

## 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?*

The primary focus for economic recovery and growth needs to be on sustainable energy programs. Continued focus on short-term solutions like coal and oil and (shockingly!) asbestos mining as means of generating jobs means we will all pay the price in years to come, with damaged air and water, and poor health for more and more Canadians. And poor health is costly as we know. I would like to see this government focus on generating jobs and wealth by investing in research and development of clean technologies, and offering incentives to get us off oil. And please continue to tax gas at the pump...we should all be paying the TRUE cost of this dirty energy.

#### 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?*

I believe Canadian companies should only have very limited government support. If the business is not competitive, it should make change, or be allowed to fail. We should be investing in education (our school standards are awfully low!) so that young people are better prepared for the work force. I don't think jobs need to be 'created'...there is always work to be done for those who are willing to do it. That said, continuing to cut needed social programs and funding for education is actually taking jobs away, and from where we should have more.

#### 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?*

Well, again, put money into education (starting with high school and including much better support for college, technical schools and university) and social programs that give people the opportunities to develop their skills. I am personally in debt over \$100,000 because I chose to go back to school in my forties and as my family's main breadwinner. Luckily I chose a new career that pays well but the amount of student funding I got was ridiculously small. \$80,000 of my debt is not student loans....I received less than \$40,000 to help pay for four years of education and continued support of my family. Less than \$10,000 per year...pretty pathetic Mr Harper. Bet you couldn't go to school (i.e. not work) and support your family on that. BUt apparently we're trying to address the challenges of skills shortages. PS> I am now a midwife, helping fill the gap being created by retiring aging family docs and obstetricians.

**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?*

**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 believe our environment is facing the most challenge. Our continued focus on profit and productivity at the expense of so many other things is going to cost us dearly in the very near future. We need to put stronger laws in place to prevent environmental degradation from such things as pipelines where they are not safe (i.e. the ocean!), and air and water pollution. We need to see ourselves as part of the bigger world and recognize that our actions (i.e. overconsumption) have long term consequences. Instead of paying for ads to denigrate the NDP (looks like Harper is running scared!) how about putting that money into sustainable energy?