

Briefing for April 30

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Your morning briefing

30.04.2018

Headlines

The brother of a certain infamous Toronto mayor is running for office in Ontario and is sort of Trump-like in his populism, the *Guardian* reports, following a similar take in *The Economist*. The American press is also taking note. "His brother, **Rob Ford**, the late mayor of Toronto, had a political career marred by drunken escapades and a video of him smoking crack cocaine," reports the *Washington Post*. "But **Doug Ford**'s rhetoric on the campaign trail has compelled observers to link him to another political name: President Trump." Still, a handful of stories in a few international publications is nothing compared to the worldwide press coverage devoted to "Der Crack-Bürgermeister von Toronto" back in the heyday of the Ford administration at city hall.

The PCs have resurrected another promise from their former platform: MPP **Laurie Scott** announced this weekend the Tories will adopt the child-care rebate from the People's Guarantee.

You don't want to miss our weekend podcast. This time the *QP Briefing* team nerded out with an academic who studies the history of Ontario Hydro. In case you missed our other recent stories:

- At campaign launch, Andrea Horwath frames NDP as only alternative to Kathleen Wynne
- In brief: TVO's Steve Paikin vindicated by investigation, Gandalf the Grey, and long-term care
- Doug Ford unveils hydro plan adopted from Patrick Brown's People's Guarantee
- Eight interesting tidbits from the integrity commissioner's report on Patrick Brown every Ontario politico should know about
- Thousands more employees to be covered by pay equity rules under beefed-up bill

In other news:

Trillium Power has new evidence in its lawsuit against the provincial government, alleging the destruction of documents related to its cancelled off-shore wind farm, *Global reports*.

Pollster **Frank Graves** teams up with **Michael Valpy** to write about populism in Ontario in the *Globe and Mail*.

The CBC finds the PCs are still out-fundraising the competition, raising more than the other parties combined in the first four months of 2018.

The *Sun* has found out that the seven town hall meetings the premier held across the province cost a total of \$209,000. The PCs have been criticizing the Liberals for holding campaign-like events on the taxpayer's dime.

The Ontario Court of Appeal is expected to release its decision today on Const. **James Forcillo's** conviction of attempted murder in the death of **Sammy Yatim**, the *Star* reports. The jury arrived at the attempted murder charge by finding Forcillo not guilty of second-degree murder when he first an initial volley of shots, but guilty of attempted murder for a second volley, fired as Yatim lay on the floor already dying.

CBC sees a lot of commonalities in the demographics that supported **Mike Harris's** Common Sense Revolution and **Ford Nation**.

And the *Globe* has an interesting investigation on condo flipping in B.C.

In the opinion pages:

- Navigator's **Jamie Watt** has some advice on political ads, including that production values don't matter
- Ontario should keep standardized tests, according to the *Star* editorial board
- It's #metoo, not #metrue according to **Rosie DiManno**, reflecting on the vindication of **Steve Paikin**

Committees

2 p.m.

The Standing Committee on General Government will meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 8, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000. Room 2.

Bills and motions

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 26, 2018 on the motion for Second Reading of Bill 53, An Act respecting the establishment of minimum government contract wages.

Events

9:30 a.m.

Horwath makes a campaign announcement regarding cancer care. Gilda's Club, 24 Cecil St, Toronto.

9:30 a.m.

Chris Ballard, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, will be providing an update on waste management in Ontario. Media studio Queen's Park, Toronto.

9:30 a.m.

Mike Colle, MPP for Eglinton-Lawrence on behalf of **Bob Chiarelli**, Minister of Infrastructure, will make an announcement. 5 Replin Rd., North York.

10 a.m.

The Honourable **J. David Wake**, Ontario's Temporary Financial Accountability Officer, will release two reports: The Effectiveness of Ontario's Business Support Programs and A Financial Analysis of the OLG's Gaming Expansion and Sale of the Greater Toronto Area Gaming Bundle. Both reports will be posted on the [FAO website](#).

10:15 a.m.

Wynne to make an announcement. École secondaire publique Louis-Riel, Atrium, 1655 Bearbrook Road, Ottawa.

10:30 a.m.

