

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 small businesses, entrepreneurial enterprises, education (primary, secondary, and post secondary), science (natural and social), healthcare, the arts sector, innovation/creativity, and sustainable infrastructure, programs, and agriculture. We need healthy, educated, creative people to overcome the challenges of the 21st century. We need to shift to a green economy to reflect the restraints of our natural environment and to adapt to climate change, otherwise it will be even more costly later. E.g. see: Executive summary:

http://www.parc.ca/pdf/research_publications/communities6_summ.pdf Full report:

http://www.parc.ca/pdf/research_publications/communities6.pdf Support people, their jobs, and their interests so that they can achieve a high quality of life. Happy people = productive people. Invest in social programming to lessen the harmful impacts of a stressed 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?

Highly support entrepreneurial endeavors. Support local businesses. Keep production and manufacturing in Canada where possible. Create better programs to support those who are looking for jobs and/or transitioning (e.g. career centres). And get past the idea that "a job is a job"... people do best when they're interested in what they do and have had the opportunity to grow in their work. Don't just help people find any old job, but help them work towards a job they are passionate about. Support new Canadians by helping them find jobs they are qualified for. We have doctors, lawyers, business people, etc. who are driving taxis. This is undermining their abilities and does not allow them to fully add what they could to Canada. Create a national strategy to end poverty in Canada. Provide more support to Aboriginal people and their communities. Not by providing short-term labour jobs related to resource extraction, but support in the areas of community development and diverse local economies. Support unions. They provide job security to not only workers, but to workers' families. Don't put all our eggs into one basket of non-renewable resources. Use people rather than technology to get a job done.

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?

Better skills-training for new employees from those who are about to retire. Rather than raise the retirement age, train younger generation to fill those shoes. Support immigration so gaps in the workforce are filled. Invest heavily in public healthcare and housing for seniors. Including preventative healthcare (activity, healthy food, etc.) - keep seniors healthy for as long as possible so they do not rely

on healthcare system. Support developments like cohousing so seniors are supported by others in the community (e.g. <http://www.wolfwillowcohousing.ca/>). Or support the creation of secondary suites for seniors to live in - whether its with family or not.

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?

Realize the limits of an economy based on continually increasing productivity. We cannot always grow in the same ways forever. Therefore, put effort into creating a diverse economy so that no one sector will be the fall of the whole economy. Technology will play a role productivity. Steer towards a sustainable energy system and away from a limited supply of non-renewable resources. Renewable energy is going to be the closest thing to a "limitless" resource.

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?

-Aboriginal communities. Loss of culture and community. Addiction and abuse. Systemic racism that prevents them from accessing opportunities. -Immigrants. Lack of support to transition to a Canadian way of living. Systemic racism that prevents them from accessing opportunities. -Refugees. Lack of support in terms of healthcare (to help recover physically and mentally). Culture shock and other issues related to transitioning from their prior circumstances into a Canadian way of living. Systemic racism that prevents them from accessing opportunities. -Mentally ill. Lack of support to secure jobs and housing, and access appropriate healthcare. Poor public understanding of mental health issues. -Poor. Lack of support to secure housing, poor job options, difficult to "climb the latter." Addiction and abuse. A culture of "its their own fault" when they often had very little choice in the matter (e.g. being born into poverty, abuse, addition, etc.) -Students. Lack of financial support to live while studying. Massive debt at the end of their studies. *Crime also occurs in all these sectors. Sending them to jail isn't going to fix them or "the problem." Community development, helping people to secure jobs/housing and access food/healthcare, and providing education & recreation, are all much cheaper options...