



UPFRONT

with **Mike Wallace, MP**

A Publication of Mike Wallace, Member of Parliament for Burlington

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Budget 2009: Canada's Economic Action Plan

At the end of January our government tabled Budget 2009, our multi-year Economic Action Plan to help stimulate the economy and help the country during the current global recession. Our plan will assist Canada to deal with the current economic downturn and position our country to emerge even stronger as the economy recovers.

The plan will provide almost \$30 billion in support to the Canadian economy this year. I would like to highlight some of the key actions we are taking to benefit Ontario, which continues to be particularly affected by the current recession.

Investment in infrastructure represents a significant portion of the stimulus initiatives in the Economic Action Plan. The plan commits \$12 billion on infrastructure spending in Canada including monies for roads, bridges, transit, and water/sewage projects. In Ontario, we will spend \$4.5 billion over the next two years on identified infrastructure projects in partnership with the province and the affected municipalities. The purpose of this spending program is to provide a boost to the manufacturing and construction sectors in Ontario. As well, these shovel-ready projects will provide new and renewed public facilities which will position us to take full advantage of these much needed assets when we emerge from this recession. I have been working closely with the City of Burlington and the Region of Halton to identify these types of projects locally and I am hopeful that it will materialize into infrastructure funding for our community.

In addition to infrastructure spending the Economic Action Plan is designed to stimulate consumer spending with the delivery of \$20 billion in personal income tax relief for the 2008 and 2009 tax years as well as measures over the next five fiscal years. For Ontario taxpayers, that means they will keep \$4.6 billion in their own pockets over the next two years. We are raising the income threshold on the National Child Benefit supplement and implementing changes to the Canada Child Tax Benefit which will provide additional support of up to \$436 for a family of two.

Other tax relief commitments include improvements to the Working Income Tax Benefit, as well as enhancements to the First-Time Buyers Tax Credit and the Home Buyers' Plan. The Home Renovation Tax Credit was introduced to help off-set home improvement costs for home owners. More information concerning this measure can be found on page 3 of this publication under *Mike's Mailbox*.

For individuals that have found themselves unemployed and who qualify for Employment Insurance, we have extended the EI plan to allow an additional 5 weeks of benefits to be collected. We have also extended the Employment Insurance work share program to allow 14 extra weeks for employers and employees to continue to work using a shortened work week.

The Economic Action Plan extends the accelerated capital cost allowance for businesses to write off investments in manufacturing machinery and equipment. In addition, we have reduced the federal tax rate on small business income.

These are just a few of the items included in the stimulus package as part of the Economic Action Plan. The plan is designed to get our economy moving again. It will not happen over night, however we are confident that the tax relief combined with the spending on infrastructure will help us come out of this difficult time with an even stronger economy. I would encourage you to visit www.fin.gc.ca or contact our office for more information.



Mike Wallace speaking at the Burlington Seniors Centre

Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA)

There is a new tax measure available to Canadian residents, 18 years of age or older as of January 1, 2009. The Tax-Free Savings Account will allow you to contribute up to \$5000 yearly and the interest, dividends or capital gains earned will be tax free. Contributions are not tax-deductible for income tax purposes.

Some of the other benefits include:

- Carry over contribution amounts not used from previous years
- Withdraw funds at any time without penalty
- Contribute the full amount you have withdrawn the following year

- Withdrawing from your TFSA will not affect Federal income-tested benefits and credits such as Old Age Security

Generally, the types of investments that will be permitted in a TFSA are the same as in a registered retirement savings plan (RRSP). This would include mutual funds, securities listed on a designated stock exchange, Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs), bonds, and certain shares of small business corporations.

For more information, please visit www.cra.gc.ca or call the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-8281. Contact your financial institution to find out if they offer this type account. If so, they should be able to provide you with information as well.

Community Group Profile

TELECARE BURLINGTON DISTRESS CENTRE

In 1975 a group of dedicated community members in Burlington felt there was a pressing need for a service that could help people who were troubled, lonely, and depressed and in need of someone to talk to. As a result of their work, Telecare Burlington Distress Centre was born in 1976, and to this day, continues to be a vital and essential service in Burlington and surrounding areas.

