

Queen's Park Today – Election Report May 17, 2018

Day 9: Today on the campaign trail.....	1
Today's events	5
Appointments and nominations	6
News from the campaign trail.....	6

Quotation of the day

“When you stimulate the economy by putting more money into the taxpayers’ pocket, they are going to go out there, they’re going to buy goods and services that will bring more money up to the Ontario coffers. That’s how we’re going to straighten things out.”

PC leader Doug Ford tells reporters he will recoup the \$4.6 billion in revenues lost by scrapping cap-and-trade and cutting the fuel tax by stimulating the economy.

Day 9: Today on the campaign trail

Wynne campaign

Ontario Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** began her day in the Liberal-held riding of Mississauga—Malton at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries’ aerospace manufacturing facility. Wynne spoke to reporters about how her government’s corporate welfare programs have helped create jobs in the advanced manufacturing sector.

After a stop in the kitchen of Middle Eastern restaurant chain Paramount Fine Foods, also in a Liberal-held Mississauga riding, the Liberal leader was wheels up to Ottawa for the second time this campaign. She spoke at an Iftar dinner at Old Town Hall Community Centre in the evening.

On Thursday, Wynne will make an announcement at Bombardier Transportation in Ottawa South, **Dalton McGuinty**’s old riding (now held by Liberal MPP **John Fraser**). In the afternoon, Wynne travels to Liberal MPP **Sophie Kiwala**’s Kingston and the Islands riding to tour the Innovation Hub and deliver remarks at St. Lawrence College.

In the evening, Wynne will meet with supporters at 5 Paddles Brewing Company in the riding of Whitby, held by PC MPP **Lorne Coe**. This is Wynne's first campaign stop in Durham Region — but not her first stop at a brewery.

Ford campaign

PC leader **Doug Ford** made a big policy announcement at a gas station in Labour Minister **Kevin Flynn**'s Oakville riding Wednesday morning. Ford revealed a promise to lower gas prices by 10 cents per litre by cutting the fuel tax and scrapping cap-and-trade.

Later, Ford toured cleantech company Fielding Environmental in Mississauga — Cooksville. He barred reporters from accompanying him on the tour, with the exception of television cameras, despite the event being advertised on his media schedule. In the evening, Ford held another large rally with supporters at the Mississauga Convention Centre.

On Thursday, Ford will make an announcement at Capri Pizza in Transportation Minister **Kathryn McGarry**'s riding of Cambridge. He will hold a rally in NDP MPP **Catherine Fife**'s Waterloo riding in the evening.

Horwath campaign

NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** continued her tour through ridings held by retiring Liberals MPPs with a stop at a childcare facility in **Brad Duguid**'s old riding of Scarborough Centre Wednesday. The NDP leader sang with kids and parents before discussing her party's plan to roll out free child care for low-income earners and \$12-per-day child care on average for everyone else.

Later in the morning, Horwath met with supporters at Adi Biryani & Kabab House in Liberal MPP **Lorenzo Berardinetti**'s riding of Scarborough Southwest. It was Horwath's last scheduled stop of the day, although the third party leader did participate in a live Q&A on Twitter using the hashtag #AskAndrea.

On Thursday, Horwath will hold an a.m. campaign event near the University of Toronto in the new riding of University—Rosedale before speaking at the Via Rail station in Liberal MPP **Jim Bradley**'s riding of St. Catharines in the afternoon.

Ford to slash fuel taxes in bid to lower prices at the pump

Blaming **Kathleen Wynne**'s cap-and-trade program for rising gas prices, PC leader **Doug Ford** promised Wednesday to lower fuel costs by 10 cents per litre if elected.

"The price of gas keeps going up, and with it the price of goods and services with no end or relief in sight," Ford said outside a gas station in Oakville. "And with the Liberals or NDP in charge, we know that things will only get worse — higher prices at the pump."

