

KEEPING IN TOUCH

OTTAWA REPORT
Fall 2012



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LOIS BROWN, M.P.
NEWMARKET-AURORA



Dear Friends,

Our government remains focused on what matters to Canadians— jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

So far, the results have been strong. Canada leads the G7 in job creation with over 820,000 net new jobs - 90% in the private sector— since July 2009. Our financial system has been rated by the World Economic Forum as the soundest in the world, for five years in a row. Compared to other major developed countries, we are doing well. However, there are still Canadians seeking work, and the larger global economy remains fragile. To finish the job, and to help protect the economy, it is essential that the efforts of our government remain focused.

That's why we continue to implement Economic Action Plan 2012. The *Jobs and Growth Act, 2012* includes initiatives that will build a strong economy and create jobs; support Canadian families and communities; promote clean energy and enhance the neutrality of the tax system; and respect taxpayer's dollars. With key initiatives to deliver immediate support, such as the Hiring Credit for Small Business, our plan delivers the measures that Canada needs today. The Hiring Credit directly supports employment by reducing the EI costs for small businesses that hire additional workers - making it more affordable to expand and create jobs.

At the same time, we are making vital investments in innovation and education to help make sure that Canada continues to create good jobs - and that Canadians are ready to fill them. We're supporting Canadian universities and researchers, with a strengthened emphasis on projects that have commercial potential. We've also strengthened tax credits to help young Canadians afford tuition and textbooks, as well as apprenticeships in the skilled trades.

We are also working to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly by taking steps to deliver programs more efficiently and reducing waste in the operations of government while protecting services to Canadians. We are reforming MP pensions, so MPs pay a larger share of the costs and, in the future, will become eligible for benefits later. These common sense measures help protect Canada's financial strength. Just as we paid down debt before the recession, we are working now toward a balanced budget. Our government is helping ensure that Canada is ready to deal with the challenges, and take advantage of the opportunities, that we will face over the next few years.

Our Conservative Government is also acting on our other commitments to Canadians. We continue our work to help keep Canadians safe. We've already made progress, with tougher penalties in place for serious crime, particularly violent crimes, to keep criminals off our streets longer. We've made it possible for courts to consider the real damage of white collar crime, when people have their trust abused and life-savings damaged or lost. We are also working with reforms to preserve citizen's arrest and self-defence in urgent situations when the police are not immediately available. Law-abiding Canadians deserve to know that the justice system is supporting them—not working against them.

The task before our Government is clear. Canadians can count on our government to stand up for hard-working families. We will keep taxes low, implement our plan to support jobs and economic growth and take the steps necessary to encourage long-term prosperity. I will continue to look after your interests in Ottawa, and welcome your feedback anytime.

Lois

AN INSIDE GLANCE:

New ePassport Unveiled	PG 2
Improving our Immigration System	PG 3
Lois in the Riding	PG 3
Pennies and More for Polio	PG 3
Support for Small Business	PG 3
Promoting Financial Literacy	PG 3
Protecting our Great Lakes	PG 3
Increasing Benefits for Veterans	PG 4

P R O T E C T I N G C A N A D A ' S

FUTURE

LOIS BROWN'S OTTAWA REPORT

New ePassport Unveiled

The Honourable John Baird has unveiled the design of Canada's new ePassport. The new version will be full of iconic images that will make Canadian passports more attractive and more secure, while showcasing Canada's history. Images on the inside pages are uniquely Canadian and reflect our great geographic and cultural diversity. Their complexity will serve to keep the Canadian passport one of the world's most secure travel documents by making it more difficult to counterfeit.

The iconic mages include a reflection of Canada's long and proud military tradition such as W.A. "Billy" Bishop, the legendary First World War flier, the H.M.C.S. Sackville, Canada's oldest warship that served in World War II, and Canadian infantry fighting alongside United Nations forces in the Korean War. The first 5-year ePassports will be issued in select locations during the first quarter of 2013. Production will ramp up through the spring resulting in the full availability of both a 5- and 10- year ePassport in early summer. For a look at the images included in the new ePassport, please visit the new section on Passport Canada's website, which features images and descriptions of the new passport design at www.pptc.gc.ca/eppt/photos.aspx?lang=eng.

