly challenging in the first instance to get a bill perfectly correct to reinforce that position of zero tolerance. But to do it in a way which truly obtains the outcomes that we're looking for to reduce and hopefully eliminate sexual assault of this nature. So I would welcome any proposals or suggestions for improvements, and we'll look at them, presumably, during committee.

Q: Smith Cross: Speaking of assisted dying, I have a few questions on that as well. A lot of health care practitioners weighed in in committee about the bill, calling for something to strengthen the conscious rights of doctors. Are there any changes, either in the bill or policy that you think should be made to satisfy their concerns?

Well, look, again - we consulted widely in the preparation of the bill, which sets out certain aspects of medical assistance in dying. Of course the majority of the, the mechanisms of the structure and the process and eligibility and restrictions is a Federal matter, as spelled out in the federal legislation. Federal legislation that does reaffirm the charter rights too, in this

instance, to health care professionals who, for reasons of conscience, decide - as they are allowed to - to not participate. We respect that. I've said that in the legislature, as well, that we respect the right of physicians nurse practitioners, others, to not participate for reasons of conscience or morals, ethics, religious reasons. So that reference is there in the federal legislation. And we've taken measures and are continue to take measures so we've created a a Clinician referral service where clinicians that choose not to participate can Can call, and identify health care practitioners who will provide that services, if necessary. We're also creating what's called a care ordination service - where members of the public: family members; individuals themselves can call, and a health care practitioner will link them with the resources that are necessary should they decide to pursue that path

Q: Smith Cross: And. When will that be up and running?

So, we're already taking the steps, obviously, to - both on the staffing side as well - as I think the content of the process is important so that the individual who is at the other end of that phone, when it's the coordination service - that they have the expertise to be able to make those connections; make those connections with physicians or other health care providers who could potentially either assess or provide medical assistance in dying. So just, you know, to summarize and reiterate - I fully respect the health care professionals' right, charter right, to choose not to participate in medical assistance in dying as affirmed and referenced in the federal legislation. We're putting in measures which - many of these same people - when they express their concern, they ask us to implement what's sort of being referred to as the Alberta model. We are implementing the Alberta model.

Q: Zochodne: You keep referencing the federal legislation, why not just make it explicit in Ontario's legislation, as well, that those conscious rights are going to be respected?

Well because it's, because it's, it's - first and foremost - it's a charter, it's a charter issue. The, as reaffirmed and referenced in the federal legislation, the charter applies to all of Canada. Secondly, this - if you look at the legislation, the proposed legislation itself - it's fairly narrow in its scope. So most of the of the parameters surrounding medical assistance in dying are all federal, in terms of eligibility and the requirement for true assessments, and the time period of etc.. So, our bill is quite narrowly focused on, for example, protecting people with regards to their life insurance - if someone chooses medical assistance in dying, it won't negatively impact the life insurance for their survivor. It's to provide legal protection to, uh, uh, uh, to health care professionals, should they choose to participate. So, it', it's amending several existing acts. The federal legislation was a separate act in its own, which has those national - appropriately I would argue - national charter references. But again, we're putting into place those measures that have been asked for - both the clinician referral service as well as the care ordination service - a model which is essentially identical to what has been implemented in Alberta, which is the model that individuals, I think that you're referencing, have asked us to implement - and we are implementing.

Q: Zochodne: So is Ontario behind on all of this, I mean we're passing all this (inaudible) legislation, but, you know, the Supreme Court has already ruled and this, and this practice is going on already, so is this playing catch-up?

No - I don't think so. I think it's important that we do the consultation necessary to get this right, so we spent a lot subsequent and, I mean, I should mention that Ontario was the first to - in the absence under Harper, in the absence of action at the federal level under the Harper conservatives - Ontario was the one that actually suggested an organized and implement a national consultation process, with experts that consult with the public and the stakeholders. So, we were actually first involved. With regards to these specific parts of the legislation, again the consultation process is, I think, you know, the example being what you're asking me about today - demonstrates how important that consultation is. And having confidence that a clinician referral service is the right approach, having confidence that a care coordination service is the right approach, making sure that we've sort of - the aspects of medical (inaudible) that aren't adequately dealt with or referenced the federal legislation, making sure that we've got those parts here like life insurance as I mentioned and protection from liability. So I believe and you know it has been to date - it has, it's a process that has actually evolved in I think developed in this province remarkably well.