Telecare Burlington is a not-for-profit organization and registered charity that provides a 24 hour, 7 days a week telephone crisis and listening service. This is a free, telephone service available to anyone. A person calling Telecare is connected with someone who cares and is prepared to listen, while offering help and understanding. Each caller is treated with compassion, non-judgmental support and can be assured that their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. Referrals to other agencies are made if additional resources and help are needed. Last year, Telecare Burlington received 16,000 calls from people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds, who were in a state of personal crisis; loneliness, stress, grief, depression, financial problems, addictions, job loss and suicidal feelings.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of this organization! Telecare is staffed entirely by volunteers, with 100 workers and resource people dedicated to making a difference.

They are all trained in active listening and crisis intervention techniques. Each volunteer contributes 12 hours per month in blocks of 3, 4 or 8 hour shifts and is able to choose his or her own shift. It is essential to recruit new people to replenish the volunteer base and maintain this much needed service. Each February and August the Recruitment Campaign is initiated and new volunteers are then trained in April and October of each year. Telecare is currently recruiting – so get involved and make a difference in someone's life and your community. Call Telecare today for more information on volunteer opportunities and to find out other ways you can provide support.

TELECARE BURLINGTON DISTRESS CENTRE

Burlington Mall Postal Outlet
P.O. Box 62041
Burlington, Ontario L7R 4K2
905-681-1488
telecareburlington@cogeco.net
www.telecareburlington.com

**We Listen
We Care
Since 1976**



Congratulatory Scrolls

Congratulatory scrolls can be a unique way to recognize a milestone birthday or anniversary. Certificate availability is as follows:

	Birthday	Anniversary
Mike Wallace, MP	any	any
Prime Minister	25th +	65th +
Governor General	90th +	50th +
Queen*	100th +	60th +

*(proof of birth date/anniversary date required)

Requests can be made by calling Mike's Burlington office at 905-639-5757. If you would like to make your request by email, please send the details to wallam1@parl.gc.ca and include the following information:

- ✓ Celebrant(s) first & last name(s)
- ✓ Date of the birthday/anniversary (and date of celebration if applicable)
- ✓ Name & telephone number of the requestor – in case we need to make contact
- ✓ Mailing address where you would like the certificates sent

Family and friends making these arrangements will often request that the scrolls be sent to them in order to make one presentation with all of the greetings together. This is something to consider when including a mailing address.

If you belong to a local not-for-profit organization doing great things in our community, or know of a group that you feel should be highlighted here, please get in touch with us.

From Mike's Mailbox

Q: I would like to do some home renovations this year. How do I find out what items are included under the Home Renovation Tax Credit and where do I get more information?

A: In Budget 2009, the Government announced the Home Renovation Tax Credit, a measure which will help to offset the cost of renovations for homeowners. The expenses can be claimed on the homeowner's principle residence only and will be based on eligible expenditures for work performed or goods acquired after January 27, 2009, and before February 1, 2010.

To be eligible, expenditures incurred in relation to a renovation or alteration to an eligible dwelling (or the land that forms part of the eligible dwelling) must be of an enduring nature and integral. This includes the cost of labour and professional services, building materials, fixtures, rentals, and permits. Items not eligible under this tax credit are those that are performed on an annual or more frequent basis, including the cost of routine repairs and maintenance. Some items include:

- Renovating a kitchen, bathroom or basement
- New carpet or hardwood floors
- Building an addition, deck, fence
- Purchasing a new furnace

- A new driveway
- Painting of interior or exterior of a house
- Swimming Pool (permanent in ground and above ground)

The credit will only be available for the 2009 tax year and applies to eligible expenditures of more than \$1,000, but not more than \$10,000, resulting in a maximum credit of \$1,350 (\$9,000 x 15%). A line will be included on the 2009 income tax form in order to claim this credit. It is not necessary to submit proof, however receipts and other relevant documentation should be retained in case it is requested.

For more information, please visit www.cra.gc.ca or call Mike's office at 905-639-5757.



Mike Wallace speaking to the Burlington Chamber of Commerce about current issues

Apply For Your Passport Today!

Starting June 1, 2009, a U.S. law will require Canadians to present a valid passport to enter the United States by water or land. U.S. law already requires Canadians to present a valid passport to enter the U.S. by air. Apply for your passport today to avoid unnecessary line-ups and to ensure you have it when needed. The passport is the recommended travel and identification document for all Canadian travelers.

