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MEDIA RELEASE

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Wolf-in-sheep's-clothing budget unfair, will hurt recovery, CUPE Ontario President says

Toronto, ON ... Today's budget is a wolf-in-sheep's-clothing that includes measures that hurt economic recovery, penalize low waged women workers, reduce healthcare investments and signals a future asset sale that will weaken the province's ability to fund healthcare and education in the future, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario President Fred Hahn said today following the budget announcement.

"New job creation and child care funding, although welcome, are limited benefits undermined entirely by spending freezes that will reduce consumer spending and weaken public services.

"It makes no sense to impose a funding brake on recovery," Hahn explained, "and it is inherently unfair to freeze the incomes of many of the provinces lowest earners, most of whom are women, to subsidize \$4.6 Billion in corporate tax cuts.

Healthcare funding is set to decline substantially over the next few years when compared to the increasing healthcare needs of a growing and aging population. Steadily reducing investment in the healthcare people will need makes the \$4.6 Billion in corporate tax cuts even more wrongheaded.

Equally alarming is the clear signal that the Liberal long plan includes the potential for a major asset sell-off says Hahn. "Selling shares of provincial infrastructure like Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and Hydro One and significant program funders like the LCBO and the Lottery Corporation will weaken Ontario's revenue generating capacity and permanently damage the province's ability to provide the services Ontarians need," Hahn said.

He was also critical of the big hammer approach, just short of legislation, to force hospital, school board and social service employers to impose the freeze of operational and administrative spending. The Premier should own up to the fact that this will mean service cuts and job losses, the CUPE leader said.

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