Improving our Immigration System

With historically high numbers of new immigrants arriving in Canada, the Government of Canada has introduced a number of significant reforms over the past year to strengthen the integrity and economic responsiveness of the immigration system. In the past year, we have strengthened our immigration system by:

- Introducing and passing the *Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act*, which reforms the asylum system to make it fast and fair, combats human smuggling and allows for the collection of biometric data from visa applicants;
- Clearing the way for a new, modernized Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) by eliminating the old backlog that was leading to wait times of more than seven years for skilled worker applicants;
- Introducing the *Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act*, which would close avenues used by convicted foreign criminals to delay deportation and stay in Canada;
- Introducing the Parent and Grandparent Super Visa, valid for up to 10 years for visits of up to two years, which has helped reduce the backlog for sponsored parents and grandparents;
- Cracking down on fraud and abuse in the system such as taking action against marriage fraud, rooting out crooked immigration representatives and working with the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP on investigations into cases suspected of false representation and fraud;
- Requiring citizenship applicants aged 18-54 to provide up-front objective evidence of their language ability at the time they apply. The *Citizenship Act* already requires that applicants be able to communicate in one of Canada's official languages. This regulatory change will not increase the language level required but will change the way that citizenship applicants aged 18-54 demonstrate their language ability. Under the new rule, applicants submit acceptable, objective evidence that they meet the language requirement with their application.

New rules for Prepaid Credit Cards

Our government has taken further action to protect consumers by announcing new regulations for prepaid credit cards. Consumers are often unaware of the fees associated with using prepaid credit cards, which can often result in the prepaid funds expiring or maintenance fees being charged. We want to ensure that Canadians understand what fees and conditions apply to prepaid credit cards, so they can continue to make informed financial decisions.

The new regulations will require that fees be disclosed to consumers in an information box displayed prominently on the product's exterior. Furthermore, the regulations will prohibit the funds from expiring and prohibit any maintenance fees from being charged for at least one year after the prepaid credit card has been activated. These changes will ensure that Canadians get the full value of their hard earned dollar when using a prepaid credit card.

Queen's York Rangers Honoured

Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently paid tribute to military regiments, including our very own Queen's York Rangers (1st American Regiment) (RCAC), who successfully defended Canada during the War of 1812. The Prime Minister announced that battle honours will be awarded to select regiments with ties to units, who won decisive battles in that war.

In keeping with Canada's policy of military perpetuation adopted after the First World War, this honour will be allowed to be placed on the Colours of the regiment to honour the soldiers, who are a key part of Canadian history. This honour, which recognizes the deeds and sacrifices made by these soldiers, will allow the current unit to act as the safe-keeper of their heritage. These battle honours will serve as a reminder of the achievements of those who fought in the War of 1812 and allow today's Canadian Armed Forces personnel to honour and remember those who served before them.

Pennies and More for Polio

The Pennies and More for Polio Initiative was recently announced, and invites Canadians to join in the fight to eradicate polio. The Government of Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), will provide funds to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative at a ratio of \$1 for every \$1 raised by Rotarians in Canada, up to a maximum of \$1 million. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will likewise provide funds of equal value, at a ratio of \$1 for every \$1 raised by Rotarians in Canada. This would result in every \$1 raised by the Rotary Foundation leveraging an additional \$2. Canada and CIDA have proudly contributed to global efforts to eliminate polio, particularly where it threatens the health of the most vulnerable. This joint initiative will allow more Canadian individuals, groups, and organizations to contribute directly in the eradication of polio.



Welcoming MP Joy Smith to Newmarket's Northridge Community Church for a community discussion on human trafficking



Chatting with constituents at a "Coffee & Tea with the MP" drop-in.

Lois in the Riding



Introducing the Honourable Bal Gosal, Minister of State (Sport) to the Newmarket Soccer Club



Meeting local entrepreneurs at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce BBQ



Enjoying the Aurora+ Jazz Festival

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Promoting Financial Literacy

November is Financial Literacy Month in Canada. The goal of designating a special month to financial literacy is to help Canadians gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make better financial decisions. Enhancing your knowledge of financial literacy is a great way to help improve your financial future. The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC) recently introduced 'Your Financial Toolkit', a new money management resource for Canadians. Developed in collaboration with financial education experts across the country, Your Financial Toolkit is an objective and reliable resource to help Canadians become more capable and confident financial consumers. You can access the Toolkit at www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca.