Passport applications are available at our office (second floor of the Burlington Mall, Suite 209) or at your local Post Office. You can also visit the Passport Canada website at www.passportcanada.gc.ca. Completed applications can be mailed, however we recommend visiting a local Passport Canada office and submitting your application in person. The closest locations to Burlington are:

Standard Life Building
120 King Street West, Hamilton

Central Parkway Mall
Suite 116, 2nd Floor
377 Burnhamthorpe Road East, Mississauga

How Government Works: The Supreme Court of Canada



Supreme Court of Canada - Ottawa, Ontario

The Supreme Court of Canada is the highest court of Canada. It represents the judicial branch of Canada's parliamentary system and plays an important role in not only advising the federal and provincial governments on the interpretation of Canada's constitution but also in defining social issues with their opinion as a whole. The Court is committed to its mission statement of, the rule of law, independence and impartiality as well as accessibility to justice.

The Supreme Court of Canada, located in Ottawa, was created by an Act of Parliament in 1875, as a general court of appeal with wide national jurisdiction. The court sat for the first time on January 17, 1876, without any cases before it. A year later regular sessions were held with a full agenda. Since then the Supreme Court has grown in size and has changed in context. Before 1933 the Court's decision could be appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England. After 1933 criminal case appeals were abolished and in 1949 other cases followed suit. In turn the Court became Canada's final court of appeal.

In 1982, the "British North America Act" of 1867 was patriated to Canada and renamed the "Constitution Act". At that time, a written Charter of Rights and Freedoms was added which greatly expanded the role of the Court in Canadian society and broadened the scope of judicial review. Along with new roles the Constitution Act also brought changes to the composition of the Supreme Court requiring the consent of the Senate and House of Commons and the Legislative Assemblies.

The Court originally had six judges, comprised of a chief justice and five puisne or associate judges but since 1949 has grown in size to nine. While the Governor General holds the legal power to

appoint Supreme Court Justices, the choice of who will be appointed is done by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Justices remain in the position until age 75. The Court has jurisdiction over all areas of the law, including constitutional law, administrative law, criminal law and private law and reviews cases from the provincial and territorial appellate courts and the Federal Court of Appeal. Each year it receives about 600 applications to review but hears only between 50-75 cases.

All members of the judiciary in Canada, regardless of the court, are drawn from the legal profession. Those Judges appointed by the federal government are required by federal statute to have been a

member of a provincial or territorial bar for at least 10 years and at least three of the Judges must be appointed from Quebec as the Supreme Court Act stipulates.

The minimum number of Judges required to hear an appeal is five. However, most cases are heard by a panel of seven or nine Judges. The Court renders its decisions at the conclusion of the hearing in some cases; however, the majority of judgments are reserved to enable the Judges time to review and compare their opinions. One of the Justices drafts the Court's judgment. If, after receiving and reading this judgment, his colleagues disagree with it, there may be further work sessions. In principle, the court tries to hand down unanimous verdicts, but frequently this cannot be done, and the justices who disagree with the majority opinion write a dissenting judgment which is published along with the other.

On the bench, the Chief Justice of Canada, currently The Right Honourable Chief Justice of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, P.C., or, in her absence, the senior puisne justice, presides from the centre chair with the other justices seated to her right and left by order of seniority of appointment. At sittings of the Court, the Justices usually appear in black silk robes but they wear their ceremonial robes of bright scarlet trimmed with Canadian white mink in court on special occasions and in the Senate at the opening of each new session of Parliament.

The Court holds three sessions annually, in winter, spring, and fall and they are open to the public. For more information on visiting the Supreme Court of Canada and scheduled tours, please go to www.scc-csc.gc.ca or call 1-866-360-1522.

We ask Mike:

Why is it important to be part of caucuses outside of your regular National and GTA/Central Ontario Caucuses and why did you choose the ones that you did?

In Ottawa, there a number of issue or policy orientated caucus groups. The members of these groups are Parliamentarians with an interest in working on the issues the caucus has engaged. These caucuses can be made of Members of just one political party or be open to all political parties represented in the House of Commons.

Currently, I have the pleasure of being an active member of the Auto Caucus, Marine Caucus, and Steel Caucus. I chair the Conservative Marine Caucus and until recently was the Chair of the all party Steel Caucus. These three industry caucuses are extremely important to me as Burlington's Member of Parliament as steel and auto manufacturing have a direct impact on our riding. In addition, I see the marine industry as an important transportation component for business growth in our area as well as being an excellent alternative to trucks on our roads from an environmental and quality of life perspective. Our meetings revolve around significant issues and legislation that may affect citizens and corporations. It gives all members an opportunity to voice their concerns, thoughts and ideas. Currently, I am pursuing a potential formation of a Seniors Caucus and hope to be able to confirm the progress in our next UPFRONT publication.



