

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Wachiay Friendship Centre

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?

"sustained economic recovery" encompasses the adoption and strategic implementation of a strategy and does not infer the economic growth itself is sustainable, rather it is always incrementality that contributes to economic recovery. Resource dependency erodes sector diversity. Measures for incremental employment creation should be linked to viable resource diversity businesses. Local retention of natural resources supports community/regional development. In other words: add-value locally. Greater emphasis and attention to youth employment programs that are not so restrictive. Continued funding for Status of Women programs that support non-traditional employment and entrepreneurship. Business incubator and microloan programs for women and youth. The Grammeen Bank model works. Eliminate government assistance to profit-driven corporations. Invest in social enterprise initiatives and non-profit community organizations that are capable of operating businesses that employ the unemployable, or chronically unemployed, and return net income to the community through the provision of programs and services. Work with Canada's aboriginal friendship centres to create better lives for the urban aboriginal population. In our community the local first nation receives exponential magnitudes of funding for on-reserve projects, programs and services yet their population represents 5% of the total regional aboriginal population. The Urban Aboriginal Strategy should be accessible to all cities and regions within Canada. Aboriginal disenfranchisement and poverty is not restricted to specific geographies; the same can be said for the non-aboriginal population.

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?

Canadians contribute substantially to our GDP as a result of retail purchases of Canadian products. Canada needs to focus more on Canadian made goods. I know this is much easier said than done. If subsidies are to be considered to Canadian industry (tax incentives, depreciation, capital cost writedown) these benefits need to be directly attributable to employment creation and not generate increased shareholder dividends. Consider using non-profit community-based organizations to create employment as their visions and goals for community development do not benefit shareholders. Canada needs to consider lessening funding assistance to foreign nations. Yes I know the ramifications however we must adopt a 'Canadians First Policy'. WE must also let Canadian banks and industry that cannot survive without federal assistance face the perils of reality; if their business model is not sustainable or poor business choices have been made the Canadian taxpayers should not bail them out. Why not take a page from China and create state-partnerships but only with non-profit social enterprises. The agriculture, tourism and forestry sectors offer great opportunity. Focus as well on youth job creation and reduce student loan education debt.

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?

Skills shortages ideas could include, more trades and technical training programs and institutes for youth and the under employed. Focus trades, mentoring (job shadowing, training), micro-business and make-work programs on all youth including strategically funded programs for urban aboriginal youth. Check out the Farestart and New Horizon's programs in the United States for creating employment for the homeless, unemployed and persons living with disabilities. The aging Canadian population is a much more difficult challenge than dealing with skills shortages. I could not address such a complex issue within this medium.

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?

Your question above requires addressing labour market challenges, global competitiveness, increased Canadian productivity (in comparison to what??) and mitigating initiatives. To provide an answer to such a question as phrased could only exist in the theoretical realm and generalizations: which for all intents and purposes serve no purpose. Labour Market Challenges: Previously addressed herein. Global Competitiveness: this question is much too general. In order to deal with 'global competitiveness' you need to qualify the respective areas of competitiveness that are impacting the Canadian economy. IS it productivity, transportation, wages, employee benefits, debt, utility costs, natural resource costs, land, and one hundred other potential indicators??? Increasing productivity is not a simple matter of increasing output of units. This is complex and requires individual analysis for each area you wish to increase productivity. Thus mitigating actions and strategies are specific to the study area and become concomittant to the success of the strategy. One suggestion I can provide is 'the more hands that touch a product prior to the end-consumer taking possession' the better for our economy.

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?

Individual challenges: numerous such as debt, unemployment, under-employment, housing, scarcity of food, childcare costs, medical costs: (The biggest cause of personal bankruptcy in the United States is medical costs. DO not let this happen in Canada). The challenges are more dire for low-income earners and some challenges are specific to the socio-economic demographic. Actions: childcare programs, employment programs as mentioned within, food banks, social housing. Business Challenges: Big Box Stores, multinationals, Canada does not have a strategy to support small business. Free enterprise cannot be regulated in a democratic environment without the implementation of socialistic mechanisms. Communities: loss of tax revenue, closure of businesses, primary resource depletion, operation costs. Diversification and dependency studies. Non-wealth generating communities become recipients of social-aid from provincial and federal governments. Rural development and community sustainability has a cost that needs policy in order to make politically difficult decisions. Each of the above requires an individual response tailored to deal with the cause. No generic policy will fit.