

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?

Though growth cannot be indefinitely sustained there are opportunities for Canada. First and most important is supporting sustainable energy and food development. Remove subsidies for fossil fuels and apply them to strategies that promote the adoption of renewables by the average person. Secondly, stop viewing Canada as a source of raw materials, for example the export of logs, crude oil etc. Put in place policies that make exporting value added goods, dimensional lumber, refined oil products etc, less expensive per unit than exporting the raw materials. Thirdly, honestly price commodities. Have the "social costs" of products as a part of the price of buying them. Examples can be the health care costs of smoking applied to tobacco products or disposal costs of excessive packaging added to the cost at purchase of the product. This would free up tremendous tax dollars for use in social programs and tax reductions. Finally, no free lunch. Any government program must require the recipient to contribute. If you receive health care you pay taxes to support it, if you are in jail you work to put the roof over your head and food on the table just like everyone else does, if you receive welfare you work in the community to make it better (eg; community garden, sorting recyclables, cleaning streets, caring for children so others can work on other projects etc.) and so on.

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?

Require reciprocal agreements of any country importing to Canada. If you have access to our market we have the same degree of access to yours. I'm thinking specifically of China and other Asian countries. We have far more limited access to their markets than they have to ours. If they won't agree then limit access to our market exactly the same as they limit our access to theirs.

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?

Firstly, limit enrollment into academic programs that don't have a demand. This could be done by financially supporting the "needed" spaces then have surplus students have to pay the full cost as out of country students do for example. Secondly, have active promotion of needed skills and remuneration in all years of high school so students have better information to make informed choices. Regarding the aging population anything that supports them in their own homes will act to minimise the cost of caring for them. Examples would be the 40 hours of community service required to graduate high school allowing things like yard care for seniors, basic home maintenance such as painting a room etc. Community support could become tax deductions eg; meals on wheels volunteers being able to claim time and gas against taxes etc.

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?

Stop playing god by legislating non-essential people back to work. Essential means life and death such as nurses, doctors, firefighters etc... Not people such as airline pilots, mail workers, teachers etc... The discontent generated in basically becoming slaves dictated to by the corporation is guaranteed to result in decreased productivity.

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 middle class is being squeezed from both ends. The rich are pushing the government to allow less wages and lower benefits while the poor demand more services from the tax base. Corporations have many rights similar to people under the law but pay a pittance in taxes comparatively. This uneven playing field may promote short term employment but in the long run simply acts to degrade the work environment. Long term planning rather than short term reactionary processes need to predominate. Corporations are not people and need to have much of their subsidies removed.