Q. Smith Cross: One last question on that. How will the care coordination work for a patient who is like an all-religious hospital that doesn't do assisted dying at all? Just practically what steps would happen to that patient?

So well that patient or their family members, their caregiver, would have the ability to (inaudible) contact with the care coordination service directly and they would then through that process, that phone call or email, say, would be linked in to all of the - all of what's required. If they chose to pursue medical assistance in dying, they would be able to follow that through to completion by contacting the care coordination service. (Inaudible) in Alberta, the requirement of a - the attending physician is to ensure - because they have a care coordination, I'm not sure if they call it a care coordination service, I think they do - but there's a requirement that the physician, the attending responsible physician, provide the information for that service to the patient.

Q. Smith Cross: And then would they likely be transferred to a hospital that doesn't have an – the conscientious objection to medical assistance in dying?

Well you know I think there is a variety of mechanisms that – that can be thought of or implemented. Some of them already are and so it may be up to the individual institution but I'm confident – and we've seen this through over the course of the last almost year – we've – the – it has in almost all instances worked remarkably well and I'm confident with these additional layers, the existing clinical referral service, but particularly the care coordination service, I'm confident that those who choose to pursue medical assistance in dying will be able to have access to that service.

Q. Smith Cross: Can you avoid the situation of Hotel-Dieu in Windsor that happened there?

Yeah, you know, I think in that – so had the care coordination service been contacted or the clinician referral service for that matter been contacted, so the care coordination service isn't yet active so that wasn't an opportunity but when it is active (inaudible) believe that that would avoid that situation that you're referring to – or had the LHIN been informed as well, there are a variety of mechanisms that I have – that we have rather – that I'm confident will provide that – that access to care, which is really important in terms of obtaining that balance.

Questions for Minister Sousa:

Q Brule: What do intend to put in the budget that could, in affect Toronto real-estate or Ontario real estate?

Well, as I have said all along, I mean, we're compiling the information, we had a number of discussions in regard to the effects of housing, not just in Toronto, right around the region, and the impact this is having on many families, and those who are being crowded out (inaudible) given the fact that summer is coming and speculating on those properties, especially new bills. In any event, those things are being addressed and I am compiling information to make a determined decisions. And no one decision is effective, there are unintended consequences from anything we do and I don't want to be doing something that will negatively harm others. I want to make certain that what we do is in the best interest for all stakeholders and all individuals, especially families.

Q: Wong: So – what about a foreign buyers' tax

Well, we have to determine the degree to which this is happening. We recognize that a lot of demand exists in the system from all around. We have an influx of population coming to Ontario and they are in need of accommodation, both rent and buys. So, all of that is having an impact on the rising demand and supply is not keeping pace and that is one of the things we have to determine as well.

Q: Brule: Do you believe there is a bubble?

I'm not going to ,... I don't want to speculate because what happens now is (inaudible) don't want to create any more , how should I put this, intensity into the marketplace, the uncertainty is evident so we want to try to provide some calm and some desire get a sufficient supply in the mix so that we can meet up with that demand but it's not up to me, in the end, to make those decisions. Ultimately, those are investors and developers municipalities, levels of government have to coordinate to make a wholesome, strategic initiative around house. Now, market forces are at play here, and in the end those will prevail

Q: Benzie: Did the fact that the Federal government they didn't take any action last week with Boll Morneau and his budget. There are not a lot of tax changes you can make to do with real estate without Ottawa, Canada Revenue Agency.

Well, yes, certainly around issues that involve CRA. Right and those are some of the request that were made in terms of what degree of capital gains and we not exempt, because that was happening. There were individuals going into subdivisions, buying 10, 40, 50 homes holding paper, and flipping it when the markets comes and they're crowding out families who are trying to buy and they don't pay any capital gains, or they are exempt from a portion of it. So, we're trying to address that, and we cannot do that without the CRA.

Q: Benzie: So, your hands are tied on those issues then?

But there are a number of issues that the federal government has done. To their credit, they have put some stress-testers to it, they put some measures to limit the degree of leverage. We've also provided for a higher supports for first-time house buyers, there are inclusionary housing that has been put forwards. We are looking at freezing taxes on rental properties that are paying much more than condominium complexes. Some of the measures that have been done today. But still, demands is increasing, demand is high and we have to look at it holistically.