Mike Wallace and the Honourable Marjorie LeBreton, Minister of State (Seniors)



Library of Parliament - Ottawa, Ontario

Please share your thoughts on Budget 2009

Does the budget begin to address the current needs of Canadians during these difficult economic times?

Yes No Not Sure

Does the budget begin to address the needs of your household during these difficult economic times?

Yes No Not Sure

Is the Government on the right track?

Yes No Not Sure

Is Mike on the right track?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: _____

Important Information & Updates

Permanent Resident (PR) Cards – 5 Year Renewal

One of the primary topics that our office assists constituents with are matters concerning Citizenship and Immigration. Specifically, we have found that many Permanent Residents are unaware of the fact that PR Cards have an expiry date, which is five years from the date of issue. They are usually alerted to this when they are required to use their card, which generally means they are out of time to wait for a new one to be issued.

If you are a PR Card holder it is important that you are aware of the card's expiry date. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) does not issue reminder notices so it is up to you to remember and submit an application. We recommend applying for a new card prior to expiry so that you are not caught in an emergency situation without valid travel identification. Should a family member require your assistance abroad for example, you will

want your travel arrangements to run as smoothly as possible.

Processing time for a renewal PR Card is currently 2 ½ months, however you should be sure to check with CIC (1-888 242 2100 or www.cic.gc.ca) for up to date information before you apply. Applications are available from the CIC website or from our Burlington Constituency Office.

Alternatively, you may decide that you would like to become a Canadian Citizen! You are issued one card at the time you become a citizen, a ceremony is held in your honour, and most importantly, you are now allowed to vote. These are just a few of the benefits of course. Applications for citizenship are also available on the CIC website and from our office. Please note, you should have a valid PR Card while you wait for your citizenship to be processed as it can take several months.

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program enlists the aid of individual volunteers and community organizations across Canada to assist people with the completion of their individual tax returns. The program is designed to provide a free income tax preparation service to low-income individuals and families with simple tax situations.

The following Burlington locations will have Community Volunteer Income Tax Clinics for the 2009 tax season.

Office of Mike Wallace, MP

Burlington Mall, Suite 209
March 9, March 23, April 6, April 20
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
905-639-5757 - By Appointment or drop-off

Burlington Seniors' Centre

2285 New Street
905-335-7888 ext. 5
Fridays, 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
From February 27 to April 24, 2009
With Appointment

Burlington Central Library

2331 New Street
Mondays 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
March and April beginning March 9th
No Appointment necessary

Halton Multicultural Council

860 Harington Court, 905-842-2486
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
March 3 to April 30, 2009
By Appointment

Association Canadienne-Francaise de l'Ontario (ACFO)

760 Brant Street, Suite 43-A, 905-637-0796
Monday to Friday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
March 2 to April 17, 2009
Drop-off

The following income levels are used as a guide - \$25,000 single; \$35,000 family; \$30,000 single parent with one child plus \$2,000 per additional child.



Mike addressing the crowd at the 3rd Annual Seniors Pension & Tax Seminar

REMINDER Income Tax 2008

The deadline for filing your 2008 income tax is Thursday, April 30, 2009 at midnight. If you are mailing your return on April 30th, please ensure to have it date stamped at the post office.

Even if you are expecting a refund or have not made any income for a given tax year, it is still necessary for you to provide a tax return to Canada Revenue Agency. If you do not submit a return by the filing deadline it could result in loss of benefits, the Canada Child Tax Benefit or the GST rebate for example. These particular benefits are based on your income and if they do not have your information to calculate it, they can not provide it.

Upcoming Events

Town Hall Meeting with Mike Wallace, MP

April 7, 2009
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Burlington Central Library, Centennial Hall

Mike will provide an update on federal issues being debated in the House of Commons and answer questions from participants.

Community Cleanup Day – April 25, 2009

We encourage you to get involved, organize a local cleanup group and make a difference in our community. For more details, or to register your group, please visit www.burlington.ca or call our constituency office at 905-639-5757.



UPFRONT with Mike Wallace, MP

Mike Wallace
MP Burlington

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