Protecting our Great Lakes

Recently, Canada's Environment Minister announced an important investment over four years to address the complex problems of recurrent toxic and nuisance algae, and nearshore water quality and ecosystem health in the Great Lakes. This is an ecosystem that supports more than 3,500 species of plants and animals. The \$16 million Great Lakes Nutrient Initiative will advance the science to understand and address recurrent toxic and nuisance algae. The study will focus efforts geographically on Lake Erie, the lake most impacted by toxic and nuisance algae. The knowledge developed through the Initiative will be transferable to the other Great Lakes, and other bodies of water in Canada.

Women on Boards

Economic Action Plan 2012 announced the creation of an advisory council of leaders from the private and public sectors to promote the participation of women on corporate boards. Canadian women have high levels of education and business experience, yet remain under-represented on boards of directors and in top leadership positions. In fact, they currently hold only 14.5% of the board seats in Financial Post 500 firms and fully 40% of these firms have no women board members at all.

Increasing opportunities for women to serve on corporate boards makes good business sense for Canadian women and for Canada's economy. The advisory council will promote the participation of women on corporate boards and champion their leadership. In the weeks ahead, I will be reaching out to business and community leaders in Newmarket-Aurora for ideas on how we can best achieve this goal. I will be welcoming all suggestions.

Action for Health Care Solutions

An investment in innovative software will help Canadians, their families, and their medical teams gain quick access to all their health records using cloud-based tools. The Connected Health and Wellness Project is a technology platform containing an integrated suite of compatible technologies and apps designed to improve the health of Canadians. This project will allow patients to access and share their health records with their family, friends, and care teams, including a health coach, to collaboratively manage their health and wellness. This technology will also allow hospitals, physicians, and other healthcare professionals to access and update this information on an ongoing basis. For example, patients with diabetes can track their biometric measurements, meals, and exercise using smartphones, and be able to share this information with their medical teams. Our government's contribution of up to \$15,549,290 through the Technology Development Program will bring together 16 private sector, academic, and not-for-profit partners led by York University, NexJ, Systems and McMaster University. We are proud to invest in this initiative and support industry-research partnerships in Southern Ontario that will strengthen the Canadian health system.

Cyber Safety Tips

The Government of Canada has launched the Get Cyber Safe national public awareness campaign to inform Canadians about internet security, and the simple steps they can take to protect themselves online. GetCyberSafe.ca offers this advice:

- Recognize that the internet can be a hazardous place.
- Stay informed and visit www.GetCyberSafe.ca often for the latest updates;
- Make your password count by ensuring it has at least eight characters and does not spell a single dictionary word. Be sure to change it often and avoid using automatic login features that save your username and password;
- Beware of sharing information such as sharing your location, work schedule, or vacation details. These tell people when your home is empty, and where you can be found;
- Beware of clicking links and do not reply to, or click on links in any email that look suspicious;
- When banking and shopping online, look for the lock symbol on the website or "https://" at the beginning of the website address, an indication that the site is encrypted. When you're banking online, never use public Wi-Fi or public computers. When disposing of an old computer or other device, erase all personal data;
- Password protect every device – making sure your computer or device is password-protected is one of the most effective ways of keeping your device secure from cyber criminals who might try to log in and access your files and data.

Support for Small Business

Small business owners and entrepreneurs in Newmarket-Aurora are the backbone of our local economy and contribute to the quality of life in our community. Given the importance of these enterprises to our economic well-being, it is vital to ensure that they are supported in their efforts to remain strong and viable. Some of our Government's recent actions for entrepreneurs include:

- Cutting red tape through our Red Tape Reduction Plan, an ambitious plan applying common sense solutions to business irritants in areas ranging from tax and payroll, to labour, transport, and trade;
- Promoting Canadian exports through our ambitious trade plan including nine recently signed free-trade agreements and twelve new foreign investment promotion and protection agreements;
- Extending the temporary Hiring Credit for Small Businesses for one year to help employers with the cost of new hires;
- Introducing the Pooled Registered Pension Plan to provide small business entrepreneurs with a framework to provide pensions to employees at a lower cost;
- Keeping the small business tax rate low at 11 per cent.

