

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?

While young adults in my own neighbourhood are having a tough time getting jobs and starting their careers, high tech companies are not finding enough educated and qualified Canadians to fill their employment needs, so they are hiring well-educated young people from China, India and many other places around the globe. Careers in science, engineering and technology can be lucrative and satisfying, and these are areas in which the labour market is growing. Our skilled labour-shortfall in physical sciences and engineering should first be filled by young Canadians before we start looking abroad. We should be developing and participating in outreach in technology, engineering and science, especially in our high schools and elementary schools. We are currently not educating and producing enough qualified technical personnel to fill jobs in science/engineering and technology in Canada. Let's strongly support education in sciences, engineering and technology, so that our own kids will be the leaders and innovators sparking economic recovery and growth in industry and hi-tech in Canada.

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?

New jobs are being created in Canada. A problem we have is that we are not training young Canadians to fill these jobs, especially when they are in high-tech engineering or sciences. Support education in sciences, engineering and mathematical sciences and we'll be employing Canada's youngest generation of workers.

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?

To address skills shortages, the answer is simple: let's support education for young Canadians in the fields in which we are facing skills shortages: these fields are mainly in engineering, sciences, mathematics and technology. We need to attract more young people to these fields - these are fields in which we have large skilled worker shortages. Support education and training for these young people. Examples of fantastic training grounds which have been closed or have had severe funding cuts are :PEARL, the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Lab, the Experimental Lakes Area, the Bamfield Marine Sciences Research Center, and many other small cost-effective educational facilities. We have people, we have jobs, but we are not doing all we can do to train young people for the jobs/careers that are suffering labour shortages.

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?

We need to support the education and training of more young people in high tech fields. These are the young folks who will drive Canada's advancements in technology and industry.

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?

We are just passing over the threshold of a serious environmental crisis. There is no question that the atmospheric CO2 levels are higher than they've ever been for millions of years, higher than they've ever been through the passage of the last 3 ice ages. We are in a danger zone. In the 1990's Canada was a world example and leader to which many nations looked up in terms of environmental policies and action. Now we are an embarrassment to ourselves and to our kids: we cannot just sit here and take no action (as is currently happening) We need tighter environmental regulations and carefully planned resource extraction and management. Our beautiful country is too precious to abuse or waste.