

OTTAWA REPORT

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Speech from the Throne

On October 16, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, delivered the Speech from the Throne to open the second session of the 41st Parliament and outline our government's agenda. Some of the key measures that the government will undertake under each of its three principal themes include:

Creating Jobs and Opportunities for Canadians:

Balancing the budget by 2015 and reducing the debt-to-GDP ratio to pre-recession levels by 2017;
Reducing the cost of the federal government to ensure that taxes remain low;
Completing reforms to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program to ensure that Canadians always have the first chance at available jobs; and,
Expanding trade with the European Union by concluding a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, as well as with markets in Asia and the Americas.

Supporting and Protecting Canadian Families:

Supporting greater competition in the wireless sector by addressing roaming costs on networks within Canada;
Providing Canadians with the opportunity to choose the combination of television channels they want by requiring that they be unbundled;
Taking steps to address geographic price discrimination against Canadians; and,
Supporting victims of crime and punishing criminals by introducing the Victims' Bill of Rights and legislation to address cyberbullying.

Putting Canada First:

Providing the Canadian Armed Forces with the tools they need to defend Canada's sovereignty and vital interests;
Providing further support to help meet the needs of veterans, including helping them secure jobs and reintegrate into civilian life;
Further strengthening the immigration system, including introducing a new model to select immigrants based on the skills that Canadian employers need to expand their businesses and the economy; and,
Honouring Canada's Confederation as we approach our historic 150th anniversary in 2017.

Small Business Week

October 20-26 is National Small Business Week, an opportunity to recognize the enormous contributions that small business owners and entrepreneurs make to our communities and our country. With over 98% of all companies in Canada comprised of small businesses, they truly represent the backbone of the Canadian economy.

Nationally, under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, our government recognizes the vital role small business owners play in the economy and job creation. Since taking office in 2006, we've taken numerous steps to help entrepreneurs and have lowered the federal tax bill for a typical small business by over 30 per cent. Our actions include:

- ? Reducing the small business tax rate from 12 per cent to 11 per cent
- ? Increasing the ?small business limit' to \$500,000
- ? Introducing the Code of Conduct for the Credit and Debit Card Industry
- ? Extending the Hiring Credit for Small Business in 2013
- ? Increasing the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption to \$800,000 from \$750,000 in 2014, and indexing it going forward
- ? Freezing EI rates for the next three years to support job growth

Historic CETA Agreement Reached

Canada has reached an agreement in principle on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union. This historic agreement will create thousands of jobs for Canadians and give Canadian businesses access to a half-billion new customers.

When Canada trades, the whole country becomes more competitive. The benefits of this agreement are equivalent to creating almost 80,000 new jobs or increasing the average Canadian household's annual income by \$1,000. Responsible for one out of every five jobs in Canada, exports increase Canadian prosperity and boost our standard of living.

CETA is by far Canada's most ambitious trade initiative ever. It is broader in scope and deeper in ambition than the historic North American Free Trade Agreement. It will make Canada one of the only developed countries to have preferential access to the world's two largest markets ? the European Union and the United States. Access to these markets' 800 million+ affluent consumers will make Canadians the envy of trading nations all over the world.

With this agreement, the number of countries with which Canada has free trade agreements will triple from 14 to 42, providing Canada free-trade access to over half of the entire global marketplace. The elimination of 98 per cent of all EU tariffs on the first day that the Agreement comes into force will translate into increased profits and opportunities for Canadian businesses of all sizes in every part of the country.

If you would like to contact me on any issue, please call 905-953-7515 or visit my website at www.loisbrown.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.