Ford to make an announcement. 519 Brock Street S, Whitby.

11 a.m.

Wynne to participate in a roundtable discussion with the Assemblée de la Francophonie Ontarienne MIFO. z Carrière Street, Orléans.

1 p.m.

Chris Ballard, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, will make an announcement. The Vineland Estates Winery, 3620 Moyer Rd., Vineland.

2:45 p.m.

Wynne to make an announcement. La Résidence Prescott et Russell, Bistro, 1020 Cartier Boulevard, Hawkesbury.

3 p.m.

Ford to visit the Canadian Mental Health Association. 60 Bond Street W, Oshawa.

3:45 p.m.

Ford to visit the Military and Industrial Museum. 1000 Stevenson Road N, Oshawa.

6 p.m.

Ford to host a rally. Tosca Banquet & Conference Centre, 800 Champlain Avenue.

Doug Ford unveils hydro plan adopted from Patrick Brown's People's Guarantee

27.04.2018

PC Leader **Doug Ford** has released his party's plan to lower hydro rates, and it borrows from his predecessor's plan to shift more costs from ratepayers to the tax base.

The cornerstone of the plan is to return the province's Hydro One dividends to hydro customers, which the party estimates will save the average family \$70 a year on electricity bills.

The PCs would also shift the cost of conservation programs from the rate base to the tax base, which the party estimates would eliminate an average of \$43 per year on their hydro bills.

The last part of the plan is to attempt to negotiate savings on the government's current contracts for power generation, and not to sign any more. The PCs estimate that would save the average family \$60 on their hydro bills.

All told, the PCs estimate the changes will save the average family 12 per cent — \$173 a year on their hydro bills, with \$113 of that coming from the tax base.

All three promises were in **Patrick Brown's** People's Guarantee and the cost to the tax base was estimated in that platform to be \$1.4 billion over a four-year term.

At the announcement, Ford slammed the Liberal government's Fair Hydro Plan — which artificially lowers hydro bills by borrowing billions of dollars through a complex financial scheme — for both its "shady accounting" and the interest on borrowing that ratepayers will have to pay in the coming years.

However, the PCs would continue with the plan at first, but review it.

PC energy critic **Todd Smith** said the review would be part of the an inquiry into government finances the PCs have promised to conduct.

He pointed to an estimate from Ontario's Financial Accountability Office that said the way the plan was structured could add \$4 billion in interest costs that would be unnecessary if the government had borrowed the money directly. The structure of the borrowing also means the debt is recorded on the province's books.

Smith said the review will determine whether to switch the borrowing to the Ontario Electricity Financing Authority, which would bring it onto the province's books.

Cancelling the plan outright — as the NDP has promised to do — would cause ratepayers' bills to spike, and the PCs want to avoid that, Smith said. However, he said it might be feasible to dial back the borrowing if the party is successful in bringing down rates by taking costs out of the electricity system.

"I don't see extending it being an option," he added.

A spokesman for the Minister of Energy hit back at that the PCs' plan, releasing a statement saying: "Doug Ford's plans don't add up to anything but empty promises that will eventually dig their way into people's pockets."

"First, his cornerstone commitment to abandon all new contracted electricity procurement projects fails to mention that there are no new contracted electricity procurement projects," said **Colin Nekolaichuk**. "As a consequence, there can't be any savings that can be passed on to customers."

Nekolaichuk said the threat to tear up energy contracts will cost the province hundreds of billions. He cited a radio interview in which Smith said doing so would "come at a huge cost to taxpayers and we're going to see electricity prices continue to rise."

Smith told *QP Briefing* that cancelling some contracts could potentially do that — but added there are certain contracts where power producers haven't met their contractual obligations, and so it shouldn't cost the province much to terminate the contract.

The NDP, meanwhile, said the announcement shows Ford "stands proudly for a privatized hydro system in Ontario."

"Ford has committed to leaving 'no stone unturned' when it comes to what he will privatize next — saying every ministry would be a target — including the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care. Ontario families are wondering what that means for the services they depend on: more cuts to our already overcrowded hospitals? A longer wait for the 32,000 people already on the list for long-term care? More school closures?" asked NDP Leader **Andrea Horwath** in a press release.