

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?

-Infrastructure spending that expands to sectors other than construction/physical infrastructure development -relaxed criteria for EI eligibility, longer benefit periods -National transit strategy to provide affordable mobility for job seekers -National childcare strategy to permit both parents to work and support their families

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?

-Tax incentives for job creators -incentives for companies that use natural resources to create value-added products for export (rather than direct sale of raw materials) -Grants and training programs for entrepreneurs -Federal funding and support for apprenticeship programs (particularly in key trades where we are facing/will face labour shortages)

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?

-Reform immigration and temporary foreign worker programs to make it easier for workers and their families to immigrate to Canada, particularly in fields where we face labour shortages -Fund and promote preventative health care - reward provinces that give special diet supplements to social assistance recipients, provide tax credits for active people (sports, gym memberships, etc.), financially support small farmers and initiatives to make nutritious food more available and affordable to people - Fund the health care system at a level where adequate levels of staffing are maintained and adequate care can be provided -Invest in homecare programs and nurses/support workers to keep people at home, and out of long-term facilities -Reform CPP to provide aging Canadians with a retirement that allows them security and dignity. Reverse changes that mean seniors will wait until 67 to draw benefits.

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?

To increase productivity, we need to support the workers who will replace retirees. This means making education, apprenticeships and other training programs available and affordable to more people. Incorporate more international workers into our labour market. Create restrictions around unpaid internships that restrict access for low-income youth to certain fields of work. Support programs that bridge college to university training.

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 that many Canadians, even those who considered themselves soundly middle-class, are now struggling. I worry in particular about families who were already struggling to make ends meet. I believe that housing costs are an increasing issue, and that more subsidized housing needs to be built. I believe rent control measures need to be put into place. I am worried about immigrant communities who may face discrimination in housing or job markets, and who may need access to training or language skills training. I am worried about the decline in decent jobs across the country. I would hope the federal government would invest in our social safety net. I would hope they would reward companies when they create jobs. I would hope they would support increased immigration and the integration of international workers into the job market and into our country. I hope the federal government will invest in transit and child care, to support people in their efforts to find work and support their families. I appreciate the opportunity to answer this survey and thank you for your consideration.