

Prime Minister Harper visits King for announcement

By Mark Pavilons

Conservative supporters were primed recently, welcoming Prime Minister Stephen Harper to King Township.

Harper visited WaterStone Estate and Farms to announce tax relief for adoptive families. He also lent his support to York-Simcoe MP and House Leader Peter Van Loan.

Van Loan stressed Harper has led a government that has fostered the lowest federal tax burden in half a century, resulting in one of the best middle classes in the world. The Harper government is committed to tackling crime and ensuring citizen safety, and Van Loan said Canada now boasts the lowest crime rate in years.

"He leads Canada on the world stage by putting freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law as the cornerstone principles for which Canada stands," Van Loan said. "The result? A recent massive global survey showing Canada to be the most respected country in the world."

"He leads a government committed to helping Canadian families get ahead and build a brighter future," Van Loan added.

Harper, he said, "stands up for the hard-working people of this part of Canada, who want the freedom to succeed, and to build a brighter future for their families."

The Prime Minister pointed out that Van Loan is a "key member of cabinet and the team" and has held many prominent positions in government.

Continuing with the government's move to cut taxes and increase the benefits to every family in Canada, comes the support for adoptive families.

He announced that a re-elected Conservative government would help make it more affordable for Canadian parents to adopt children by significantly increasing the value of the Adoption Expense Tax Credit and making it fully refundable.

"Our Conservative government believes that there is no higher calling than that of raising a child, and no greater reward," Harper said. "We have a proven record of helping make life more affordable for Canadian families, particularly when it comes to managing some of the additional costs borne by adoptive parents."

The Adoption Expense Tax Credit is a 15 per cent non-refundable tax credit designed to defray the costs associated with adoption. The Harper government enhanced the credit in 2013 to make more expenses eligible and, in 2014, increased the maximum amount of the credit to \$15,000, indexed to inflation. A re-elected Conservative government will increase the value of the Adoption Expense Tax Credit further, raising the maximum amount to \$20,000, and make the credit fully refundable.

"Every year, thousands of Canadian families are transformed as they bring adopted children into their hearts and lives," Harper said. "We recognize that adoption costs can be high and, in some cases, prohibitive for families. That's why a re-elected Conservative government will increase the support available to these caring Canadians."

The Prime Minister noted that, in addition to the support adoptive parents receive from the Adoption Expense Tax Credit, the Conservative government has a strong record of helping make life more affordable for Canadian families through benefits like the enhanced Universal Child Care Benefit, the Family Tax Cut and Tax-Free Savings Accounts, among others.

"All Canadian families with children aged 17 and under, including those who adopt, have benefitted under our low-tax plan," Harper commented. "We will continue our proven record of helping Canadian families in ways that tangibly improve their lives."

Joining Harper was Essex MP Jeff Watson, who, along with his wife Sarah, adopted their sixth child, Beatrice.

"Canada needs more Jeffs and Sarahs," Harper said, stressing they intend to cut backlogs and wait times for adoptive families.

When asked about programs designed to boost agriculture, agri-tourism and the equine industry, Harper said being in King, it's easy to see the potential of these industries.

His government is encouraging tourism here from the U.S. and generally, they are supporting Canadian agriculture. He did admit that the equine industry has some unique challenges and issues.

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper made a brief stop in King Township recently while on the campaign trail. He made an announcement about increased support and funding for adoptive families. He was joined by Essex MP?Jeff Watson and his adoptive daughter. Photo by Mark Pavilons