

Nathalie Fortier

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?

Adequate support for cultural organizations that promote Canadian culture around the world. In addition to generating significant returns, funding for cultural organizations raises Canada's profile and encourages agencies and communities that do not know much about Canada to take an interest in our country. This funding also gives rise to other initiatives that could have significant economic impacts, much like those generated by government/private-sector trade missions to various parts of the world.

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?

Canada's economic activities are highly diversified. Job creation initiatives must reflect this diversity. The oil, forestry and automobile industries receive a significant share of employment support funding. The culture industry is the poor cousin and is often ill-treated by government. It is wrong to think that this industry siphons public funds without giving much back. The economic impacts of the culture industry encompass a wide range of areas from design and distribution to tourism. Cultural activities offer a level of visibility that also attracts investors from non-cultural sectors.

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?

The government should encourage and maintain initiatives to support immigration in addition to offering programs that make things easier for families. As we have seen with Quebec and its family policies, Canadians would be less reluctant to have bigger families. If families received better support, having children would have a less negative impact on employment, and our birth rate would slowly rise. As for immigration, it is shameful to see the huge discrepancy between the description we give future immigrants of life in Canada and the reality they face once they move here. It is unacceptable for an educated and qualified group of people to have to take jobs that are far below them because Canada does not recognize their credentials. Such a disgraceful lie damages our international reputation, deprives us of important resources here at home and hinders our development. This gap between image and reality impedes our ability to achieve our main goal: dealing with our demographic problem.

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?

Support for education and continuous learning. Programs to make mental health resources accessible, given increased absenteeism caused by depression and workplace burn-out. Finding work-life balance should also be at the heart of productivity policies, incentives for companies that take an innovative approach to flexible schedules, telework, etc.

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 would like to reiterate that the cultural sector is important to Canada's development and its specific needs. Communities are also facing significant challenges and their support is essential to the well-being of at-risk populations, single families headed by women, Aboriginal peoples, etc. We should remember that funding for these sectors of the economy does not always have direct and obvious benefits, but from a broader perspective, these sectors make a definite contribution and if they are weakened, there will be serious consequences over the long term for the entire Canadian economy.