



# Mike Lake, M.P.

Edmonton – Mill Woods – Beaumont



## YOUR VOICE IN OTTAWA

Volume 8, Spring 2008

### Dear Constituents,

It's hard to believe that two and a half years have already passed since Canadians elected a Conservative minority government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. By the end of June, ours will become the third-longest-serving minority government out of the twelve in Canadian history, with the longest tenure since Mackenzie King's (1926 to 1930).

Many people have speculated as to why this might be the case. I believe that the critical issue, both immediately before and since the 2006 election, has been leadership. Under Prime Minister Harper and this government, taxes are down across the board, Canada's reputation on the world stage has been rejuvenated, and the safety and security of Canadian families is once again a top priority at the Cabinet table.

Interestingly, even the Liberal Opposition seems to recognize the progress being made. On confidence vote after confidence vote this winter, the Liberals decided not to even bother showing up. In front of the microphones they would complain and spin their political stories, but through their actions (or non-actions) at voting time, they would acknowledge that the measures being put forward by the Conservative Government were in line with the wishes of the electorate.

As we enter the summer recess, I look forward to hearing your feedback on how we are doing, as well as your suggestions about areas upon which we should focus more attention. I will spend my summer attending many events throughout the riding and meeting as many of you as possible. We will continue to hold our constituent roundtables (see page 3 for details), and I would encourage you to contact my office if there is anything we can help you with.

Have a terrific summer!



Mike and his son, Jaden, at a press conference to mark the first ever UN World Autism Awareness Day.

## Budget 2008

### Responsible Leadership for Uncertain Times

#### Ottawa

Building on the Government's 2007 Economic Statement, on February 26<sup>th</sup> the Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance, tabled a balanced, focused and prudent budget to strengthen the Canadian economy amidst global economic uncertainty. Budget 2008 continues reducing debt and taxes, focuses government spending, and provides additional support for sectors of the economy that are struggling in this period of uncertainty.



"Our Government is meeting the challenge of global economic uncertainty with a plan that is real, a plan that is responsible, a plan that is working," said Minister Flaherty at the time. "In the weeks to come, Canadians will see \$2.9 billion in retroactive personal tax relief that was announced in the fall. We didn't wait, we acted and Canadians can see the results."

Budget 2008 also provides the most important federally-driven personal finance innovation since the introduction of the *Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP)*: the *Tax-Free Savings Account*. This flexible, registered, general-purpose account will allow Canadians to watch their savings—including interest income, dividend payments, and capital gains—grow tax-free.

"The *Tax-Free Savings Account* is the first of its kind in Canadian history,"

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## Tackling Violent Crime Act Becomes Law Important Bill Receives Royal Assent

#### Ottawa

In the Fall 2007 Speech from the Throne, your Conservative government promised to make tackling crime and strengthening the security of Canadians a top priority. Its first bill of the new session, the *Tackling Violent Crime Act (Bill C-2)*, is a comprehensive piece of legislation that puts that priority into action.

Because the individual elements contained within the *Tackling Violent Crime Act* are so widely supported by Canadians, this bill was deemed a confidence measure by the government and, after slow passage through the Liberal-dominated Senate, finally received Royal Assent on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

The new law strengthens the *Criminal Code* in the following five areas:

- Tougher mandatory jail time for serious gun crimes;
- New bail provisions which require that those accused of serious gun crimes show why they shouldn't be kept in jail while awaiting trial;
- Better protection for youth from adult sexual predators by increasing the age of protection for sexual activity from 14 years to 16 years;
- More effective sentencing and monitoring to prevent dangerous, high-risk offenders from offending again; and
- New ways to detect and investigate drug-impaired driving and stronger penalties for impaired driving.

The majority of these reforms will come into force within the next few

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## Canada's Economic Leadership

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said Minister Flaherty. "It will provide all Canadians with a powerful incentive to save. An RRSP is primarily intended for retirement, but the *Tax-Free Savings Account* is like an RRSP for everything else in your life."