New Funding for Alzheimer's

The Government of Canada has announced an investment of nearly \$5.4 million to bring southern Ontario businesses, researchers, and not-for-profit organizations together to work on developing new technologies for Alzheimer's care. This new initiative will help increase our knowledge and advancement of Alzheimer's disease and its treatment. Alzheimer's disease, or related dementia, affects an estimated 500,000 Canadians. Statistics predict that this number will double within a generation. Participating companies, specializing in healthcare and information communication technologies, will be working with the Centre of Innovation Excellence for Alzheimer's Care to bring their innovative solutions to market, including medical devices, diagnostic tests and a variety of technologies used to monitor and treat patients. These collaborations are designed to bring advanced Alzheimer's care solutions to world markets as well as increase the concentration of companies devoted to Alzheimer's disease and dementia care thereby helping businesses in southern Ontario compete internationally.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY / TOWN _____
PROVINCE _____ POSTAL CODE _____
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NO
POSTAGE
REQUIRED

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LOIS BROWN

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

SERVING YOU IN NEWMARKET—AURORA



Supporting our Canadian Forces

Our government recently announced additional funding to enhance the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) extensive mental healthcare system, by targeting wait times through innovative recruitment campaigns for health care professionals and treatment approaches. An additional \$11.4 million will be invested, supplementing the \$38.6 million spent annually to provide mental health care to CAF personnel.

The health needs of military personnel are extremely important and we are doing everything we can to provide the care needed for those defending our country. This new funding will enhance our Government's already robust mental healthcare programs and ensure that our Nation's heroes will continue to receive the best care and services whenever and wherever they need it.

New E-Service for Veterans

The Government of Canada has launched the Benefits Browser, a new e-service to help veterans quickly and easily find information on the benefits, services and programs offered by Veterans Affairs Canada. The Benefits Browser is another measure that is part of the Minister's "Cutting Red Tape for Veterans" initiative. These improvements offer veterans and their families 24/7 online access including from a mobile device to the important information they need.

Veterans and their families can find the Benefits Browser at www.veterans.gc.ca where they will have the option to browse "Benefits at a Glance" or select information specific to their military service. Based on their selections, the browser will automatically sort through the many VAC services, benefits and programs to display those relevant to them. Our Government will always stand up for our veterans, and together with all Canadians, we will never forget their service and sacrifice.

Increasing Benefits for Veterans

Effective immediately, the Government of Canada will deliver increased benefits to Canadian Forces Veterans. This will be accomplished by ending the deduction of Veterans' disability pensions when calculating their Earnings Loss and Canadian Forces Income Support benefits. Recipients who are in receipt of a disability pension from Veterans Affairs Canada may see a significant increase in their payment in the coming weeks. All affected recipients will be notified in writing with details of the recalculation and change to their payment.

We owe a great deal to our veterans who have served Canada while putting themselves in harm's way. I am very proud that these changes, amounting to an investment of \$177.7 million over five years, will help meet the needs of these heroes and their families.

Veterans' Transition Action Plan

Our government unveiled the Veterans Transition Action Plan, to help our Veterans and Canadian Armed Forces personnel make a successful transition to civilian life. The Veterans Transition Action Plan will assist those leaving the Armed Forces because of an illness or an injury to get the help they need to assist them through this important transition. This is a 5-point plan that includes; enhancements to the Department's delivery of services, new opportunities for Veterans beginning post-military careers, ground-breaking research into the real-life experiences and needs of releasing Canadian Armed Forces personnel, and building cultural awareness. The measures in the new Veterans Transition Action Plan respond directly to findings released in Auditor General Michael Ferguson's recent audit of supports for ill and injured military personnel transitioning to civilian life. For more information on the Veterans Transition Action Plan, please see the accompanying background document or visit veterans.gc.ca.



Is the Conservative Government on the right track to deliver results for you?

YES

NO

COMMENTS