As part of the Tories' pocketbook agenda, the PCs are proposing to reduce the provincial fuel tax on gasoline from 14.7 cents per litre to nine cents per litre. This will cost the provincial government \$1.19 billion in annual revenues.

Combined with the 4.3 cents per litre in savings drivers will see when the PCs scrap the Liberal's cap-and-trade plan, the Tories say they will save drivers 10 cents per litre at the pump.

Ford said \$1.60 per litre gas prices in Vancouver, the "carbon tax capital of Canada," should be a "wake up call" to the rest of the country that carbon taxes are unaffordable. Ford warned that carbon taxes are set to rise from their current rate of \$18 per tonne to \$95 per tonne by 2030, which will add 23 cents per litre to the cost of gas.

"We can't afford not to do this," he told reporters, adding that "when you stimulate the economy by putting more money into the taxpayers' pocket, they are going to go out there, they're going to buy goods and services that will bring more money up to the Ontario coffers," he said. "

Ontario's cap-and-trade program brought in \$1.9 billion last year, which combined with the \$1.2 billion fuel tax cut, would put a \$3.1 billion hole in the budget.

Ford again said this would be offset by efficiencies found by a third party audit of the province's books. His media team later told reporters that the cap-and-trade money would be offset by cancelling the green initiatives it funds.

In a backgrounder, the Tories said municipalities will continue receiving their share of the fuel tax with no corresponding decrease in funding.

The New Democrats said Ford's fuel tax cut is a cut to the transit and infrastructure programs the revenue-stream helps fund. "The PCs lack a financial plan, a platform costing, and any semblance of explanation of how they think they can pay for this without massive cuts in funding for transit, highways and transportation infrastructure."

Transportation Minister **Kathryn McGarry** warned that "people won't get the savings [Ford] promises ... Even if any room is created, the gas companies will eat it up with higher prices and we'll just be left with \$1.2 billion in cuts to transit and vital services."

Liberals urge Ford, Horwath to drop candidates over 'racist' and 'anti-Muslim' comments

In a series of press releases and news conferences Wednesday, the Liberals called on NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** and PC leader **Doug Ford** to drop three candidates, one an incumbent MPP, over controversial statements each has made since 2015.

The Liberals want Horwath to drop Hamilton East—Stoney Creek MPP **Paul Miller** over questionable comments he allegedly made about not wanting to attend a Black History Month event.

The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal is currently investigating two complaints of bullying and harassment his former staffer **Todd White** made against Miller. In White's complaint to the tribunal, he alleges Miller reprimanded him for not attending a Black History Month event the MPP himself did not want to attend, claiming "those people' can't organize events." His complaint also alleges Miller made "routine racist, sexist and homophobic comments" in the office.

"Andrea Horwath has stood by Miller, refusing to address the serious allegations, and allowing Miller to remain as a candidate in the 2018 general election," the Liberals stated in a release. "Will Horwath take her own advice and drop Miller?"

At a campaign stop in Scarborough Wednesday morning, Horwath said because NDP staff are unionized there is a process in place for handling complaints.

After targeting Kanata—Carleton PC candidate **Merrilee Fullerton** over tweets where she mocks hijabs and suggests refugee Muslim doctors be subjected to surveillance, Liberal campaign co-chair **Deb Matthews** called an afternoon press conference in Toronto to discuss London North Centre PC candidate **Andrew Lawton**.

Lawton, an alt-right radio reporter who hosted a podcast with Rebel Media for many years, was one of 11 candidates hand-picked by Ford soon after becoming party leader.

In a short video prepared for the media, the Liberals highlighted Lawton's public views on Christianity as the "only correct faith," the dangers of "a radical Muslim ideology" and the concept that women are "more proficient at being friendly" and therefore ideally suited to secretarial work.

"Doug Ford's endorsement of Lawton's views is further evidence that he doesn't see anything wrong with them," Matthews told reporters. "This is the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, a party with a great tradition, and this kind of candidate should never be allowed to run for any mainstream party."

