

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

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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?

Attention to small businesses in RURAL areas. The government needs to support organic farmers and small farmers who produce primarily for a LOCAL market. We need to MAINTAIN staff and research levels at ALL federal and national parks across Canada, for these parks are intrinsically important to tourism which is a main segment of our economy. INCREASE taxes to corporations, especially those foreign companies that rely on our natural resources. I firmly support a QUARANTEED INCOME system to replace existing programs as a means to enable family members to leave low-paid jobs so they can give direct care to their children or elderly. All higher education ought to be FREE OF COST and 100% ability-based. This would streamline university systems and make it possible to educate our most promising future members of society. The money lost to unpaid student loans would more than equal the dollars required to give a world-class education to those who qualify ACADEMICALLY.

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?

MANY NEW JOBS in our region of Canada originate within natural resources, tourism, agriculture, academia, and medical research. Our government must initiate programs that KEEP our best and brightest HERE: reimbursement of all academic costs for professionals in science and medicine who remain in their home province for ten years. Agriculture: 95% of ALL fruit and vegetables grown in Canada is now picked by immigrant workers. In order for fruit and veg farmers to attract local workers, offer a cut to EI premiums paid BY workers and offer a bonus to farmers who employ them (e.g. farmers would pay LESS into the 'EI' pool if and when they employed local workers).

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?

AGEING: critical lack of palliative level/hospice care. Offer incentives to FAMILIES who can provide this care themselves (e.g. trained at the level of RN, CPA, LPC, etc.) This will free up precious space for those without family support. HOUSING badly needed for senior seniors who face health challenges that do not require nursing home. Many are single, ambulatory, but still need assistance of a moderate kind (e.g. shopping). Many single senior seniors do not have family support: they need to live with dignity in affordable housing where minimal support can be offered. KILL SHORTAGES: I addressed this earlier re agriculture and medicine. In EVERY profession, and also in EVERY TRADE, our gov't must offer Canadians incentives to stay where they are most needed. Income tax benefits is one way.

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?

Universities must amalgamate to assure productivity. U of Nova Scotia might then have, under its aegis, SFX, NSCAD, SMU, Dal, etc.) This would make better use of limited resources and increase competitiveness and productivity. FULL SCHOLARSHIPS based entirely on ABILITY also assure productivity at a younger age when it needs to be instilled into Canadians. Extend program to high schools: free higher education for those with the ABILITY improve productivity and increases a positive sense of competitiveness.

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?

AGRICULTURE! It is fine to advise 'buy local' but we have less land available for farming and FEWER FARMERS every year. To entice younger Canadians and new immigrants into farming (and this includes vineyards, but NOT fish farming), establish a CANADFA LAND BANK. Land would be leased to young farmers at favourable rates which would enable them to enter a marketplace where profits are low. LABOUR: right now 95% of all fruit and veg grown in Canada is harvested by immigrant workers. Encourage farmers to hire local by decreasing what the farmer must pay as a EI premium (to the govt) and what the worker must pay also.