

Queen's Park Today – Election Report May 16, 2018

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Quotation of the day

“The odds have always been against me [so] it actually feels kind of familiar.”

Premier Kathleen Wynne responds to questions in London about polls consistently showing the Liberals lagging behind the NDP and PCs.

Day 8: Today on the campaign trail

Wynne campaign

On Tuesday morning, OLP leader **Kathleen Wynne** re-committed to her government's plan to bring high-speed rail to southwestern Ontario, saying phase one of the high speed rail plan will be delivered “as early as 2025.” Flanked by Economic Development and Growth Minister **Steven Del Duca** and Transportation Minister **Kathryn McGarry**, Wynne made the announcement at the “Internet of Things” company eleven-x in NDP MPP **Catherine Fife**'s Waterloo riding.

In the afternoon, Wynne headed to Liberal MPP **Deb Matthews**' old riding of London North Centre to continue discussing high-speed rail commitments at marketing company sagecomm. Wynne ended her day with a visit to Wellington Brewery in Guelph, where long-time Liberal MPP **Liz Sandals** will not be on the ballot for the first time since 2003.

On Wednesday, Wynne will make a morning announcement at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in Mississauga—Malton, a riding held by Liberal MPP **Amrit Mangat**. In the evening, Wynne will deliver remarks at an Iftar dinner in Kanata—Carleton, the riding held by **Jack MacLaren**.

Ford campaign

PC leader **Doug Ford** began his day in downtown Toronto where his supporters held a rally outside the Hydro One shareholders' annual general meeting, which took place near Bay and Dundas streets. Ford's team scheduled the rally to coincide with a shareholder vote on whether Hydro One board executives' compensation and severance packages should be reconsidered.

On Wednesday, Ford will start the day with an announcement at a Canadian Tire Gas Bar in Labour Minister **Kevin Flynn**'s Oakville riding.

He will tour a cleantech company in Mississauga Centre in the afternoon and hold a rally with supporters at the Mississauga Convention Centre in Mississauga—Malton in the evening. These are both 905 ridings the PC team is hoping to break into on June 7.

Horwath campaign

Like Premier Wynne, NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** spent Tuesday in southwestern Ontario. Horwath began her day in Liberal MPP **Deb Matthews**' old riding of London North Centre where she and NDP MPP **Catherine Fife** unveiled their party's southwestern regional platform, which focuses on improving health care, supporting manufacturing and building stronger transit links to the GTA.

In the afternoon, Horwath headed to Blue Dog Coffee Roasters in Paris to meet with supporters in Brantford—Brant, a riding once held by Speaker **Dave Levac**. For the second day in a row, Horwath wrapped up her day with health care-focused town hall. Tuesday's was held in Kitchener Centre, the riding currently held by Tourism, Culture and Sport Minister **Daiene Vernile**. There are 10 ridings in Southwestern Ontario, and Horwath is hoping to turn as many of them orange as possible.

On Wednesday, Horwath will hold morning campaign events at a childcare centre in Scarborough Centre and at a biryani restaurant in Scarborough Southwest.

Hydro One board chair calls executive pay 'appropriate' while Ford supporters rally outside AGM

Hydro One board chair **David Denison** told reporters outside the utility's annual general meeting that the company's executive compensation levels are "appropriate," despite PC leader **Doug Ford** using Hydro One CEO **Mayo Schmidt**'s \$6.2 million annual salary as political ammunition.

"We operate in the private sector and, consequently, all our benchmarking for both executive compensation and our other benchmarking is appropriately done in the private sector," Denison said Tuesday.

Ninety per cent of voting shareholders approved the utility's executive compensation packages, but the board will still commence the independent review of its executive pay model it promised on May 1.

Earlier in the day, Energy Minister **Glenn Thibeault** issued a statement saying the government, which owns 47 per cent of Hydro One's shares, would abstain from voting at the shareholders' AGM on whether to approve new executive salary and severance hikes. Thibeault said abstaining was preferable to voting against the board because he did not want to trigger a "showdown."

Outside the AGM, held near Yonge and Dundas Square in downtown Toronto, Ford and a handful of supporters gathered in the rain to draw attention to the political mess that Hydro One has become for the Liberals. "They're gouging the taxpayers as they're lining their pockets and feathering their nests," Ford said about Hydro One.

