

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?

Invest in culture: In our often short-sighted society, we tend to forget that investing in the arts is good for government accounts. The idea is not to fund only companies like Quebecor or Spectra, but to allow more artists to make a living from their work and subsequently reinvest the subsidies they receive into their companies. These subsidies are not charity. They are a way of keeping the economy going on a number of levels. Artists are major consumers. Their enterprises require constant investment: they have to reinvest their fees. They have to constantly hire other people to keep their business going, which obviously creates employment in return. What is more, when it comes to promotion (an artist has to use a great deal of networking in order to succeed), artists consume a number of products and services, which creates a significant number of taxpayers. As you know, the towns and neighbourhoods where artists set up, become popular tourist attractions. Take for example the famous Plateau Mont-Royal, in Montreal. Some 20 years ago, this neighbourhood was home to many artists because it was an affordable place to live and work. Those artists settled there, brought life to the neighbourhood, spruced things up and attracted people with means. It is now becoming difficult for the artists to afford to stay there. Artists stimulate gentrification and tourism, and contribute to the good reputation of a town, province, or country. When people travel who do they talk about? Our artists. They are the ones who showcase the country the most. For now, the Conservatives seem to have forgotten about this smart investment for the SHORT AND LONG TERMS. Speaking of SHORT AND LONG TERM investment, there is the environment and sustainable development: a source of great pride on the international scene when a country succeeds in making progress and inspiring others. In that sense, I am ashamed of Canada. We are making choices that will be our downfall sooner than we might think. Major investment needs to be made in products and research that will result in sustainable solutions. Imagine if Canada were the first country to patent non-polluting modes of transportation? Do you have children? It does not seem like it. The current Conservative government's decisions on the environment scare me and make me not want to have children in a country that does not invest in the future. A hefty bank account is worthless without a planet to live on. Thank you for your 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?

Invest in culture. Invest in sustainable development: wind energy.

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?

Make the application process for adopting foreign children easier.

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?

Encourage the Quebec government to allow access to higher education. Tuition fees in Quebec are having the opposite effect.

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?

Give more subsidies to SMEs instead of favouring companies that have a monopoly. Corporations have all the money, which chokes the others and leads to bankruptcies and job losses in a number of sectors. Consumer products and services need to be diversified.