

Tilson thought there was lots to like in federal budget

By Bill Rea

Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson announced he was pleased with the federal budget that Finance Minister Joe Oliver brought down last month.

However, Ed Crewson, Liberal candidate in the riding in the next federal election, was able to contain his enthusiasm.

"It's really not addressing any of the middle class issues," he said.

"We're back in the black and are continuing our focus on jobs and growth, which is what constituents tell me is most important to them," Tilson commented. "We've also delivered on commitments made in the last election on tax relief for families and other measures, all while the economy has generated an impressive 1.2 million net new jobs since July 2009."

"I always look at it as to how it affects the riding," Tilson added, pointing to the needs of families, seniors and students trying to pay for education. "I think the budget looked at all those things."

On top of that, he pointed out it's balanced.

Tilson pointed out the average two-income family of four will receive \$6,600 in support annually due to measures the government has introduced. He said the new tax relief will make things more affordable. As well, he pointed to an increase in the Universal Child Care Benefit, adding \$60 per month for children aged six to 17. He said that adds up to \$720 per year.

"It's a big deal," he said. "Hopefully, it's going to help out."

As for families sending their kids to university, Tilson pointed out the budget is expanding the eligibility for low and middle-income families to access student grants. He also said the Canada Student Loan Program will be providing \$119 million over four years to reduce expected parental contributions.

"I think we're allowing part-time students to have higher family incomes without affecting their eligibility for student loans," he said.

Tilson also pointed out there are a lot of small businesses in the riding, and those operators can expect to see a reduction of nine per cent by 2019. He said that means a business with \$500,000 in income will see an accumulated reduction of 46 per cent in taxes since 2006. "That's huge," Tilson declared.

He also said there have been calls for the government to get rid of the Business Development Bank of Canada, but the plan is to expand it.

There is also the plan to increase annual contributions to Tax Free Savings Accounts (TFSA) to \$10,000. Tilson recalled he spent a lot of last weekend at the Caledon Home and Lifestyle Show in Bolton. "At the home show, people loved it," he said.

The needs of seniors are being addressed with provisions to reduce the amount they have to take out of their Registered Retirement Income Funds, enabling them to keep more of their retirement savings.

"The budget was really just smoke and mirrors," Crewson said, adding it gives help to those who need it the least.

"I listen to the concerns of my neighbours every day," he added. "They want a real and fair chance at success, and that means growing incomes and more job opportunities."

"Unfortunately, Stephen Harper's priority is a \$2 billion tax break for the rich and a doubling of the TFSA limit, which will be paid for by taking away tens of thousands of dollars in Old Age Security for seniors," he added. "Instead of strengthening those at the heart of our economy, middle class Canadians, the Conservatives have introduced unfair proposals that will benefit the rich on the backs of the middle class."

"What this riding needs, and what families want, are investments in infrastructure, post-secondary education, and skills and innovations that will produce real growth," Crewson commented.