

# We need deep income tax cuts : Michael Chong

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I think the real problem in Ottawa is not the way in which we elect members of parliament. I think the real problem is what happens to those MPs once they get elected and go to Ottawa. Quite simply, the problem is that when they get to Ottawa they are under the control of party leaders particularly the Prime Minister so we need to reform our system to reduce the power of party leaders, particularly the Prime Minister to control MPs, and to ensure those elected MPs can give a voice to their constituents. Changing the way we elect MPs isn't going to change the real problem of concentration of power in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

### On his plan for economic growth:

Quite simply we need deep income tax cuts. Central banks are out of monetary room. The Bank of Canada (interest rate) is effectively zero in fact it's negative if you take into account inflation. What we need is deep income tax cuts to stimulate the economy. The current government has done the opposite. It has increased income tax and this is going to lead to a brain-drain and lower levels of business investment.

### On what he feels is the biggest issue currently facing Canada:

The biggest one is lack of growth and jobs. I base that concern on what I'm hearing from people in Halton Hills and it's what I'm hearing from people across the country. It's that lack of growth and opportunity that is the most important concern.

### On Bill C-51 and privacy:

Two points on that. I think the previous government made a mistake by not accompanying Bill C-51 with stronger democratic oversight. I think whenever governments acquire new powers to surveil and gather intelligence on their own citizens, that along with that increased power show

come increased oversight.

Bill C-22, which is currently in front of the House of Commons, is a piece of legislation that would establish a new national security and intelligence committee to provide oversight to the government's security and intelligence activities is a farce. First, the committee is made up of nine parliamentarians, who are appointed and who sit at the pleasure of the Prime Minister... A committee that is supposed to hold the Prime Minister and government accountable shouldn't be sitting at the behest and pleasure of the government.

To me, the solution is simple. If you truly want democratic oversight, which I believe we need to have, we need a committee of nine parliamentarians who are democratically elected on a secret ballot by the House of Commons as a whole. That committee would then sit until the next election and have all the powers of a court to compel witnesses to appear, to gather evidence and produce reports that from time-to-time may be critical of the government's intelligence and surveillance activities.

### On why he voted in favour of Bill C-51 as a member of the previous administration:

I supported the legislation, but at the time I also voiced publicly my concern that there wasn't a parallel initiative to have proper democratic oversight over the newly acquired powers. One of the reasons why I'm in this leadership race is to make the argument that we need to put this in place. It's one of the proposals I put forward in November.

### On marijuana legalization:

In general, I don't think the current criminal prohibitions on marijuana are working, so I think we need to give police forces and enforcement agencies new tools to combat marijuana use.

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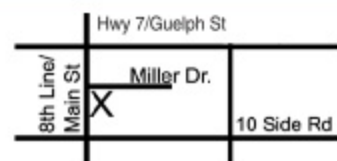
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