

Report from

PARLIAMENT HILL

By Mike Chong

MP Wellington/Halton Hills



January is a good time to review the year that was and look ahead to the one that will be. Over the past year, many of you have told me that your main concerns are job creation (especially youth employment) and economic growth, as well as the environment.

Last year, we continued to implement Canada's Economic Action Plan. Job creation remained robust throughout the year and the Canadian economy continued to grow, outshining its peers in the G-7. To date, Canada's Economic Action Plan has helped create over 880,000 net new jobs since the summer of 2009. Nine out of ten of these jobs have been full-time positions, three-quarters in the private sector, and most in highly skilled and paid sectors of the economy.

Part of the Plan included last year's federal budget. The budget included a one-year extension of the job-creating Hiring Credit for Small Business, a benefit that helped nearly 534,000 employers hire

more workers last year. It also improved the Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs), and implemented tax rules for Pooled Registered Pension Plans (PRPPs), creating workplace pensions for Canadians who don't currently have one. The budget also included \$350-million for the Youth Employment Strategy that will help young Canadians find jobs.

Last year also saw the government take a number of steps to address climate change in Canada. The government implemented new environmental regulations to reduce greenhouse gasses (GHGs) in a number of sectors. Our ambitious new regulations for passenger cars and light trucks for model years 2017 to 2025 will improve fuel efficiency and reduce GHGs. Last summer, strict new regulations were introduced to reduce GHGs for Canada's coal sector and before that, regulations were introduced to mandate renewable fuel content in gasoline and diesel sold in Canada.



PRE-CHRISTMAS SKATE: The Burack family of Acton, including mom Bobbi-Jo (left), Jake, dad Mike, and Payton enjoyed a pre-Christmas skate at Acton arena. — Frances Learment photo

As a result of the government's sector-by-sector regulatory approach, we are moving toward meeting our commitment to reduce Canada's GHG emissions by 17 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020. Since the government came to power in 2006, total GHG emissions have actually fallen over the past six years

in Canada. In the near future, we'll be introducing new regulations for the oil and gas sector, as well as for other large final emitters.

Looking forward to the year ahead, the ongoing economic turmoil in Europe, the "fiscal cliff" in the US, and the continued instability in the Middle East all present chal-

lenges to the Canadian economy. Your federal government remains focused on managing those external risks in a way that ensures continued job creation and economic growth. We also remain committed to protecting our environment and ensuring that resource development is conducted in a respon-

sible manner.

I will continue to share your feedback with my colleagues in Ottawa to ensure that your voices are heard. Contact me if you have any concerns or questions you wish to discuss. You can reach me by phone at (866) 878-5556 or by email at michael.chong@parl.gc.ca

Catholic Trustees ratify deals with OECTA and APSSP

Trustees of the Halton Catholic District School Board voted unanimously

to ratify a Memoranda of Settlement with the Halton OECTA Elementary

Teachers, and the Halton OECTA Occasional Teachers on December 18. Each of the two-year agreements are effective September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2014.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank and congratulate

the teams that were involved in reaching these agreements in such a positive and amicable way," said Diane Rabenda, Chair of the Board. "We are deeply grateful to our teachers for all they do on a daily basis. We could not do what we do if it were

not for their dedication and hard work."

Members of the Halton OECTA Elementary Teachers held a ratification meeting on December 17, and voted in support of the Memorandum of Settlement. The Memorandum of Settlement

with the Halton OECTA Occasional Teachers was unanimously ratified on December 18.

Under the Putting Students First Act, 2012, the newly ratified collective agreements must now be submitted to the Minister of Education for review and approval to ensure compliance with legisla-

tion. Having reached a settlement with two of its unionized employee groups, the Board is currently in negotiations with the remaining seven unions.

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