Budget 2008 also demonstrates responsible leadership by:

- **Reducing debt.**  
Since taking office, the Government has reduced the federal debt by more than \$37 billion, including \$10.2 billion during the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The Government's aggressive debt reduction has resulted in ongoing interest savings of \$2 billion per year. Under the Tax Back Guarantee, the benefits of debt reduction are passed on to Canadians in the form of lower personal income taxes.
- **Strengthening Canada's tax advantage.**  
Since taking office, the Government has delivered almost \$200 billion in tax relief over this and the next five years. Budget 2008 extends the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for the manufacturing and processing sector by three years on a declining basis—this will provide businesses in this sector with an additional \$1 billion in tax relief.
- **Investing in the country's manufacturing heartland.**  
In February 2008, Parliament passed the Government's \$1 billion Community Development Trust to support communities and workers. Budget 2008 builds on this investment by providing \$250 million for an Automotive Innovation Fund to help Canada's automotive sector adapt to the challenges of the future.
- **Investing in the priorities of Canadians.**  
Budget 2008 provides \$400 million to hire 2,500 new front-line police officers over the next five years. Budget 2008 also supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and will improve the safety systems for food, consumer, and health products.

"We have come to a fork in the road," said Minister Flaherty. "Some would have us go down the path to higher spending, higher interest payments and higher taxes. That approach is misguided. Our Government is taking the path that requires focus, prudence and discipline."

**For more information about Budget 2008 please visit:**  
[www.fin.gc.ca](http://www.fin.gc.ca)



**Justice Minister Rob Nicholson speaks to local community members about actions the Government is taking to tackle crime.**

## Keeping Our Families Safe

(Continued from page 1)

months, giving the public, police, prosecutors, defense counsel, and judges sufficient time to familiarize themselves with these important changes to Canada's criminal law.

In addition to its comprehensive measures to tackle violent crime, and in keeping with its commitment to make Canadian communities safer, the Government of Canada has also:

- Passed legislation to increase penalties for those convicted of street racing;
- Passed legislation to end conditional sentences (house arrest) for serious personal injury and violent offences, including sexual assault;
- Introduced a National Anti-Drug Strategy, including legislation that would provide mandatory jail time for serious drug crimes;
- Introduced legislation to strengthen the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and announced a comprehensive review of this Act in 2008;
- Introduced legislation to protect Canadians against identity theft; and
- Invested in crime prevention community projects across Canada that target youth.

**For more information on the Tackling Violent Crime Act and other measures the Government is taking to keep our communities safe, please visit:**  
[www.tacklingcrime.ca](http://www.tacklingcrime.ca)

## Supporting Our Troops

### Parliament Passes Important Confidence Motion to Extend our Mission in Afghanistan to 2011



**Prime Minister Harper meets with Afghan President Hamid Karzai at the NATO Summit in Romania in early April. The Prime Minister rallied the resolve of Canada's NATO allies to make a new commitment to the people of Afghanistan.**

#### Ottawa

The Canadian Forces serving in Afghanistan have the clear support of Parliament. On March 13, 2008, a consensus motion extending Canada's military mission in Afghanistan to 2011 was passed. The Government motion was a key confidence measure, and shows that this is not a Conservative mission or a Liberal mission – it is a Canadian mission that is supported by the majority of the elected representatives of the Canadian people.

Canada, along with over 60 other nations, is in Afghanistan as part of a UN-sanctioned mission to help build a stable, democratic, and self-sustaining society. Our efforts are guided by the *Afghanistan Compact*, a five-year framework for coordinating the work of the Afghan government and its international partners in three main areas: security, governance, and development.

Since the motion in Parliament was passed, we have:

- Met our requirement for an additional battle group in Kandahar, thanks to French and U.S. allocations of more troops. We are very happy that NATO has renewed its commitment to Afghanistan;
- Met the requirement to put more emphasis on development and reconstruction. NATO has adopted a comprehensive new plan to balance and synchronize military and civilian efforts;
- Made considerable progress on obtaining commitments from our Allies to contribute the equipment we need;
- Provided an additional \$110 million for reconstruction and development, bringing Canada's 2008-09 assistance for Afghanistan to a projected \$280 million, and our total commitment to \$1.3 billion over 10 years.

These resources will help the Afghan people, and include provisions for more training of Afghan security forces that will allow them to take increasing responsibility for security in Kandahar. Security is the first step to long-lasting and sustainable development.

Canada continues to show leadership in its commitment to development assistance and its deployment of diplomats, development workers, troops, and civilian police to help the Afghan government secure a better future for its people.

**For more information on Canada's progress in Afghanistan, please visit:**  
[www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca](http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca)





Mike congratulates Leaticia Kaggwa, the award winner from Holy Trinity.

## Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Leaders

### Mike Recognizes Local Students' Accomplishments through the Second Annual Youth Leadership Award Program

Edmonton

The Youth Leadership Award Program annually recognizes high school students who have proven to be leaders in their schools and communities. In particular, these students, who are in their final year of high school, have demonstrated excellent academic achievement by having an average of 80% or higher; have shown their characteristics as good citizens through their involvement in their communities; and have positively contributed to their school environments.

