



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA



MIKE MORRICE

Member of Parliament
Kitchener Centre

THE PRE-BUDGET ISSUE

In this issue:

- » Pre-budget priorities
- » New international student measures
- » Protecting life-saving care
- » An update on advocacy for our Sudanese neighbours

/morrlicemike morricemike morricemike Mike Morrice Kitchener Centre

April 2024

A MESSAGE FROM MIKE

Budgets are reflections of our priorities.

Given this, and with the Federal Budget set to be tabled on April 16, I'm glad to share with you this Pre-Budget Issue, highlighting some of our community's priorities that I'm pushing to see included.

This includes ending legislated poverty for people with disabilities, addressing the housing crisis, and funding critical affordability measures through a windfall profit tax on Big Oil. Read on to learn more about my work on each of these priorities.

Further on I also share some of our joint wins, including newly adopted measures to improve Canada's approach to international students, and a more

fair policy for reuniting families who are fleeing violence in Sudan.

If you're a constituent and would like to discuss these, or any other issues you're passionate about, please don't hesitate to reach out. Whether you'd like me to meet as a small group, or would like to speak with me individually, please get in touch in any of ways listed on the right.

All my best,

Mike
Member of Parliament, Kitchener Centre

INFO

COMMUNITY OFFICE

305 King Street West
Suite 303
Kitchener ON N2G 1B9
At King St W and Water St S

Open Mondays, Tuesdays,
and Thursdays from
10am-4:30pm

Tel. 519-741-2001

mike.morrice.c1@parl.gc.ca

OTTAWA OFFICE

Confederation Building
Suite 313
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Tel. 613-995-8913

mike.morrice@parl.gc.ca

mikemorrice.ca

NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MEASURES

Colleges have turned to exponential increases in international student enrollment to make up for dramatically reduced funding from the province since 2011.

Without the infrastructure needed to accommodate this rapid influx, community members and students are feeling the strain.

After consulting with our community, including international students themselves, I put forward

Motion 98 - full of measures the federal government could take to help address related issues.

I'm glad to share that this has resulted in the federal government adopting four measures from this motion, including:

- more than doubling the financial requirement for study permit applicants to over \$20,000, recognizing the true cost of living;
- reviewing and adjusting

this amount regularly to reflect inflation;

- reinstating the 20 hour work week cap so that students can focus on their studies;
- and allowing post-secondary schools to access existing federal loans to build rental housing - making it easier for them to build student housing, and relieving pressure on rentals in our community.

While I'll keep advocating

for the remaining measures in my motion, I'm glad to see the federal government take steps in the right direction.



Ashwin, an international student in our community who joined consultations on Motion 98, and Mike

PRE-BUDGET PRIORITIES

Ahead of the spring 2024 Federal Budget, I continue to advocate for our community's most urgent priorities to be included. Here are the top three that, combined, address poverty, affordability, housing, and the climate crisis while providing plenty of opportunities to increase revenues to balance new expenses.

1. Funding the Canada Disability Benefit

40% of those living in poverty across Canada are people with disabilities. To help address this injustice, the disability community has been advocating for the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). This new federal benefit, which is meant to serve as a specialized income supplement to top-up similar provincial benefits, became law in June of 2023. Regulations for the CDB are currently being drafted.

Ahead of this budget, I'm continuing my calls to urgently fund this benefit at a level sufficient to lift people with disabilities out of legislated poverty. People with disabilities can't wait - funding the CDB before regulations are finalized, as was done with other federal programs like the Early Learning and Child Care program, is a critical step in minimizing further delays.

While I continue to advocate for more ways to address poverty across the country, adequately funding the CDB would be a significant step in reducing poverty and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.



2. Addressing the housing crisis

Homes should be places for people to live, not commodities for investors to trade. Yet more than 30 years of underinvestment in social housing - combined with incentives for corporate investors commodifying housing - is fueling the housing crisis facing Canadians, leaving communities like ours reeling.

At a minimum, I'm calling on the federal government to double the social housing stock in Canada, put in place a package of measures to address the financialization of housing, and provide support for gentle density projects to increase supply.

My Motion 71 offers one way the government could fund increases in social housing while addressing the financialization of housing: ending the unfair tax exemptions that Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) currently enjoy. This would generate \$300 million over five years, for critical investments into the affordable housing our community needs.

