

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Kristina Calhoun

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

The most effective method of sustaining economic recovery and enhancing economic growth is to re-localize the economy. Innovative new approaches are required, jobs for all skill levels are needed and energy security at a local level insures steadier economies. It is time that the Federal Government work out true cost, long term finances before making any investments. Specifically, a target of zero waste could be set (and that is a 'target'). Jobs could be provided for thousands of Canadians in all regions and in all skill levels at the gathering, sorting, recycling, repurposing and even researching of waste reclamation. There are comparatively low start up costs to this system other than paying staff. Often waste is a provincial or municipal responsibility but the Federal Gov't could look very awesome by stating a target of zero waste is wanted and throwing a few dollars this way and that in order to encourage other levels of gov't to get on board. Good publicity, good jobs and good for the health of Canadians. Not to mention this fits nicely into the Build Canada funding criteria. Encouraging more local production of energy for local consumption would also bring a spike to many regional economies. It would encourage the use of and expansion into alternative forms of energy therefore benefiting the manufacturing industry in Canada. And also providing countless jobs in every community of Canada.

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

An education campaign is needed to teach Canadians that good jobs are a privilege and must be earned. Students and others should not be ashamed to take any job that is available because if they refuse to fill certain roles then foreign workers are brought in for these roles and job opportunities are lost. As previously mentioned an entire overhaul of our current system of waste management to waste reclamation and specifically targeting zero waste is a massive opportunity to employ thousands of Canadians in meaningful work. Also previously mentioned re-localizing power production for local consumption. And building a food production industry in Canada would also provide many meaningful jobs for Canadians. This would be a total rescaling of current industrial farming to local community by community food security strategies. Employing people for planting, harvesting, preserving, researching and even teaching. Probably achievable through additional 'Growing Forward' funding.

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

Incentives for trades programs. If federal grants could be given to community colleges offering specific trades programs, more students would take the courses if they were cheaper than the alternatives. Making certain skills education cheaper or easier to get than other skills is a great way to fill vacancies.

People want to go the easiest and most affordable route so make elderly nursing courses, etc., easy and affordable to obtain. A program encouraging the elderly to move in with family rather than be put in a home is likely much cheaper in the long run than the system as it is now. A federal incentive for more in home and preventative care would also save millions on health care costs, create jobs and would alleviate wait times at hospitals.

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

A total and complete attitude change of current thought patterns is needed. A sustainable economy is a long term, slower economy. It is not this grab it all now as fast as you can. By slowing down, mines stay in operation longer, manufacturers have resources coming in more steadily and slowly. Producers have more parts available for longer periods of time, wages stay more constant and don't need to keep going up at a rate which puts most industries under or overseas. It all keeps going, slowly, steadily and safely. Put a new emphasis on long term job creation, 'jobs for generations' rather than make fast cash now! Also more emphasis on man power, instead of massive, expensive machines that can turn an acre of land a day, get men to do it and provide those men with jobs for years. You'll be doing Canadians a favour by keeping them fitter and healthier. A specific federal initiative could be to set a goal that everything Canadians need can be found, manufactured, produced, grown right here in Canada. An initiative this big would require tens of thousands of jobs as first our needs would have to be identified and then a plan made to achieve those needs and then the necessary infrastructure created to carry through. Not only would this be an enormous job creation strategy, but it would also ensure the very security of Canada as a nation that is totally self sufficient.

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

I think there is an entire sector of Canada that is being left behind. In our quest for wealth and comfort we are totally ignoring those in need all around us. Some may shrug and think this as 'their' problem, but it isn't. It becomes all of our problem when gunmen go on rampages senselessly killing dozens of innocent people and gangs run rampant to replace some sense of belonging and theft and vandalism and constant occupations and protesting are happening. Obviously it is time to face the facts that we have to do something about the disparity that is creating these problems. Canadians need to feel safe and neighbourly in order to spend money and work productively, etc. Our First Nations people are being treated terribly and this needs to be rectified. I think the challenges that many of our citizens, First Nations or otherwise, are confronted by could be lessened with the creation of free counselling services. Offering free counselling would enable people to receive the advice and direction they need in order to improve their circumstances. I also think that taxing the wealthy at a much higher rate would provide the necessary funding to pay for the services required by the poor.