

Ontario's Government By Bulldozer

By: Christine Van Geyn,
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The provincial government has decided to raise the minimum wage, and are finally admitting that they don't care if it hurts small businesses or puts people out of work.

On December 7, Liberal MPP Ann Hoggarth was in her riding of Barrie when she said the following about small businesses that may go out of business because of the minimum wage hike: "if you're going to go out of business, because on the backs of your employees [sic], because you can't afford to pay them this, perhaps you should reassess your business plan and reassess if you should be an employer at all."

Ann Hoggarth was elected in 2014, and was previously an elementary school teacher and local union chapter president. And obviously, a self-taught expert on how to run a small business.

Keep in mind, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is not even opposed to increasing the minimum wage. Rather, they are concerned that the planned increase is "too much, too fast," and that the pace is just too difficult for small businesses to absorb. Vice President of the OCC, Karl Baldauf, has pointed out that while the intent of the wage increase may be good, a \$15 minimum wage took five years to implement in California and four years in Seattle. In Ontario, the government is requiring a 32 per cent increase in 18 months.

Many small businesses operate on narrow margins, and have close relationships with their employees. The statement by MPP Hoggarth shows a lack of concern for the real world experiences of business owners and the people they employ.

Small business owners risk their own capital to create something of value. With narrow margins, they

need to plan how to use their limited resources. For Hoggarth to say they ought not to be in business and their workers become unemployed if the owners can't operate on government timelines, is callous and out of touch, but fitting for a politician who has never created a private-sector job herself.

This attitude is also par for the course for a government that is keen to impose their viewpoints on the province without much concern about the implications for anything other than their electoral prospects.

Cap and trade was brought in despite repeated calls by small to medium sized manufacturers that the increased costs would – and now have – cause them to relocate out of Ontario.

Or consider residential electricity reforms. The temporary rate reduction financed with as much as \$39.4 billion in borrowing will see prices soar after four years, according to the Liberal's own leaked documents. These reforms show little concern for the long term, but temporary relief helps to set the government up for the June 2018 election.

The government has acted as if adding billions in debt to what is already the most indebted sub-national borrower in the world was the only option available to lower rates. They simply ignore that part of the reason rates are so high is that their own ideological Green Energy Act forced consumers to overpay for electricity by \$37 billion between 2006-2014.

The minimum wage increase is just the latest example of governing by the bulldozer method. No matter who it hurts, no matter what the cost or consequences, Wynne will move ahead with policies that align with her ideology. Especially if they'll help them get re-elected. The only difference, is that this time Hoggarth admitted it.

-Courtesy: The Canadian Taxpayers' Federation.



Rudolph And Rest Of Santa's Reindeer 'Are All Female'

The first written account of Santa Claus having reindeer was in 1821, and since then most people have assumed the reindeer were male – but a scientist says those people would be wrong.

Andrew Hebda, a zoologist at the Nova Scotia Museum, says while both male and female reindeer have antlers, only the females have their antlers during the winter months.

"Being members of the deer family, the males grow their antlers a little bit earlier and just after mating season, which is just about finished now, they drop off. So over a winter you'll never see a male with antlers," Hebda said.

Pregnant females use their antlers to dig through the snow in search for food, and lose them just before giving birth, he said.

It's most likely, he said, that Rudolph, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen are all female.

"Any reindeer right now with antlers is a girl," he said.

New focus has been placed on their gender in part because of a New York City Twitter user's



assertion this month they are "a team of strong, powerful, underrated women."

The tweet, relying entirely on the antler theory of gender, proved very popular – it has garnered more than 680,000 likes and more than 200,000 retweets.

A Chicago Zoological Society blog post echoes the contention that the antlers tell the tale.

"This isn't to say Santa only had female reindeer, but the nine flyers were girls," it said.

"Let's be honest, unlike Santa, reindeer don't live forever, so Santa needs both male and female reindeer, no? Because boy

reindeer don't give birth to future generations of magical flying reindeer."

Hebda says there's another option – castrated male reindeer don't lose their antlers.

"That's always a possibility. It's a question of whether Santa has followed a code of practice for proper raising of animals in castration is perhaps up in the air at the moment, but that's a possibility," Hebda said.

Hebda said European reindeer are cousins of the North American caribou. There have been some introductions of reindeer into North America – most recently into Newfoundland, he said. While Hebda can talk about reindeer gender, he's not prepared to explain how they fly.

And while many children leave milk and cookies out for Santa on Christmas Eve, Hebda said that's not a good choice for the reindeer.

And he said carrots may also be too rich of a treat to leave out for Santa's reindeer. He suggests lichens, leafy greens and dried mushrooms instead.

- The Canadian Press

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