

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?

Support post secondary education so it becomes the next step to a career and not the main step to debt. Put money into research that meets the need for society to protect the environment yet addresses our economic need to prosper from an expanded use of natural resources. This will bring about a sense of harmony which will then foster local and international investment. Invest in municipal/provincial infrastructure grants. The government needs to use technology to cut down on its particular expenses - model restraint - be creative - choose to opt out of an international trip to a meeting but then donate those savings to organizations that support the cost of athletic travel or medical travel...then participate in that meeting via technology - it would set a great example. Support tourism as a resource sector - this is where economic growth and diversification is born.

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?

Expand the LMEDA to include a larger cross section of training and apprenticeship opportunities. Include a business incentive so employers will see they need to be part of the training process and not just sit back and expect people to apply who have that rare combination of certification and experience. Support self employment ventures that are green, inclusive, innovative and have the potential for diversification and expansion. Industry must financially support the training and education of local workers so that communities can directly benefit from the changes brought by new ventures. Stop the boom and bust cycle of small rural communities by assisting those municipalities with support for diversification. Rapid economic growth is a huge cost factor for social services in the health and welfare sector.

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?

Promote the value of the gained knowledge of our elders by tapping into them as a resource. Too much emphasis is placed on how our seniors are a burden and its creating a negativity that impacts their access to employment and respect based services. Teaching, tutoring, hands on skills training and think tanks will help society glean a depth of knowledge from seniors and governments can then learn first hand from their experience what worked and what didn't and quite possibly seniors will have some solutions. We already know we are facing a skills shortage due to retirements at a faster rate than incoming trainees or graduates. We need to back up right to high school and show financially successful steps to take towards further education and training. It still seems an insurmountable financial process to acquire trades certified skills.

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?

Ease the financial burden of those currently enrolled and those seeking further education and training. Make professional daycare a right rather than a financial burden. Create a parent wage for those parents who stay home to raise their children as currently this is a punishment and sets (mostly women but an increasing number of men) backwards in their career advancement. (This is different than those who are accessing Income Assistance - one would need to prove the impact on their career progression rather than those who have yet to start a career.) Credit cards create a false sense of the value of market purchases - control the credit card interest rates so that purchases are more in line with the ability to pay back the true amount borrowed.

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 most important action the federal government can do is take genuine, measurable steps to regain the trust of Canadian citizens. The federal government is too removed and is making decision and enacting them in isolation from the people. People feel vulnerable and not listened too. This creates dissent, dissatisfaction and a tendency to not take chances or engage in long term commitments. The government needs to take obvious and courteous steps that result in actions that benefit families and industry alike. Listen to the people of BC regarding the pipeline. Invest in new technologies to move toxic materials from point A to B that will not forever damage environments and human ways of life. The government needs the people to believe they are being represented thoughtfully and with respect to our multiple unique provincial needs. This not the reality at this time. This is changeable. The government must regain the trust of its people before we all see a collective forward movement to prosperity.