

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Government is working at keeping Canada's economy strong



Canadians know that 2015 will be filled with many challenges and opportunities.

Our government, like Canadians, is focused on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Indeed, we are focused on the future and on delivering real results that build on our record of economic and financial security, creating and protecting jobs, lowering taxes for families and keeping Canada and Canadians safe in a dangerous and uncertain world.

Around the world, the economic news has not been good and the global economy continues to be plagued by uncertainty. However, the measure of any good government is not how it achieves success in times of stability and peace, but how it succeeds in times of adversity.

In 2008, when we faced the greatest period of global economic instability in a generation, our government reacted by fostering the best job creation record and maintaining the best debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Furthermore, with more than one million jobs created since the depths of the recession, our record is clear: Canada is continuing to move in the right direction.

We're focused on building on that record of success and securing economic opportunities now and for future generations.

Our government has successfully delivered the most ambitious trade agenda in Canadian history through our Global Markets Action Plan. Through our plan, we have expanded the number of countries that have free trade agreements with Canada from five to 43; including a deal with the world's largest economy, the European Union, and Canada's first free trade agreement in the Asia-Pacific market with South Korea. By expanding Canada's trade, we are helping companies grow and create jobs, while injecting billions into our economy each year.

Our government also recognizes that investing in improved roads, bridges, and public transportation will help ensure our communities keep moving and our economy keeps growing. This is why we're delivering the largest federal investment in job-creating infrastructure in Canadian history, the new Building Canada Plan.

What's more, our government is delivering on these commitments without having to raise taxes on hard-working Canadians and families. In fact, we've cut taxes over 180 times, bringing the federal tax burden down to its lowest level in a generation.

Our low-tax plan is also putting more money back into the pockets of hard-working families through a number of enhanced and expanded programs, including the Universal Child Care Benefit and Children's Fitness Tax Credit. Indeed, we are now increasing the Universal Child Care Benefit to \$1,920 per year for children under six, and we're delivering a new benefit of \$720 per year per child aged six through 17. We also enhanced the Children's Fitness Tax Credit, doubling the amount parents can claim for enrolling their children in sports activities to \$1,000 and making it refundable.

We've also introduced the new Family Tax Cut, saving families up to \$2,000 per year by treating parents with different income levels more fairly.

Together, these measures will help make life easier for hard-working families.

We're also poised to deliver a balanced budget, helping ensure Canada's finances stay strong and that we don't burden our children and grandchildren with debt.

So while the global economic news remains uncertain, Canada will continue to push forward. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, our government is continuing the task of building a better, stronger Canada. It is a task that won't come easy, but one that will take the leadership and the determination to seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

We will not rest until the job is done.

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