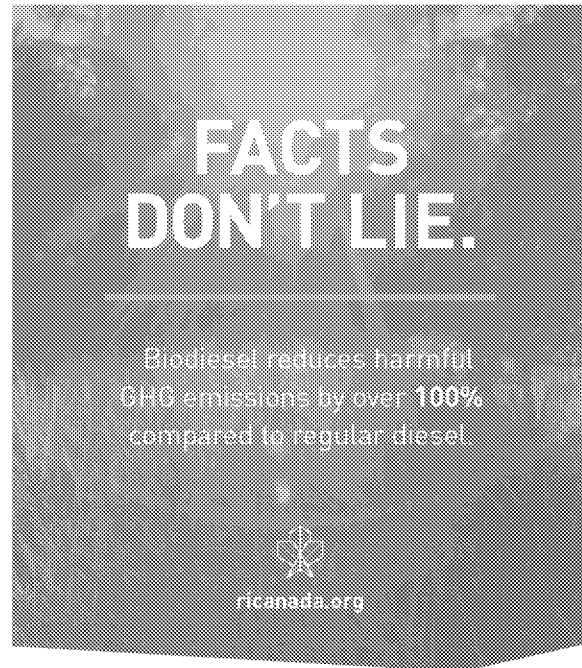
With the deadline to nominate candidates set to expire at noon on Friday, Matthews urged Ford to replace Lawton before he's no longer able to do so.

Later in the afternoon, Ford told AM 640 radio host **John Oakley** he planned to stick with Lawton as a candidate.

Topics of conversation

- Brampton East PC candidate **Simmer Sandhu** has dropped out of the race following allegations that he stole consumer data from the Highway 407 company, where he works, in order to target voters. Sandhu called the allegations "totally baseless" but said he does not want them to distract from the election campaign.
- Ontario's top cops are warning the \$274 million in federal funding scheduled to help police forces deal with cannabis legalization is insufficient, leaving forces like the Ontario Provincial Police on their own when it comes to training officers to deal with and detect high drivers.

- Ontario Health Coalition director **Natalie Mehra** was at Mt. Sinai hospital in Toronto Wednesday to urge all parties to abandon talk of finding “efficiencies” in the health care system and to instead commit to long-term investments that will fix the problem of overcrowding.
 - “All the political parties need to make real commitments to fix the crisis that we are seeing in our hospitals and in access to seniors’ care in nursing homes,” Mehra said in a [statement](#). “That means a multi-year commitment to significantly improve funding and restoration of services. It’s time now to rebuild.”
 - The OHC is asking for a 5.3 per cent increase in hospital funding each year with a promise to ensure the funding goes towards improving care and not administrator salaries.
- Dr. Chris Mackie**, London’s Medical Officer of Health, has gotten [approval](#) from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to construct two permanent safe injection sites and a mobile unit to make scheduled stops in the city’s Old East Village. Concerns over whether a PC government would approve the sites led Mackie’s team to fast track the application process.
- Finnish tech giant Nokia and Amazon.com will [invest](#) \$4.3 million into Hamilton’s Innovation Factory, an autonomous-vehicle technology incubator and accelerator based at McMaster University. This comes after the Ontario government devoted \$80 million towards autonomous-vehicle R&D in 2017.



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Today's events

May 17 at 9 a.m. — Ottawa

Ontario Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** will make an announcement at Bombardier Transportation.

May 17 at 9:15 a.m. — Toronto

NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will make a transit announcement at Bathurst Station.

May 17 at 1 p.m. — Cambridge

PC leader **Doug Ford** will make an announcement at Capri Pizza.

May 17 at 1:45 p.m. — St. Catharines

NDP leader **Andrea Horwath** will make a transit announcement at St. Catharine's GO Station.

May 17 at 3:45 p.m. — Kingston

Ontario Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** will tour the Innovation Hub and speak at St. Lawrence College.

May 17 at 6 p.m. — Kitchener

PC leader **Doug Ford** will hold a rally with supporters at Bingemans Conference Centre.

