

OTTAWA REPORT

By Lois Brown, MP
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Temporary Foreign Worker Program Moratorium

As a result of serious concerns, the Government of Canada has announced an immediate moratorium on the Food Services Sector's access to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

This moratorium will remain in effect until the completion of the on-going review of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. In no way will it affect the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program as there are proven acute labour shortages in this industry and the unfilled jobs are short term by definition.

Abuse of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program will not be tolerated. Our government will continue to pursue significant reforms to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to ensure that employers make greater efforts to recruit and train Canadians and that it is only used as a last and limited resort when Canadians are not available.

Channel Choice for Families

The CRTC has released their report on the unbundling of television channels. The report sets out a roadmap to greater channel choice, which is consistent with our commitment in the Speech from the Throne to provide Canadian families with the flexibility and choice they want.

The proposed approach is designed to respond to consumer demand for more flexibility by requiring that all discretionary services be offered on a pick-and-pay basis. Under this approach, subscribers would not have to pay for discretionary services they do not wish to receive and could allocate their financial resources mainly to the services they or their families wish to receive.

Given that the price of cable, satellite and IPTV distribution services has increased faster than the rate of inflation in recent years, providing subscribers with increased flexibility would give them more control over their bills. In addition, requiring build-your-own-package options while continuing to allow pre-assembled packages would maximize the options available to consumers, while still providing support for Canadian programming, choice and diversity within the system.

Call for Proposals

I would like to invite local organizations to propose projects that will empower women in the region ? particularly entrepreneurs and professionals ? to succeed. The Government of Canada will fund these new projects through a Status of Women Canada Call for Proposals entitled Economic Prosperity: Positioning Women for Success.

Projects funded under this call will support women by increasing their access to economic and mentoring opportunities, as well as advancing their financial preparedness. This latest Call by Status of Women Canada is in line with the commitment made by the Government in Economic Action Plan 2014 to support women entrepreneurs by increasing mentorship among women business owners.

For more information, visit women.gc.ca.

Budget Surplus

We heard more good news on the fiscal front last week with the announcement of a budgetary surplus of \$5.1 billion in February 2014. Revenues increased by 8.4 per cent including a 10.9 per cent increase in corporate income tax revenues. Major transfers to persons, consisting of elderly, EI and children's benefits, increased by 3.7 per cent and elderly benefits increased by 3.0 per cent, due to growth in the elderly population and changes in consumer prices, to which benefits are fully indexed. Direct program expenses decreased by 3%.

Great Lakes Water Quality

A draft Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health has been posted for public comment until July 3, 2014. This agreement will help the Government of Canada continue to make progress on protecting and enhancing Great Lakes water quality and deliver on its important bi-national commitments with the United States under the amended Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Our domestic action plan to protect and restore the Great Lakes includes the Lake Simcoe/South-Eastern

Georgian Bay Clean-Up Fund which has allocated \$59 million since 2007 and leveraged \$51.2 million from partners to support 186 community projects to address algae issues in the watersheds. You can view the draft agreement at <http://www.ec.gc.ca/lcpe-cepa/>.

Coffee & Tea with the MP

Each year I host a number of 'Coffee & Tea with the MP' events around the riding where constituents can drop by without an appointment. I enjoy chatting with residents about their issues of interest or concern, and keeping my finger on the pulse of the community. Last week's event included discussions about agriculture, Ukraine, RRSPs and beneficiaries, international pensions, Organic Flow Batteries, Bill C-18, the Fair Elections Act, police matters and Senate Reform. Follow-up items include help with an immigration matter, assistance in obtaining a copyright, an invitation to attend a local women's group and meetings for further discussion. My next event takes place in Aurora in June. Stay tuned to this paper for the date and location.

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.