



By Cory Soal
R.H.A.D.

... Lend Me Your Ears

BUSINESS (NOT QUITE) AS USUAL..

Dear people of Halton Hills;

During these uncertain times, rest assured we remain open to serve you. We have adjusted services according to the guidance by Health Canada.

Please call for an appointment. We are not accepting walk ins at this time.

We handle every call on an individual basis to best handle each person's needs.

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OPINION

WHERE'S THE FEDERAL BUDGET?

CANADA NEEDS A BROAD PLAN TO GUIDE SPENDING, WRITES MICHAEL CHONG

There's been no federal budget for two years — the longest gap in Canadian history.

Annual budgets were delivered through the difficult days of the World Wars, the Great Depression and the Great Recession of 2009.

Canada is the only G7 country not to have delivered a budget in two years. Every province managed to table budgets through this period, even when faced with the same pandemic.

While Parliament has still approved spending, the



MICHAEL CHONG
Column

lack of a budget means no broad plan to guide the spending of hundreds of billions of dollars in response to the pandemic.

The lack of a budget is more astonishing, considering the deficit is projected to be a record-shattering \$382 billion — more than six times the 2009 deficit in response to the Great Recession.

The Canadian economy was in trouble before the pandemic. Our productivity, the only long-term deter-

minant of prosperity, had been lagging for years.

Per capita GDP was flat, if not declining, in the quarters before the pandemic. Canadian households have some of the highest debt levels in the world.

The pandemic has only made things worse.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predict that Canada will have a deeper recession and a slower recovery than our economic peers.

And Canada's economic recovery will be slower than our peers, in part, due to the slow procurement of vaccines compared to many other countries.

In that context, it's even more important that the government lay out its eco-

nomics plan to restore our lives and our communities.

Conservatives have been calling on the government to deliver a budget to support those hard hit in the hospitality, charity, airline and small business sectors.

And it should also increase the Canada Child Benefit to help low-income families, particularly women.

March 19, 2019 is the last time Canada had a budget. It's long past time for the Liberal government to respect the public purse and table a budget to restore our future.

Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills, and the shadow minister of democratic institutions for the official opposition. He can be reached at michael.chong.a3@parl.gc.ca.

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