



Andrea Horwath

Leader, Ontario New Democrats

www.OntarioNDP.com

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Ontario Public Service Employees Union
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Dear Smokey,

Early in this campaign, I urged my fellow provincial Leaders to join me in a series of debates about the future of our province. They've done their best to avoid the sort of open and honest debate Ontario needs but I wanted to thank you and OPSEU for stepping up to the plate with a simple idea that's long overdue: a real debate on privatization.

The Conservatives and Liberals took a pass on the proposal, but that's no surprise. In an open and honest debate they'd lose, pure and simple. And they know it.

Anyone paying attention over the last twenty years can point to example of privatization deals that left the people of Ontario paying more and getting less: whether it's high tolls on the 407, user fees for Teranet or getting stuck with the added cost for so-called public-private partnerships. Just look at the recent scandals at Queen's Park: \$1.1 billion handed to private power companies for cancelled gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville, millions handed to the privatized ORNGE air ambulance corporation without any oversight or discretion, millions to consultants at eHealth.

The fact is: when it comes to our public assets, privatization rarely makes much sense. I've been clear that the private sector has a vital and important role to play in our economy, but there are aspects of our lives where the public interest, and the common good, has to be the priority. Whether it's our schools, our hospitals, or, I'd argue, our power plants and roads, we need to work together for the common good. This makes sense for people who rely on services but for business too. Ask a company whether they'd rather be paying the hydro bill for Ontario's private power boondoggles or the low electricity prices that Manitoba and Quebec can provide via their publicly owned and publicly accountable hydro companies.





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I've said before that I'd consider any privatization plan that protected the public interest and saved the public money in the long run. Unfortunately, the plans that are being championed in this campaign by both Liberals and Hudak Tories don't meet that test. Both have said they're looking at selling off parts of the LCBO, OPG and Hydro One despite the fact that past governments of all stripes have considered such schemes before and were forced to admit they would cost more and put service at risk. When Ernie Eves and Dalton McGuinty are forced to back away from privatization plans you know they're a bad deal. Yet, year after year, Liberals and Tories keep resurrecting the same discredited schemes.

It's time for a change. Those of us who believe that government has a fundamentally important role to play in our society, want public money invested in front-line services, not wasted on short-sighted schemes.

It's time for an honest debate on that and I want to thank you and OPSEU members for your leadership.

In solidarity,

Andrea Horwath
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