Q: Wong: So, what kind of measures are you interested in taking?

(Inaudible) Ensure we have the appropriate measures and then, I am not going to speculate, speculate is the wrong word. But that's the issues, we do not want to foster any uncertainty I get the full information and until we have everything at our disposal to determine how best to proceed, then we will come forward with a plan.

Q: Brule: Are you gonna do something about this?

Absolutely, we have to do something for the benefit of many families in Ontario. Keep in mind, as I have said again, ultimately market forces will prevail, and we know that interest rate plays a role, we know that more supply in the mix will play a role, we know that if demand starts to taper down, that plays a role. All of those things are not at the control of the government. But there are things that government, from all levels, has to address, and we want to work closely with certain municipalities, some of them are more apprized of the issues than other and we may require their partnership in what we do going forward.

Q: Brule: Is this situation very different from the late 80's?

Well, I was there in the late 80's and I know all too well what happens when correction takes place. I want to make certain that we protect people to the best we can, given those circumstances.

Q: Bernie: Are you still looking at April 13th for the budget?

I haven't locked the numbers, yet. And, when I do and when I am ready I will certainly advise everyone when that is happening. I will give advanced notice, for sure.

Q: Zochodne: When you're considering these measures, are you at all concerned at all at what it might do for the government bottom line, that you are going to let so much air out of the market that you don't have as much revenue?

It's my priority are the people of Ontario and the families of Ontario. We are taking every necessary step to balance the budget, as we should, in order to meet and fulfill the requirements of the people of Ontario, by investing in healthcare, education and social programs. That's always a priority. And when it comes to housing, and any revenues that come from housing, has to be for their benefit for the people of Ontario, they are my priority and I'm concerned about the degree in which any province or municipality will obtain revenue, that's not what we are concerned about right now. Frankly, the fact that Ontario is becoming a destination of choice, that we have huge amounts of influx of people, that greater investment in housing, as well as business and creation of jobs, that is a good thing. The question now becomes how do we ensure sustainability going forwards and how do we ensure there is enough housing supply in the mix to provide for those who are looking for a place.

Q: Zochodne: So taking your time with this measure has nothing to do with the fact that you get a lot of money from the provincial land transfer tax?

That is not in question, at all. In fact the greatest amount of revenue coming to the province at all coming to the province is generation of jobs, generation of income for the people of Ontario. And that is ultimately what we want to promote and produce and creation and growing our economy is providing greater prosperity for many Ontarians. We have the lowest unemployment in over a decade and we have 722,000 net new jobs since the recession. Those are positive signals. We're outpacing Canada, we're the OECD countries and the European Union, we're doing our part. We need to ensure this continues and that it's sustainable and that only happens when people are secure and have comfort in their jobs and that is our priority.

Questions for PC Leader Brown:

Q:

(Joined in progress)...Well he's, he's apologized. He knows his colleagues are disappointed. I think the starting point is to go back home and think about this and, talk to his family. He's got, I understand, I think it's three daughters and a wife and last time he made a mistake he went and talked to his family went through sensitivity training and this, this can't happen.

Nanji: I think if I recall correctly, Jack is the only one of your incumbent MPPs that's being challenged for the nomination. You said before you support all your incumbents, does that still stand?

Well we have a fair transparent democratic nomination process.

Nanji: But do you still support Jack to run again in 2018?

Well, I support all my incumbents, that's the policy we have. But you know I think we're the only party that have checks and balances, that where we have these open transparent democratic nominations even for incumbents.

Rushowy: Can I just ask, was there a problem in your party? I mean there was an issue with the coffee comment and a bit of controversy about where you're speaking, the Athletic Club.

Well, speaking of the Athletic Club, it is a coed club. I think that was an example of Liberals shooting first and aiming second. Mistakes happen and they need to be corrected and we've seen that in all parties. And the key thing is, is I think those in public service needs to, anytime there's a mistake, needs to disavow it immediately.

Nanji: So three times doesn't make a trend?

Well, listen, I think there's been careless mistakes in all parties. This is not a partisan issue. Mistakes are made and I think there is unity, actually, a complete consensus in politics that there is zero tolerance for any, any, any disappointing comments like that.

