

Ottawa Journal: creating jobs and opportunities

Our Government is focused on the priorities of Canadians, supporting jobs, and economic growth. Canadians can take pride in our country's G7-leading job creation record. Our Government is working to build on that record and lay the groundwork for Canada's long-term economic prosperity, by staying on track to balance the budget in 2015. Our Government is also addressing other concerns of hard-working Canadian families with measures that include important, common sense legislation to help keep our streets and communities safe. At the same time, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is leading on the world stage, supporting Canada's friends and allies, and upholding Canadian values. The Canadian economy, with the support of our Economic Action Plan, has created over one million net new jobs since the depth of the global recession. We are working to build on that record and support continued job creation. Our Government is also working to better connect Canadians with available jobs. We're launching the Canada Job Grant to help Canadians access skills training for available, in-demand jobs. We're continuing to invest in the training and hiring of apprentices in the skilled trades, promoting skills essential to Canada's continued economic growth. In addition, we're working to help ensure disabled Canadians have the opportunity to contribute to the Canadian economy by supporting the Ready, Willing & Able initiative. We also understand the importance of balanced budgets to long-term prosperity. This is why we paid down debt before the global recession. While temporary deficits were necessary to stimulate the economy and support job creation, since then we have taken measures to control spending and find efficiencies in government operations. Canadians work hard to balance family budgets and expect no less from their government. We're on track to balance the budget in 2015, just as we pledged we would. We're also delivering on this commitment without cutting transfers to individuals or provinces. Once the budget is balanced, we will build on our record of supporting families and keeping taxes low by providing more tax relief. Our Government is also working to better protect Canadians. This will build on our extensive record of delivering common sense reforms, including cracking down on organized crime and gun crime. Now we've introduced the Tougher Penalties for Child Predators Act. It includes tougher penalties for sexual offences against children and measures to ensure that sentences for abusing multiple children must be served consecutively. It also helps ensure that spousal testimony is available in cases of child pornography and establishes a national, publicly accessible database of high-risk offenders. We are also working to reform the way the system treats those found Not Criminally Responsible for serious criminal acts, to make the protection of society the highest priority when decisions are made regarding these offenders. Our legislation will also help ensure that victims are kept informed and allow non-communication orders to be imposed, to protect victims. At the same time, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is leading on the world stage. Our Government has been consistent in our support for the people of Ukraine from the beginning of the crisis. We strongly condemned Russian aggression, offered support to Ukraine, and the Prime Minister became the first G7 leader to visit Kyiv during the crisis. This follows the Prime Minister's visit to Israel, where he delivered an historic address to Israel's Knesset and pledged, "Through fire and water, Canada will stand with you." Our Government will always stand up for Canadian values of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law, and we will always stand by Canada's friends. We're also pursuing an ambitious trade agenda. With our recent agreements with the European Union and South Korea, our Government has now tripled the number of countries that Canada has free trade agreements with from when we first came to office. This is helping to open up access to vast new markets and gives Canadians access to more choice and better prices at home. By expanding trade, we are helping create jobs, economic growth, and long-term prosperity. Canadians can count on our Government to remain focused on their priorities. Through Economic Action Plan 2014, we're delivering practical measures to support jobs and growth, including helping Canadians gain new skills and connect with available jobs. Our ambitious international trade agenda is opening up vast new markets. At the same time, we continue to build on our record of helping keep our streets and communities safe.

By David Tilson, MP