

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?

I do not believe that austerity measures are the way we "grow" the economy. From examples such as Ireland we have seen that investors stay away even though the government forces deep cuts on public services, cuts which inevitably hurt ordinary citizens. I would like to see Canada do more sharing across the country, that is help different regions benefit (through lower cost of) from the materials, products and services the other regions have to offer. I would also like to see Canada develop more small and medium business as these are usually where the future jobs will be and these smaller businesses are more invested in their local communities. In the area of resources I want to see Canada try to keep as many processing jobs here as possible. Perhaps we could also develop more cooperatives in some areas of the economy.

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?

Make sure the processing of raw materials extracted in Canada also stays in this country. Look at how enhancing education can make us competitive by having a better-trained workforce. Support entrepreneurs more. Invest in the green 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?

There are lots of people waiting to work. In my experience (I am an educator at the post-secondary level) the problem is that "baby-boomers" who have retired are taking on well-paid contractual work NOT because they need the money but because they have the contacts in their field, the pay is better, and they have everyone convinced that their greater job experience is crucial. I think these boomers let young people down by not having groomed them before the boomers retired. Now boomers are reaping benefits they don't really need (please note I am generalizing and this has certain flaws). There are jobs for young people if some of those early-retired boomers will move out of the way. So...create more mentoring programs, more internships...

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?

From the statistics I have seen there is a lot of productivity lost to people being stressed, chronically ill, dealing with sick elders, etc, etc...in other words... before anything we need to look at all the lost work days for THOSE kind of causes and see what we can do about that. Next, I would like to see a workplace model where employees' input is solicited and rewarded when it results in greater productivity and profits.

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?

I think small and medium businesses face the greatest challenges. The first few years must be incredibly tough and we need to find ways to help them obtain equipment pay for infrastructure and find qualified workers. Unions also need to adjust their priorities. I am unionized and I firmly believe in unions but they need to examine how they are working and whether or not they have become too close to management. Their priority should be making sure companies and businesses are creating all the jobs they can. The individuals most challenged are certainly those who have difficulty finding some kind of training that they fit well with so they can develop and offer skills. I think seasonal workers and farm owners also face serious challenges. The huge corporate farm seems to be taking over and it must be hard for small family-owned farms to compete.