Finally, currently the federal government only provides financial support to housing with five or more units. I've called for gentle density projects like triplexes and fourplexes - especially those built by non-market housing providers - to also be supported, incentivizing an increase in housing supply that aligns with what the Minister of Housing has been requiring of municipalities to receive housing funds.





3. Applying a windfall tax on Big Oil

While folks in our community are facing a growing affordability crisis, we are also seeing the impacts of the worsening climate crisis.

In the midst of both, oil and gas companies continue to gouge Canadians at the pumps. In 2022, their pure profit increased by 18 cents on every litre of gas sold compared to the year prior. This far outpaced the 2 cents per litre increase in the carbon tax over the same period, and resulted in them raking in record breaking profits in the billions.

I'm pushing to address both of these crises by extending the Canada Recovery Dividend, put in place for the banking and insurance industries during the pandemic, to these excess profits of Canada's largest polluters. My Motion 92 would do this by applying a 15% windfall tax to their profits exceeding \$1 billion, generating \$4.2 billion on 2022 profits alone. All of this would be reinvested into proven climate and affordability solutions including:

- replenishing and expanding the Greener Homes Grant program, which helps every-day Canadians fund climate-friendly home retrofits to lower their energy bills while creating good, green jobs;
- funding heat pumps to help folks transition away from oil-based home heating;
- large-scale investments in public transit, to increase service and reduce fares.

I also continue to advocate for additional priorities, including:

- multi-year investments for under-funded arts communities like ours;
- increased funding for mental health and addictions services;
- expedient action to fund and implement a fulsome and universal pharmacare plan;
- ending all federal subsidies for the oil and gas industry, estimated to be at least \$18 billion per year;
- implementing all 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;
- funding anti-sexual violence training for athletes across Canada, modelled after training already provided by the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region;
- reversing funding cuts to the Canada Summer Jobs program.

PROTECTING LIFE-SAVING CARE

I recently received a letter from Dale, a father in our community who tragically lost his daughter, Kaela, to a poisoned drug overdose.

Dale told me how Kaela would very likely be alive if she had access to safer supply, and shared his fears for others in our community as federal funding was set to expire for 21 safer supply programs.

The research on this is clear – safer supply programs, like those provided by Sanguen Health Centre, save lives in our community.

I was glad to be able to share Dale’s letter with the Minister responsible for mental health and addictions - impressing upon her the urgent need to renew funding for these critical programs.

In response, we got some good news for our community.



The Minister confirmed that she has every intention of renewing this funding, saying on the record: “We’ve contacted all the existing programs that are expiring and it is my intention to renew those that have proper mitigation measures.”

My team and I are committed to continuing to work closely with organizations in our community that provide life-saving supports to people who use drugs to ensure the federal government follows through.

AN UPDATE ON ADVOCACY FOR OUR SUDANESE NEIGHBOURS

Since the conflict in Sudan began last April, I have been working alongside Sudanese community members to call on the federal government to expand their definition of an immediate family member to allow Sudanese Canadians to reunite with their families in Canada.

I’m glad to share that special immigration measures have now been put in place so that our Sudanese neighbours will be able to help their siblings, parents, or grandparents get to safety.

You can find more details on the Government of Canada’s Immigration webpage at www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.

If you are a constituent whose family is impacted by this and need assistance navigating the temporary immigration process, the team at our community office is ready to help. Reach out to the team via email at mike.morrice.c1@parl.gc.ca.

LOOKING FOR MORE FREQUENT UPDATES?

For more regular updates on a variety of topics, including the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, calls to expand the Greener Homes Grant program, and electoral reform, sign up to receive my monthly email update at mikemorricemp.ca, or through this QR code:



IN OUR COMMUNITY



Learning from the leadership team at Carpenters’ Union Local 785.



Celebrating at the Waterloo Region Chinese Canadian Association’s Lantern Festival.



Joining in at the Sanatan Bengali Cultural Association’s Vasant Panchami Celebration.



Connecting with neighbours at Bring on the Sunshine’s African Festival.

LET'S CHAT

My advocacy in Ottawa is driven by your concerns and priorities. That’s why I make it a priority to keep time in my schedule to connect with folks in our community.

If you’re a constituent in Kitchener Centre and would like to discuss issues you’re passionate about, simply email mike.morrice.c1@parl.gc.ca to book a 15 minute video call or in-person meeting. Please be sure to include your postal code so my team can prioritize your message.