

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?

To begin with, this is a question that presupposes a set of answers. The question might be framed better by asking to what should our economy recover, and if, given the ecological crisis rapidly overtaking our planet economic growth is appropriate. I note the Governor of the Bank of Canada forecasts an economy running at full capacity by mid 2013- why then would any stimulus be needed at this time.

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?

It is time we focussed on a renewable economy, I would suggest unleashing the creative and entrepreneurial abilities of our citizens by allowing us to compete on an even playing field with utilities in generating electricity by removing constraints. Aside from this, a superbly educated and motivated population will create its own opportunities- as a start we could eliminate tuition fees for post secondary students and institute a more meritocratic entry system.

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?

Clearly encouraging population growth is not a sustainable solution in the long term, thus we need to address the age at which we stop contributing to our society and economy. Retirement age should be part of this mix as should increased efforts to maintain vigour and health into what we presently consider old age. Enhanced education opportunities for all age groups would also be logical.

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?

Productivity is often related to education. Eliminating fees for post secondary education would boost productivity. This includes apprenticeships.

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?

First Nation and Inuit communities are facing the biggest challenges. Too many of our First citizens are poor and poorly educated, poorly housed and poorly governed. The federal government needs to live up to its legal and moral and fiduciary obligations. The actions or rather inactions of successive federal governments has been nothing short of shameful.