

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Customs and Immigration Union

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?

Ensure maximized effectiveness of government spending including: *Full review of consulting and services contracts entered into by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) including specifically those pertaining to Management Consulting', 'Unspecified', 'Information Technology Consulting', 'Other Business and Professional Services'; *Full review of expenses incurred by CBSA as part of the arming initiative including an unnecessary expansion of management positions; *Full review of allocations to CBSA NHQ and whether funds can more productively be reallocated to front line operations; *Full review of all bonuses paid to management including whether they are linked to operational activities which counterproductively impact CBSA officers' performance of duties; *Expansion of low risk traveler programs with enhanced screening and biometric screening and identity verification and rigorous enforcement;

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?

The following actions are recommended to promote both job creation and job retention with respect to international trade and travel: *Expansion of overseas Mission Integrity Offices to enhance pre arrival screening of persons seeking entry to Canada; *A complete review of the Corporate Can Pass (Air) program to immediately address the current glaring security deficiencies which jeopardize legitimate cross border commercial traffic. *Expanded role for CBSA officers at marine ports of entry

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?

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?

Enhance the productivity of spending by the federal government by taking the following measures: *Direct CBSA to participate in the Canada-US cross border Shiprider program thereby increasing operational effectiveness and decreasing the overall cost; *Expand the Integrated Cargo Security Strategy (ICSS) by restoring cuts to CBSA intelligence services and by deploying enhanced security

measures as recommended by CIU in its Submission on the ICSS at marine ports of entry. *Deploy Canadian automated analytical marine radar technology successfully tested by Defence Research and Development Canada during the G-20 Summit and currently in use by the RCMP and direct CBSA to participate in the deployment including by funding contribution from existing allocation thereby reducing smuggling of guns, drugs and people into Canada with the attendant financial and societal costs attendant thereto; *Deployment of a modernized lookout system, including face recognition biometrics, to prevent entry of persons who are inadmissible to Canada and thereby eliminate costs arising from future criminality, incarceration and removal; *Expedited removal of non citizen offenders using CBSA officers rather than private security as escort where that is required; *Deployment of GPS assisted electronic monitoring technology for criminal/security deportees who are awaiting removal; *Express authorization of CBSA officers to pursue persons in breach of the Customs Act or IRPA by failing to report as required to remove the current ineffective and costly CBSA policy of seeking contiguous law enforcement assistance; *Deployment of armed CBSA officers at airports to reduce the need for other law enforcement officer presence; *Reverse all operational cuts to CBSA staffing and seek like savings from CBSA spending areas as identified in Question 1.

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?

Although many different groups are facing specific challenges, unionized employees, including those in the public service, have recently become the focus of unprecedented and completely unjustified attack from the federal government. An organized workforce that is independent of management provides a balanced workplace with internal accountability that is simply absent in a non unionized environment. This reality is important for the entire Canadian economy but especially so in the public service. The Customs and Immigration Union, and its predecessor, the Customs and Excise Union Douanes Accise (CEUDA) has a long history of providing substantive, experienced based recommendations to Government on how to improve border security, immigration screening and enforcement and the expedited flow of legitimate travel and commerce. We are pleased to note that many of our recommendations from arming to ending work alone situations, to Canada-US joint border security initiatives, to intelligence focused enforcement and more have been adopted by the current Government. Over the years, we have also worked with different Ministers to remedy management error, financial waste and avoidance of appropriate responsibilities. These contributions were possible because of the independent, organized nature of what our union is and we are not alone in that in the federal public service. Rather than demonize organized labour within the federal public service which is short sighted, counter productive and disingenuous, we encourage the Government to return to an environment of mutual respect and trust which assuredly will produce positive results in terms of government performance which benefits all Canadians.