This all played out just hours after CBC broke the news that Hydro One's part-time board members recently approved \$25,000 annual raises for themselves, boosting compensation to \$185,000 annually. Board chair Denison, who saw his salary climb to \$330,000, told reporters the increase brings Hydro One's board members' compensation into only the 35th percentile of executive pay in Canada.

Denison told reporters Tuesday the board had already engaged with independent advisors regarding executive compensation and would consult further "to determine what, if any, changes we would see as appropriate."

Speaking with reporters at a campaign stop in Waterloo, Wynne said the government has been clear it is not happy with how salary increases were handled and wants the matter investigated.

"We forced that review to happen. We made it clear, and the review is happening," she said. Wynne said she expects there will be a "change" in compensation for senior executives, including board members' \$25,000 raises.

NDP energy critic **Peter Tabuns** called the board's self-appointed raise "pretty outrageous," but added that it was "hypocritical" for Ford to say he is against high executive pay given his history of supporting raises for those leading Toronto Hydro and Build Toronto while he was at city hall.

"This is all about politics and hot air and not really about principle or policy," Tabuns told *Queen's Park Today*, noting that Ford has not committed to bringing Hydro One back into public hands. "Don't be surprised, if you turn a utility into a private company, if the senior executive start looking after themselves very generously," Tabuns said.

Ford would jeopardize rent controls: Liberals

The Liberals accused PC leader **Doug Ford** Tuesday morning of threatening the province's rent control protections, including the measures in the government's Fair Housing Plan implemented over the 12 months.

Liberal MPP and Trinity—Spadina candidate **Han Dong** and federal Liberal MP and former Toronto city councillor **Adam Vaughan** told reporters at Liberal Party HQ that Ford is in favour of letting the market dictate rents, a move they say will lead to unscrupulous landlords jacking up rents.

The Liberals drew attention to a March [video interview](#) with *The Globe and Mail* in which Ford said, “I just don’t like it. I like having the market dictate,” in reference to rent controls.

“Living in Toronto is expensive, we all know that. The cost of renting, let alone buying, can be overwhelming,” Dong said. “But renting here without the protection of knowing rent increases are going to be steady and predictable? That’s straight up scary.”

The Tories got ahead of the Liberals’ announcement by issuing a statement calling phooey on the Liberals’ scare tactics. “I have listened to the people, and I won’t take rent control away from anyone. Period.” Ford said in a release. “When it comes to rent control, we’re going to maintain the status quo.”

“He’s lying,” Vaughan said in response to the PC leader’s statement.

Topics of conversation

- New [polling](#) from Ipsos for Global News found the gap widening between the New Democrats and the Liberal party. The NDP are up six points from last week, having secured the voting intention of 35 per cent of respondents, leaving them just five points behind **Doug Ford**’s PC Party. The Ontario NDP has [not seen](#) this level of support during an election campaign for decades.
 - Horwath’s rise has come entirely at the expense of **Kathleen Wynne** and the Liberals who dropped to 22 per cent voter support.
 - Mainstreet Research head **Quito Maggi** [speculates](#) there may be a “shy” Wynne vote that wants the premier to win on June 7 but is unwilling to tell pollsters the Liberals have their vote.
 - CBC [Vote Tracker](#) saw the NDP jump 3.6 per cent on Tuesday to capture 30.7 per cent of the vote, a full 10 per cent behind the Tories.
 - Ipsos polled 1,000 Ontarians between May 11 and 14.
- The broadcast consortium programming the final televised leaders’ debate on May 27 announced it will be jointly moderated by Global News reporter **Farah Nasser** and TVO’s *The Agenda* host **Steve Paikin**.
- Data [compiled](#) by Ontario Monitor on the more than 30,000 speeches delivered in the Ontario Legislature in 2017 found NDP MPP **France G  linas** and PC MPP **Bill Walker** were parliament’s most prolific speakers, with NDP MPP **Catherine Fife** a distant third. Attorney General **Yasir Naqvi**, in sixth, spoke most for the Liberals.

