

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Budget 2017 fails ordinary, hardworking families and seniors

Finance Minister Bill Morneau tabled Budget 2017 in the House of Commons March 22.

The current Liberal government was quick to tout it as, 'a long-term plan to create jobs and strengthen the middle class.' However, it was exactly what we, the Official Opposition, expected ? more reckless spending, no results and higher taxes. Budget 2017 fails to deliver for ordinary, hardworking families and seniors and instead, drives us further into debt with expensive programs for years down the road, demonstrating the current Liberal government is completely out of touch with Canadians.

Canadian families were seeking a budget with a jobs plan and action from the government to put more money in their pockets. Sadly, the Liberal government's tax hikes contained in Budget 2017 will only make it harder for struggling families to make ends meet. They aren't growing the middle class, but are growing government and Canadian families will foot the bill. The budget confirms that the Prime Minister broke his promise to keep deficit spending under \$10 billion a year and to balance the budget by 2019. It puts the deficit for 2017-18 at \$28.5 billion and shows Canada running deficits into the foreseeable future. There is no plan return to balanced budget and rather than reigning in his out-of-control spending, the Prime Minister wants to borrow billions more (\$13.3 billion over six years).

Budget 2017 hikes taxes on public transit users (1.8 million Canadians); Uber and ride sharing; beer and wine; donated medicines; child care; small business owners (farmers, fishermen, doctors, lawyers, accountants, etc); oil and gas companies; and tourism. The Prime Minister recently admitted that \$195 million of the funding for 'child care' will actually be going to Ottawa bureaucrats instead of families who need it. Moreover, the current Liberal government can't tell Canadians how many child care spaces they are actually going to create. They 'hope' it will be 40,000, but don't seem to actually have a plan.

The current government had an opportunity to make life more affordable for those living on a fixed income, but instead continued with their out-of-control spending, job-killing tax increases and massive debt. There are several features in Budget 2017 that will hurt Canadian seniors, including scrapping the Public Transit Tax Credit; eliminating the Family Caregiver Tax Credit; and the Prime Minister's continued refusal to appoint a Minister for Seniors. This budget offered little more than buzz-words and repackaged ideas, which fail to address the actual needs of Canada's aging population.

Budget 2017 failed to deliver on the Liberal government's promise to lower the small business tax rate. When in office, the Conservative government cut the small business tax rate from 11 to 10 per cent and also introduced the Small Business Job Credit. Altogether, our previous Conservative government cut taxes over 180 times during our time in office, lowering the overall federal tax burden to its lowest level in over 50 years. We also understood that the key to job creation is lower taxes, responsible government spending, and support for small business. Sadly, the current Liberal government doesn't understand how to grow an economy and create jobs. In the last year, Canadians aged 15 to 24 lost 42,000 full-time jobs. The Liberal government's programs won't help the vast majority of Canadian workers and businesses who now face much more intense competition from a low-cost, low-tax neighbour to the south.

Budget 2017 does nothing to support hard-working Canadian farmers. In fact, farmers and fishermen may face higher insurance premiums resulting from the Liberal government's decision to scrap the income tax exemption for insurers of farming and fishing property. In addition, the Liberals have indicated that they plan to eliminate the income tax deferral for grain producers. In failing to provide any details regarding the next agricultural policy framework, the Liberal government has left Canadian farmers in the dark. Budget 2017 also fails to deliver for our troops. For the second year in a row, the budget contained nothing for our men and women in uniform. The Liberal government instead cut \$8.48 billion which had been earmarked for military equipment purchases. When taking into account last year's cuts, the Department of National Defence now faces a \$12 billion shortfall. All of this demonstrates that national defence is clearly not a priority for the current Liberal government.

Budget 2017 shows the current Liberal government is clearly out of touch with seniors and hardworking, ordinary Canadians and their priorities. Canadians are instead being hit with more taxes to pay for reckless spending. The Conservative Official Opposition will continue to be a strong and effective voice for the taxpayer, holding the current Liberal government accountable for increasing taxes, reckless spending, and growing debt.