Rushowy: But do you worry though that it alters the public perception of your party, that maybe there is an issue with sexism?

Well I think I've been very clear on all these issues. And frankly, when other, when mistakes have been made I think I've been pretty clear and denounced it.

Rath: How many times do you let this guy (inaudible).

Listen, I was disappointed by the comments. He needs to think more carefully about his words and I hope he goes home this weekend and talks to his family and takes his mistake to heart. I understand he apologized sincerely this morning and it just can't happen.

Rath: But is that enough? I mean, it's two strikes now, how many strikes does a guy get?

Well, a mistake was made. And I'm obviously disappointed.

Benzie: Does he get three strikes as to Randy's point, one more strike and then that's it, he's out?

There's no set formula but obviously the actions previously, I was disappointed by, took actions. It can't happen again. And Jack knows that.

Nanji: you think maybe he didn't learn his lesson after the sensitivity training?

You know I would hope that he would have learned his lesson. I know he spent quality time in the sensitivity training with his family. He seemed sincere and I hope that this is still the case.

Jones: The Liberals now have been making noise about this, about the Cambridge Club stuff, about Pettapiece's comments -- it seems like a pattern. Does it seem like a concerted effort to paint your party, your whole party as sexist?

You know, I, I think this is the Liberals uncomfortable with their own record and looking for opportunities to, to attack others. In terms of the Toronto Athletic Club speech, I think that's a case of disappointing politics as usual where you shoot, you shoot first and aim second. They, they, they know they were stretching there.

Jones: Does it seem like party of a bigger sort of strategy to you to specifically brand PCs as sexist? You know, we've seen their attempts at byelections.....

I would, I would hope that's, I would hope that's not their intention because they know it's wrong. I'm offended by it. And you know, but maybe this is an example of a government that feels uncomfortable talking about their own accomplishments and choose to attack others instead.

Q. Brule: (in French) (joined in progress) sanctions for an MPP.

(in French) The last time that we had an error like this, there are sanctions. I explained to Mr. MacLaren that he can't make a mistake like this again. I understand that he made (in English) apology –

Q. Brule: (in French) apology.

(in French) – apology this morning (inaudible). And I didn't have the chance to speak with Jack on this issue but it is not acceptable.

Q. Golding: Can you just tell us that in English? Now I understand that you spoke to Mr. MacLaren this morning. Tell us what kind of sanctions you're going to take against him.

I haven't had a chance to speak to Jack MacLaren. I only recently read the comments. Understand that he apologized sincerely. It's unacceptable, and frankly I'm disappointed. He needs to be more careful with his words and I know he said they're misconstrued but (inaudible) apologized unequivocally but it's not acceptable and frankly I hope he goes home this weekend. He's got three daughters and a wife that I know were partners with him as he made the mistake last time and tried to provide help and I hope he has a conversation with them to – so he doesn't let down his colleagues or his family.

Q. Golding: Are you thinking about making him go through sensitivity training again?

Well, we did that in the spring and I hope that would have solved this, so (inaudible) just say I'm disappointed and I have not had a chance to speak to him.

Q. Golding: Are you thinking of taking any measures against him?

Well, we'll have to see but as a starting point I think he needs to go home this week and talk to his family and think pretty seriously about this mistake.

Q. Golding: How concerning do you find the words being used yesterday?

Well it's disappointing. There's zero tolerance. There's zero, zero tolerance for sexual misconduct, sexual assault, and there is no gray in this issue, so it was a foolish comment.

Q. Brule: (in French) Mr. Brown, (inaudible) do you want the government to act to slow down the increase in price (inaudible)

(in French) Yes and it's (inaudible) Ontario right now, there are many people who cannot have – can't buy a house. The price is very high. There are different ways we can combat this, not just one way. And I am interested in what the government will present.

Q. Brule: (in French) Because even in Barrie the increases are significant.

(in French) Yes, I know. It's not only in Toronto. It's the GTA, it's – [end audio]

Questions for PC MPP MacLaren:

Q:

I'd like to apologize for the words I used yesterday. I made a mistake. It wasn't the intent...the meaning I intended. Of course, I'm in favour of zero tolerance...I have zero tolerance for sexual abuse of patients and the full force of the law should be applied in all cases. So I assure you, I'll be much more careful in the future about choosing my words because that was a mistake, and I regret it very much.

