

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Debbie Patterson

### 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?*

Investment in arts and culture always provides a good return on the dollar. They provide direct benefit to Canadian workers in these industries, rather than to goods and services outsourced from other countries. They increase the quality of life for all Canadians, reminding us of who we are and why our country is great. They instill a sense of compassion by providing understanding of the human condition. Compassionate people are less greedy, less lazy, more willing to help their fellow man and contribute to society. If we want a productive, caring and fulfilled populace, we need the arts.

#### 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?*

We need to encourage Canadians to support Canadian made products. It's no use complaining of the dearth of good union jobs when everything you buy comes from China. Make it harder to buy cheap crap and more attractive to buy Canadian made products to stimulate the manufacturing sector. Any stimulus monies given to large corporations must come with a stipulation that the company must commit to creating a certain number of jobs for a certain amount of time. A portion of funds should be withheld or posted as a security bond to ensure that these stipulations are met.

#### 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?*

Take a lesson from Iceland, which provides both mother and father with a full year of parental leave after the birth of a child. Iceland is a model of excellence in economic recovery. The aged populations have much to teach us about living well with austerity, making the best use of all we have, living in community. Community programs to create mentoring positions for seniors would benefit us all.

#### 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?*

Again, I recommend investment in arts and culture and especially in the CBC. Uniting Canadians in the common goal of improving Canada's economy can only be accomplished if we have a sense of why Canada matters. Cynicism is the death of productivity. We need to create a sense of hope and optimism among Canadians for the future of Canada. In order to do that we need to understand each other, hear each others' stories. No one works harder than a person with a vision, a dream.

## **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?*

Individuals with long-term chronic and degenerative conditions such as MS, lupus, etc need more options in terms of funded or at least deductible medical expenses. We need to be visionary in the options available. For example: when I had my babies, I paid out of pocket for midwifery services and wasn't allowed to claim this as a medical expense. Today midwifery services are covered under our universal health care. By having my babies at home, I saved the medical system thousands of dollars, yet I wasn't compensated in any way. Procedures, therapies and substances that today are seen as unfit for coverage, will one day be part of the spectrum of health care services covered by our tax dollars. And these therapies are often less expensive than traditional medical care. Expedite this process and we'll decrease suffering, save lives and money.