May 17 at 7:45 p.m. — Whitby

Ontario Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** will meet with supporters at 5 Paddles Brewing Company.

Appointments and nominations

Ontario NDP

- Pharmaceutical industry staffer **Melissa McGlashan** has secured the last-minute NDP nomination to run in Flamborough—Glanbrook.
 - McGlashan will square off against two Hamilton city councillors: Liberal **Judi Partridge** and Tory **Donna Skelly**.

News from the campaign trail

- The chief operating officer of Invest Buffalo Niagara told the *St. Catharines Standard* Wednesday that the Buffalo region is not stealing Canadian jobs and luring companies south of the border as PC leader **Doug Ford** alleged in Niagara Falls earlier this week. **Jenna Kavanaugh** said her organization is unfamiliar with Ford's claim that 2,000 jobs have been lost to the Niagara Region in the US.
 - The *Standard* found that just 308 jobs had left Canada for Niagara since 2002.
- In response to a Clean Air Alliance election questionnaire about nuclear power in Ontario, the New Democrats indicated their party is in favour of decommissioning the aging Pickering nuclear plant in August when its licence expires rather than extending its operating life until 2024, as the Liberals have planned. To replace the energy generating by Pickering nuclear, the NDP supports importing more hydroelectricity from Quebec.

- As NDP leader **Andrea Horwath's** popularity rises in opinion polls, the PCs went after the credibility of their new second place rival. The Tories attacked the New Democrats' ability to govern by reminding voters about the job losses, high unemployment rates and income tax hikes during NDP Premier **Bob Rae's** leadership.
 - "When Ontario voters look to hit the reset button, they need to think about what kind of change they're going to get," the PC Party said in a statement. "Compared to the Liberals, the NDP are going to be ten times worse."
 - In response, Horwath told reporters at a campaign stop in Scarborough that she's not Bob Rae. "He's a Liberal now," Horwath said, adding that 1990 "was a long time ago."
- Ontario Proud, an anti-**Kathleen Wynne** Facebook group that has registered as a third party advertiser in this election campaign, launched its first attack ads against **Andrea Horwath** and the NDP Tuesday. The social media ad claims voters should "think twice" about supporting the New Democrats given their policies are "almost identical" to the Liberals.
 - Ontario Proud has long claimed to be specifically an anti-Wynne organization, not a direct supporter of the PC Party.
- You can now listen to Doug Ford's campaign song on Soundcloud. "For the People," which plays at Ford rallies, features a chorus of male voices singing "For what's best / for our lives / for the people / Gotta fight / for what's right / for the people / Right now is the time / we gotta speak our mind / bring us hope / bring us change / for the people."

Wynne touts provincial job growth at Mississauga Mitsubishi plant

On the heels of PC leader **Doug Ford's** Monday promise to scrap corporate welfare, Liberal leader **Kathleen Wynne** made a campaign stop Wednesday to highlight the benefits government grants can bring businesses and the greater economy.

Speaking with reporters at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) in Mississauga, Wynne defended the Jobs and Prosperity Fund and other regional business supports as an integral element of enticing companies to relocate to Ontario or expand their existing facilities.

"Ontario is one of the strongest economies in the world," Wynne said, "and that's because of the way we do business here."

In October 2017, MHI received \$4.9 million in government funding from Economic Development and Growth Minister **Brad Duguid** in order to expand its aerospace facility and create 90 new jobs.

Mike McCarthy, president of MHI Canada, told reporters the public funding, part of a larger \$36 million investment, helped create some of the best highly skilled manufacturing jobs in Canada in recent memory.

And while proximity to customers and confidence in Ontario talent played a role in Japanese-based Mitsubishi locating its new fuselage facility in Mississauga, McCarthy said the company's partnership with the government was crucial.

"In Ontario, we have strong relationships with academia, with industry and with government," McCarthy said. "There was a level of support that was brought forward by the government that made it happen," he said, otherwise the assembly plant would have stayed in Japan.