Today's events

May 16 at 9 a.m. — Mississauga
OLP leader **Kathleen Wynne** will make an announcement at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

May 16 at 9:30 a.m. — *Scarborough*
NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will hold a campaign event at Progress Childcare.

May 16 at 10:30 a.m. — *Toronto* The Ontario Health Coalition will launch a pre-election tour at Mount Sinai Hospital by reviewing the healthcare "facts and myths from the parties' election campaigns so far."

May 16 at 11:30 a.m. — *Scarborough*
NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will hold a campaign event at Adi Biryani & Kabab House on Birchmount Road.

May 16 at 11:30 a.m. — *Oakville*
PC leader **Doug Ford** will make an announcement at a gas station in Oakville.

May 16 at 2:30 p.m. — *Mississauga*
PC leader **Doug Ford** will tour cleantech company Fielding Environmental.

May 16 at 6 p.m. — *Toronto*
Green leader **Mike Schreiner** will participate in a debate on disability issues at the Ryerson Student Centre.

May 16 at 7 p.m. — *Mississauga*
PC leader **Doug Ford** will hold a rally with supporters at the Mississauga Convention Centre.

May 16 at 8 p.m. — *Kanata*
OLP leader **Kathleen Wynne** will deliver remarks at an Iftar dinner at the Ancien Hotel De Ville De March.



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Appointments and nominations

Ontario NDP

- Long-time labour activist **Jacqueline Gujarati** has been nominated to run for the NDP in Mississauga—Streetsville against Liberal incumbent **Bob Delaney**.

News from the campaign trail

- While in Waterloo Tuesday morning to discuss her government's \$11 billion promise to deliver high-speed rail from London to Toronto by 2025, Ontario Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** told reporters campaigning on a long-term infrastructure priority like high-speed rail is challenging.
 - "I'm not going to be cutting the ribbon on all of the infrastructure that we are building," she said. "I believe it's the responsibility of government to actually look ahead and make investments today that may or may not have political salience for me as an individual." She added, "We are at a point now where it is much more real than it's been in the past."
 - Economic Development and Growth Minister **Steven Del Duca** and Transportation Minister **Kathryn McGarry** joined Wynne for the announcement.
- In response to pressure from the Toronto Real Estate Board, former PC leader **Tim Hudak** said the Ontario Real Estate Association will back off its plan to erect billboards targeting or promoting individual candidates during the election campaign.
 - OREA will continue to promote its home ownership agenda with all political parties.

Ford rejects 'lock her up' comment from Monday rally

PC leader **Doug Ford** told reporters in Toronto Tuesday he "does not condone" someone shouting "lock her up" about Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** at his rally in Niagara Falls Monday evening.

According to the *Toronto Star*, a man at a Ford rally at the Marriott On The Falls hotel shouted the famous anti-**Hillary Clinton** chant when Ford touched on the issue of executive compensation at Hydro One. Ford allegedly paused and chuckled before continuing on with his speech.

At a campaign stop in Waterloo Tuesday, Wynne told reporters that Ford's "irresponsible rhetoric" has given some a "kind of licence or permission" for Ontarians to make statements like that.

"I think it's very disturbing," Wynne said. "It's indicative of a style of campaigning ... that's angry, that's divisive, that is about slogans and bumper stickers and angry division more than it is about responsible decision-making." The premier warned that all Ontarians should pay attention to this "disturbing trend" in the province's political discourse.

PC candidate fires staffer over 'hateful' comments about Islam

Kiiwetinoong PC candidate **Clifford Bull** fired campaign staffer **Ann Ayotte** Tuesday afternoon over "disrespectful" and "hateful" comments she appears to have made online about Islam.

In a since-deleted Twitter reply to **Tarek Fatah**, founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress, Ayotte allegedly wrote "Islamism is not a true religion, it is a fraud being perpetuated on the world. They must be eradicated otherwise they will eradicate us."

"I was surprised and disappointed to learn about a comment made on social media by an individual on my campaign team," Bull posted on Twitter Tuesday. "Upon review of the comment, we immediately decided to part ways with this individual."

According to a statement from the Ontario Liberals, Ayotte previously worked as a staffer for former **Stephen Harper**-era Natural Resources Minister **Greg Rickford**, who is now running for the PCs in Kenora-Rainy River. She also served as his riding association president.