

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?

The federal government absolutely must drop the IMPP, which is increasing Canada's deficit at the expense of taxpayers and to the benefit of the major banks. The federal government must contribute more to the job creation and small business development support programs that have been put in place by the local employment centres and the local development centres. Arts and culture bring in billions of dollars (directly or indirectly) annually for the provincial and federal governments. It is imperative that the help allocated for supporting creation and enhancing our visibility abroad, as well as the help given to agencies set up abroad to promote Canadian culture (Paris, Berlin, Lausanne, etc.) is increased. The F-35 fighter jet procurement contract is the Conservatives' worst policy because it will add to the budgetary deficit, and the cost of the program is not justified. Even the mighty U.S. withdrew its order.

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?

The government should invest in the research development of a truly green industry. In other words, support projects to repurpose and recycle waste for the production of consumer products (for example, use recycled plastic to make park benches). By becoming a leader in this field, Canada would have a leg-up on the world stage.

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?

Obviously the government is not doing the right thing by making Canadians retire at 67. By implementing incentives for hiring older workers, in sectors where that is possible, we could keep part of that population active, and therefore in better health and able to contribute to the economy. Better support for informal caregivers, across the country, is another way to alleviate the burden on the health care system and would probably not interfere in provincial jurisdiction.

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?

Again, I think it is better to support the programs run by the local employment and development centres in order to support local initiatives by granting financial assistance to the centres. Better connecting the people to what these centres have to offer would also promote better development of all the regions in the long term.

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?

The arts, culture and heritage have been the hardest hit by unjustified cuts. The percentage of the budget allocated to this sector has never exceeded 0.6% of the government's total budget. Increasing our visibility internationally positively reinforces the Canadian identity that allows works to be distributed here at home. With the billions of dollars that this industry generates directly or indirectly, it is imperative to support production and administration in this sector. Today, companies from the various sectors of the arts and arts distribution are struggling to survive or keep working despite having done so for 20 or 30 years. The countless fees involved in managing these companies, the cuts to Council of the Arts and Heritage Canada programs are such that less and less money is going to the creation and production of new works. What is more, companies can no longer be competitive abroad because they do not receive enough support to promote artists or to launch tours. It is imperative that this specific area of economic activity receive adequate support. In a democracy, a difference in ideology should not be penalized.