

M.P.'s REPORT: Update from Ottawa

By Leona Alleslev, MP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

Your Input on the Federal Budget

On January 13, I hosted a pre-budget consultation at the Aurora Cultural Centre where members of the community voiced their priorities for the 2016 Federal Budget.

I also received many emails outlining constituents' concerns and project ideas.

I am happy to say that I presented my report of the pre-budget consultation to the Minister of Finance, Bill Morneau, on February 4. Our report included key themes like transit infrastructure in the Aurora/Richmond Hill area (specifically extending the Yonge subway line, and recognizing the traffic issue of Highway 404).

The report also emphasized job creation and job security, particularly through attracting new companies to Canada, developing economic incentives for small to large businesses, and creating new legislation to reduce the prevalence of contract labour.

The report also encouraged the Finance Minister to review the process of filing income taxes to make it easier, and to recognize taxes in a holistic manner where the federal and provincial governments should ensure that the overall marginal tax rate does not exceed 50 per cent of net income.

For anyone who did not get a chance to share their concerns, I encourage you to submit your budget priorities to the Finance Minister's office directly through their website: www.budget.gc.ca.

Parliamentary Secretary Lead on Shared Services Canada

The Minister of Public Services and Procurement, the Hon. Judy Foote, has asked me, in my role as Parliamentary Secretary, to take the lead with Shared Services Canada (SSC). SSC was created in 2011, to fundamentally transform how the Government manages its information technology (IT) infrastructure.

SSC's mandate is to deliver email, data centre and telecommunication services to 43 federal departments and agencies.

This week the Auditor General released a report which included an audit of SSC. The report found that SSC had made limited progress in its implementation program. I support the Minister who is committed to delivering on the program. We need an enterprise-wide solution for information technology throughout government. I believe SSC is a critical part of the future of Government and I am committed to supporting the department to succeed in its initiatives.

Achievements in Gender Inclusivity

There have been some big achievements in the area of gender inclusivity this past month in Ottawa.

PASSED - Pay Equity Motion from the NDP:

The motion passed 224 votes to 91 with all except the Conservatives in support. It called on the federal government to close gaps in pay equity in Canada, recognize pay equity as a right, implement the recommendations of a 2004 task force on pay equity in the public service and appoint a special committee that would propose a pay equity regime for Canada. I'm happy for this achievement, especially because it demonstrates how this government is working together to make real change.

A Gender Neutral National Anthem

I was proud to second Bill C-624 introduced by MP Mauril Bélanger which aims to return a small section of the anthem's lyrics to its original meaning from before 1914. The bill entitled "An Act to amend the National Anthem Act (gender)" proposes to change "True patriot love in all thy sons command" to "True patriot love in all of us command." This would not only render the anthem gender-neutral but it would return the anthem to a more similar meaning of the lyrics before the Great War. The original lyrics to the anthem were "True patriot love thou dost in us command" but were changed in 1914, the year the Great War broke out. The words were changed to support the sons going off to war. By making the changes in our anthem now it can represent all Canadians, particularly both the men and women who fight to shape the country we now love. Why you ask? Because it's 2016.

Deadline to Apply for Canada Summer Jobs Program

Canada Summer Jobs Program is still accepting applications from employers seeking federal funding for hiring summer students. Go

online to see if you're eligible to apply: www.servicecanada.gc.ca
The deadline is February 26th!

Please Contact Me!

My office is always open for those who need assistance, or for anyone who wants to stop in and say hello. Visit us at 202- 12820 Yonge St in Richmond Hill, give us a call at (905)773-8358, or email me at Leona.Alleslev@parl.gc.ca.