Q. Nanji: (Inaudible) this is what your sensitivity training last year had to do with. I mean, did you not learn any lessons after that?

I regret very much my choice of words yesterday and I assure you it will never happen again.

Q. Unidentified: What did you mean to say?

What I was trying to say was, I respect doctors and healthcare professionals. My wife is a nurse and my three daughters are registered nurses. I have a (inaudible) healthcare workers. And I just wanted to make sure that we didn't taint the good reputation of those people who provide such a valuable service. I did not mean...I do have zero tolerance for sexual abuse of patients. And any healthcare professionals that are convicted of a crime should have the full force of the law applied. I support that absolutely. So, again, I apologize for any confusion or (inaudible) that I made yesterday. It will not happen (inaudible).

Q. Nanji. Did Patrick Brown speak to you at all about your comments yesterday?

No.

Q. Nanji: So he didn't direct you to apologize?

I haven't had a chance to speak to him.

Q. Golding: (Inaudible)

Well, all I meant was, we're all entitled to be considered to be innocent until proven guilty. (Inaudible) Absolutely, the full force of the law should be (inaudible).

Q. Rushowy: Do you think you need more sensitivity training?

No, I don't. I think I understand.

Q. Rushowy: Do you worry at all this second incident that involves you and the Party and (inaudible)?

I'm sorry for my choice of words yesterday. I assure you it will never happen again.

Questions for NDP Leader Horwath:

Q:

[Joined in progress] But New Democrats are going to stay focused on the, you know, the big issues that are facing families right now. And particularly the electricity file, which is where folks want to see some real change, where they want to see Hydro One come back into public hands, where they want to see some change in the system, so that a broken system isn't kicked down the road to the next generations. And having them pay for that, as well, is just, it's the wrong direction. I'm looking forward to the debate this afternoon because we have on our, on our plates a motion that's going to see where the rest of the Members of this legislature sit when it comes to hydro relief.

Q. Rushowy: What would happen to one of your Members if they made a comment similar to what Jack MacLaren said? What would you do?

Well, you know, that's not something that I'm dealing with. It's not something that I've had to deal with. But, obviously, Mr. Brown has some work to do to deal with his Members. That kind of language that kind of attitude is not something that should be accepted by any Member of this legislature, in this day and age. Having said that, New Democrats are going to stay focused on the work that the people of this province expect us to do and that's making sure their hydro bills come down. That's making sure our hydro system is fixed. It's making sure moms and dads aren't going to have to do laundry at 2:00 in the morning and seniors are going to have to freeze in their homes because they can't afford to heat their houses.

Q. Nanji: This isn't the first time in recent days that we've heard, you know, sexist comments, so-called sexist comments coming from the PC caucus. I mean, what does this say about...?

Recent days? What about the auditor general and the remarks that the former energy minister made about auditor general. Look, the Liberals are living in the glass house when it comes to these kinds of issues and they need to acknowledge that. But the bottom line is it's not acceptable for anybody to have those kinds of attitudes in this day and age, in this legislature. And so I think that we need to be, you know, thoughtful about where the stones are being thrown from and the problems that the Premier has in her own caucus. Having said that, look, I'm going to stay focused on things like the electricity system. I'm going to stay focused on making sure that New Democrats are providing a real change for people when it comes to the hydro system because we know that folks can't deal with the electricity prices the way they are. Folks can't, you know, they can't cope. They're hitting a wall and they're having a real hard time. And all they see from this Premier is activities and initiatives that are more about the Liberals and their own political well-being than they are of the people of Ontario.

Q. Nanji: Do you think they're being partisan about these types of concerns?

Well, again, I mean, you know, Ms. Wynne is going to have to deal with the problems in her caucus. Mr. Brown is going to have to deal with the problems in his caucus. New Democrats are going to stay focused on particularly on the electricity system, but other issues that are of a concern to Ontarians. Thanks.

N.B.: Comments captured are not verbatim quotes

Prepared by:

Guy LePage, Senior Issues Analyst

Jonathan Colford, Senior Issues Analyst
Sofia Sousa-Dias, Senior Issues Analyst
Rob Di Giovanni, Coordinator, Media Monitoring
Cindy Basha, Issues Assistant
Craig Sumi, Manager, Corporate Issues