This year, awards were presented to the following exceptional students, one from each of the four high schools in the Edmonton – Mill Woods – Beaumont constituency: *Pattra Winner (J. Percy Page)*, *Hunter Yerxa (Millwoods Christian)*, *Leaticia Kaggwa (Holy Trinity)*, and *Justin Grenier (Beaumont Composite)*.

Congratulations to all award winners and best of luck with your future endeavours!

## Mike Hears from Constituents at Roundtable Meetings Format Offers Ideal Setting for Discussion of Important Federal Issues

Edmonton

Since early January, Mike has been holding regular constituent roundtable meetings in our community. Generally attended by ten to twenty constituents, each meeting is designed to facilitate discussion about issues specifically raised by those at the table.

In contrast to a typical town hall meeting, the roundtable, with its smaller group format, allows for greater interaction among the participants. Mike has found these roundtables to be the most effective way for the greatest number of constituents to express their opinions, hear the views of their neighbours, and learn more about what the federal government is doing for Canadians.

While the meetings have no predetermined agenda—topics are chosen by those in attendance—several recurring themes have developed throughout the discussions. Among the most common subjects have been Canada's role in Afghanistan, the safety of our communities, and the environment.

As your Member of Parliament, Mike has found these meetings to be invaluable, helping to inform him about the issues most important to the people he represents. At the same time, he has been encouraged by the level of public debate between the individuals who come to the meetings, often from different backgrounds and with different points of view.

If you are a constituent, and are interested in attending a roundtable, please contact the Constituency Office at 495-2149.



Mike and several constituents at a roundtable meeting in the Community Room of the Edmonton Police Service's Southeast Division Station.



High school students ask tough questions of the Environment Minister in a videoconference organized by Mike.

## Mike Organizes Special Videoconference for Beaumont High School Students

### Environment Minister John Baird Answers Students' Questions

Beaumont

On March 20, 2008, students at École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School participated in a 40-minute videoconference with the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable John Baird. This videoconference gave students a unique opportunity to ask questions of the Environment Minister.

Inspired by letters the students had written to him on issues ranging from greenhouse gas emissions to carbon markets, Mike began to think about how to get them the best answers. "I talked to John, and he was very enthusiastic about the videoconference idea," said Mike. "What better source for their answers than a live conversation with the Environment Minister?"

During the course of the event, both Minister Baird and Mike also spoke about the importance of getting involved in the political process, and asking the tough questions of their elected representatives. "Even though most of these students are not yet old enough to vote, they already understand how important it is to educate themselves about the issues," Mike noted. "Hopefully, this experience will help them to become engaged in the political process at a time when Canada can really benefit from their fresh perspective."

## YOUR VOICE IN OTTAWA: MIKE WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

What are the most important issues facing Canada today?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate the overall performance of the Conservative Government?

Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

How would you rate Mike's performance as your Member of Parliament?

Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

Please complete our survey and send it back to our office, *postage free*. Feel free to fold and tape to conceal personal information, but please do not staple.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



### CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Our offices are here to be of service to you.

We regularly help constituents:

- Navigate their way through federal government departments and services;
- Obtain Canadian flags and pins for travel abroad;
- Receive Congratulatory Certificates for milestone birthdays and anniversaries from the Member of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Governor-General, and Her Majesty the Queen;
- Get answers to immigration questions; and
- Find information on government policies and procedures.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with your comments or concerns and we would be more than happy to assist you.

### CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
**WWW.MIKELAKE.CA**



#### Canada's Future Leaders

Mike visits a Mill Woods elementary school classroom to teach kids about government in Canada and the role of a Member of Parliament.



#### Groundbreaking Science

Mike tours the Agri-Food Discovery Place with MP for Edmonton Centre, Laurie Hawn, and the rest of Edmonton Caucus.



#### Mill Woods Diversity Days

Mike chats with constituents at Mill Woods Town Centre as part of the Mill Woods Diversity Days celebrations.



#### L'Arche Ted Bradshaw House

Mike helps cut the ribbon for the grand opening of L'Arche Ted Bradshaw House, which offers long-term supportive housing for aging persons with developmental disabilities.



#### A Warm Welcome

Mike celebrates the contributions of immigrants to our community with constituents at a local Filipino church. His son, Jaden, helps hand out Canadian flags.



#### Building Community

Mike enjoys a coffee with community leader Shafteek Ali, President of MCARFA (Mill Woods Cultural and Recreational Facility Association).

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