

'I would do it again and I would do it proudly'

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MN Apr. 5, 2018

Longtime Mississauga-Streetsville MPP Bob Delaney became visibly agitated during a budget event Thursday (March 29) after being pressed by local media on the economic viability of his party's recently released budget.

The Liberal MPP met with constituents and local media during a "budget breakfast" at a Streetsville eatery to discuss the document and field questions.

Delaney defended his government's shift from promises of several years of balanced budgets barely three weeks ago, to now projecting at least six more years of deficit spending by emphasizing the province's 37 per cent debt-to-Gross Domestic Product (the total value of goods produced and services provided in a country during one year) ratio.

He dismissed questions asking him to clarify his comparison between Ontario's provincial debt-to-GDP ratio and that of the national debt-to-GDP ratio of countries overseas, saying he didn't think it was "a fair question."

He didn't mince words when questioned by The Mississauga News as to why, after 14 years in office, his government waited until two months before an election to address these concerns - while tripling the provincial debt in the process.

"With respect, bull****," Delaney said, becoming visibly upset.

"For the past 15 years, I've been part of a government that has built this province," he said, later adding, "We have tripled (the debt) and we're proud of it, because we can afford it. It's the responsible thing to do. It's the correct thing to do, it's what people have asked us to do and I would do it again and I would do it proudly."

During his presentation, Delaney emphasized "care" and the roughly \$8 billion in new social program spending included in the 307-page document, highlighting the party's new dental, pharma, child and senior care programs.



File photo by Rob Beintema

Mississauga-Streetsville MPP, Bob Delaney, spoke to residents and local media at a "budget breakfast" event in Streetsville on Thursday (March 28).

"This budget is, if nothing else, about healthcare," said Delaney, adding that, after achieving budget balance after nine years of deficits, the Wynne government had a choice to either stay the course and keep its promise of three straight balanced budgets or return to deficit spending. While admitting deficits aren't politically popular, Delaney said his party had spoken to Ontarians and that's what voters wanted.

A Forum Research poll surveying 728 randomly selected voters reported in the Toronto Star on Saturday (March 31), found only 24 per cent of respondents approved of the budget. Forty-four per cent disapproved, while 32 per cent were undecided.

Once he opened the floor to questions, the discussion quickly turned to the province's soon-to-be \$325-billion debt, and our economy's ability to sustain all the new spending. Ontario has become the most-indebted sub-sovereign jurisdiction in the world under the Ontario Liberal Party's watch - with twice the debt and half the population of California.