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Ottawa Journal: here for Canada

Our Government is continuing to deliver on jobs and opportunities, just as we promised. We're on track to balance the Budget and we are upholding and defending Canadian values on the world stage. This is a record I think all Canadians should take pride in, while recognizing that there's more to do and that it will require hard work to stay on the right track.

Our top priority continues to be jobs and economic growth. With the support of our Economic Action Plan, the Canadian economy has created over one million net new jobs since the depth of the global recession. This is the best record in the G7, but it does not mean that the job is done. As long as there are Canadians seeking work and as long as economic instability around the world continues to pose risks, we need to continue our efforts.

Our new Small Business Job Credit, which lowers payroll taxes on small business employers by 15 per cent, is a great example of how we continue to promote job creation.

We've also expanded the number of countries Canada has trade agreements with from five to 43, including historic agreements with the European Union and with South Korea. In addition to expanding choice here at home, the opportunities for increased exports are expected to create thousands of additional jobs.

Our work to cut taxes and keep them low is helping job creators employ more Canadians and it's also making it easier for hard-working Canadian families to make ends meet. In fact, the average family of four now saves $3,400 a year on their taxes. This is thanks to a record that includes cutting the GST to 5 per cent, cutting personal income taxes, and creating the Children's Fitness and Arts tax credits.

At the same time, by taking steps to control spending and deliver programs more efficiently, we're on track to return to balanced budgets in 2015. Once the Budget is balanced, we will deliver even more tax relief for Canadian families.

Our Government is also working to support hard-working Canadian families in other ways.

For example, we're working to deliver on our Throne Speech commitment to require unbundling of cable TV channels. Families should be able to pay only for what they want to watch. We're also banning the practice of ?pay to pay' billing, where companies charge Canadians just for sending a paper bill. We're also expanding access to broadband internet and addressing the geographic price discrimination that contributes to higher prices in Canada than in the U.S. for identical items.

Our Government is also working to help ensure the interests of law-abiding Canadians and victims of crime come first in Canada's criminal justice system. Our historic Canadian Victims Bill of Rights would protect the rights of victims to information, participation, protection, and restitution. We're ensuring that public safety is the priority when dealing with dangerous individuals who have been found Not Criminally Responsible for violent acts. We are also are continuing to work to keep our communities safe with measures to end early parole for serious and violent crimes, speed the deportation of foreign criminals, and ensure honesty in sentencing by making a life sentence truly a sentence for life.

We're also standing up for Canadian values and Canadian interests on the world stage. In an unstable world, our critics continue to advocate going along to get along. This is not the approach of our Government. Instead, we are defending Canadian values of freedom, democracy, and rule of law and standing by our friends.

We led the way in condemning Russia's violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and in imposing economic sanctions on individuals and companies involved in that decision. We have stood by the people of Ukraine throughout the crisis.

We also stand by Israel, the only liberal democratic state in the Middle East. We defend its right and obligation to protect its citizens from indiscriminate attacks by Hamas and applaud Israel's extraordinary efforts to minimize civilian casualties despite the use of human shields by Hamas terrorists.

We also support our allies who are confronting the threat posed by ISIL in the Middle East. The actions of this terrorist organization are vile and must be firmly opposed.

On all these matters, our policies are very different than what the other parties offer.

Our Government will continue to reject these kinds of negative ideas. We'll keep taxes low, stay on track to a balanced budget, and continue our efforts to make our communities safer.

By David Tilson, M.P.