

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Mary Harrison

### 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 new small businesses, regardless of type. I have started one, and I'm too old for the 'young entrepreneur' category, can't get anything because I'm a woman, and I do retail, not technology. If you really want economic growth, give easier capital (startup and sustain) funds to all kinds of small businesses for at least their first 3 years. Instead of 'hiring credits', give small business owners actual funds to help pay salaries to their employees. It might 'just' be retail, but I have to train my staff to a specific level of customer service and administration that is specific to my type of retail. Help me out by paying half of their first year's wages.

#### 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?*

1. Crack down on pirate internet websites. They are my biggest competitor because they don't have to charge taxes on their products. 2. My USA suppliers charge me considerably higher than my US counterparts for the same item. Make it cost comparable for me to purchase cross-border items for resale here. I lose customers to stores across the border, even with the exchange rate. 3. Create a grant for retail and other small business that isn't related to technology.

#### 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?*

Aging population means more medical care. All the skills shortages and future health care needs can be offset with assisting youth (grade 10 and higher) in making choices geared toward these skills and health care. Create a country-wide standard for nursing and medical categories, making it easier for an OR nurse in Alberta to find the exact same job in BC if they desire. Approach high schools in a yearly 'job fair' where they learn about what's needed to get into health care, technology, welding, carpentry, etc. Give employers in manual trades monetary assistance to train their apprentices and journeymen.

#### 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?*

Instead of just offering 'credits' on employment, offer employers actual MONEY to help them train employees, pay employees, source better products WITHIN Canada. Eg: Exquisite fabrics are made overseas because that's where the knowledge base is. Bring it home again with funds given to Canadian companies who create the same quality item here so they can sell their cloth here, making a profit,

while allowing their customers to make a profit when the finished garment is sold on to a retailer.

## **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 environment can't be left behind in the race for economic growth. Invest in alternate energies (solar) and subsidize new means of energy to the consumer. I'd love to go solar at my home, but the price of panels are prohibitive. And give it a substantial subsidy too - not just \$50. It has to be worth my while to jump through hoops to get the money back. The 'middle class' is being left behind - the 'poor' gets a lot of help (which is awesome), and the 'rich' gets tax breaks. Those of us who are trying to make ends meet are having a harder time of it.