

Weak jobs market for youth is hurting parents too

Dear editor:

Today's weak labour market for youth is not only hurting young Canadians. It's also taking a financial toll on their middle class parents.

There are still 200,000 fewer jobs for young Canadians than before the recession. According to TD Bank, young Canadians are not only losing out today, they also face lower wages for more than a decade as they try to catch up on missed work experience. A growing number of twenty-somethings are now competing for unpaid internships in an attempt to get ahead.

While job prospects for young Canadians have deteriorated, the price of everything from tuition to rent and groceries has gone up. Yet student debt levels have remained relatively constant. So who is picking up the tab?

It's middle class parents ? and in some cases, grandparents ? who are stepping in to financially support their adult children.

According to TD, more than half of baby boom parents have continued to financially support their adult children, even after they leave school. 43% let their adult children live at home rent-free.

Many Canadians were struggling to make ends meet even before their children boomeranged home. Now parents are taking out personal lines of credit and delaying their retirement plans to help their adult children.

Instead of listening to Canadians on this issue, the Harper Conservatives have cut the number of youth jobs in the Canada Summer Jobs Program by more than half, and frozen the skills training budget at 2008 (pre-recession) levels without allowing for either inflation or population growth.

It's time for the federal government to recognize the depth of the problem, help young Canadians and give their middle class parents a break.

Scott Brison, MP

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