

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS - PETERBOROUGH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Increasing the allowable contribution level to CPP by employees to help encourage further retirement savings?

Providing an opportunity for Canadians to save for their retirement is an important responsibility of government. We presently have a number of tools that enable Canadians to do this including RRSPs, TFSAs, the CPP, the OAS and the GIS.

Some of these tools provide their benefit based on a person's income, with the greatest impact going to those who earn the most. Others are targeted at those with little income and still others address the needs of middle class Canadians.

In examining how to reform our system and encourage people to save more for their retirement, I believe the emphasis needs to be on middle and lower income Canadians first.

I believe one of the best ways to do this is through an enhanced CPP that follows the current model of being jointly funded by employers and employees, and whose investments are managed by an arm's length body.

Ensuring Canadians can enjoy their retirement after a lifetime of work is the right thing to do. It also makes good economic sense. The more income retirees have, the more purchasing power they possess and the more they can support local businesses and the economy.

The need for detailed labour market information that is important for businesses, educational institutions and communities to plan for the future.

I believe that valid labour market information is critical for servicing individual businesses as well as for community planning. I was so disappointed with the Conservative's cancellation of the long form census. The census yielded essential information and data that was used to inform labour market planning.

Calling on the government to take a science-based approach to policy development—rather than being driven by rigid ideological positions—is not political rhetoric. It is an approach that addresses the best interests of our businesses and community.

Locally, we are fortunate to be serviced by the Workforce Development Board. This organization brings together labour, business, trainers, educators and government in a collaborative effort to understand the labour needs of our community today and tomorrow. The WDB works with employers to understand the skills their employees need and to inform both trainers and potential employees about the type of education and training they ought to seek. Further, the WDB works to project these needs into the future, which helps students make informed decisions about their career path.

Assisting the development of labour market information is an important part of my local jobs plan.

The Federal component of the funding to upgrade the rail line and reintroduce passenger rail service from Peterborough to Toronto.

I fully support the proposed upgrade of the rail line between Havelock and the GTA. The availability of an upgraded and well maintained freight line is critical to maintaining and attracting new industry to our region. Businesses such as Quaker Oats and Uniman Mines depend on the ability to move product to and from the GTA. The Federal and Provincial governments have set aside funding in their fiscal frameworks for these projects and work should begin as soon as possible.

I support the re-establishment of passenger rail service from Peterborough to Toronto as long as there is a realistic and comprehensive business plan that demonstrates that such a service is financially viable, and will not result in local taxpayers having to take on new financial obligations.

The Energy East pipeline project which, if approved by the National Energy Board, will bring 250 new jobs to Peterborough's GE large motor plant.

I believe our long term goal must be to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels for energy production. As a party, Liberals are committed to working with the Provinces to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, develop green-energy sources and encourage sustainable consumption practices.

TransCanada describes their Energy East Project as a proposed \$12 billion 4,600 km-long pipeline that will carry 1.1-million barrels of unrefined oil sands crude oil per day. It would run west-to-east from Alberta to existing refineries and new terminals in Saskatchewan, Quebec and New Brunswick.

In the short and medium term, I support the need for Canada to invest in new infrastructure, including pipelines, to move our energy resources to domestic and global markets. The risks involved in moving petroleum products by rail need to be mitigated and safer options employed. I support a robust regulatory review process. Such a process needs to provide independent and scientifically-based analysis. The overall review and decision process needs to incorporate key principals that include:

- Building public trust
- Consulting with and addressing the concerns of local communities
- Respecting Aboriginal rights, and
- Not placing our lands, waterways or ecosystems at risk.

What is your personal statement to the business community?

Peterborough Kawartha's business community is a key contributor to both the quality of life and standard of living in our area. Through the efforts of our entrepreneurs, wealth and jobs are created in the community. Beyond their financial impact, our businesses contribute to the social and cultural fabric of our region. They regularly and generously support community groups working to enhance the lives of our friends and neighbours. Their philanthropic efforts also have a positive impact on individual lives within our community.

Government needs to be a partner with our business community. It has an important role to play in supporting businesses through the creation of favourable conditions that allow them to create wealth and jobs.

In my view, government needs to concentrate on four key areas to assist businesses in job creation. These include:

- Establishing a competitive tax environment that encourages investment in innovation, technology and the development of new markets
- Pursuing smart regulations that protect the environment, labour standards, and safety without placing an unnecessary regulatory burden on businesses
- Investing in key economic infrastructure such as transportation, serviced industrial land, post-secondary education and the development of workers' skills, and
- Assisting businesses with access to debt and equity capital that will help them reach new markets, adopt innovative processes and products, and establish new or expanded operations.

As your Member of Parliament, I would work diligently with you to build a Peterborough where our children and grandchildren will enjoy a positive social and economic future.