

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?

Invest in green energy and technology. Invest in scientific research with relevance to future economies (e.g., post-carbon energy), not just current economies. Invest in youth by reducing post-secondary education costs so that education and training are available to all economic levels of society. Apply the polluter-pay principle to all industries so that the public purse is not burdened by industry costs.

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?

Invest in small and medium-sized businesses, which create most jobs. Make investment money more accessible and affordable for very small local businesses. Encourage local production of goods, services, and foods to increase Canadian jobs and Canadian self-reliance. Support cultural industries, which are heavy creators of jobs.

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?

Recognize that, while people are living longer, they are also remaining productive longer and stop spreading fear about demographic change or driving a wedge between older and younger Canadians. Stop using demographic change as an excuse to chop benefits to which the current government has ideological objections. Institute useful mentorship programs, both public and private, that allow older workers to pass on their skills and knowledge to younger workers, which keeping both groups employed and active.

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?

Develop and encourage programs to give young people job experience (both in the public and private sector) so that they can become more productive. Develop and support better programs to assist people in retraining for new careers when their old careers are no longer viable, either because of economic change or because their own capacities have changed with age. Support small and local businesses. Support innovation in sustainable sectors. Process our own resources! Open the doors to immigrants and refugees, who are among the most productive members of our society.

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?

Young people are facing serious challenges. Education is priced out of the reach of far too many of them, and others start their working lives with crippling debts. The federal government must invest in our own people by reducing these pressures and barriers through lower tuition costs, affordable and non-punitive student loan programs, and accessible apprenticeship and mentoring programs.