



YOUR VOICE IN OTTAWA

Volume 2, Fall 2006

Dear Constituents,

It has been a terrific summer. I hope all of you have enjoyed the wonderful weather and had the opportunity to spend some quality time with your family and friends. By the time you receive this newsletter, the House of Commons will be back in session and, hopefully, your new government will continue to receive enough cooperation from the opposition parties to maintain our momentum as we fulfill the commitments we have made to you and all Canadians.

My work this summer has kept me tremendously busy – attending numerous events throughout the constituency, meeting and talking with as many of you as I possibly could, and spending countless long evenings working on my upcoming nomination battle. As an aside, a special - and entirely insufficient - “thank you” to my wife and kids is in order for their incredible patience this summer and heading into the fall.

In this edition of my newsletter I want to focus on a number of issues that are in



Mike meets with Prime Minister Harper to discuss constituency issues.

the spotlight right now. They are either measures already starting to have a positive impact for Canadians, like the **Universal Child Care Benefit** and **help for post-secondary students**; or measures that we have been working hard towards and which are nearing their realization, like the **Federal Accountability Act** and **legislation to improve the security of all Canadians**.

I hope that you will find these articles informative and I strongly encourage you to share your feedback with me, either using the contact information provided on page four or by returning the comment card on page three.

As this 39th Parliament resumes, Canadians can trust that their new government will continue with an ambitious agenda, aimed at getting results. I take pride in serving as your representative in this process, and it is my pleasure to stand up for the interests of our constituency in Ottawa.

Regards,

Mike Lake, MP

Canada’s New Government Makes Good on Universal Child Care Benefit Promise

House of Commons
Ottawa

During the summer recess, Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, announced that the first Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) cheques had been mailed out and that families would start receiving this benefit in July.



The new Conservative Government recognizes that not every household runs the same way, and that a cookie-cutter solution to the issue of child care would leave many parents at a disadvantage. The Universal Child Care Benefit was designed with **all** parents in mind. This benefit provides freedom of choice to parents, so they can balance work and family in the manner that best suits their lifestyle.

“Families will be able to use the Universal Child Care Benefit to help their children as they see fit. For some parents, this might mean using the benefit to pay part of their child care fees. A parent who stays at home may want to use it on a preschool program or for occasional care by a friend or neighbour,” Minister Finley explained.

This new form of financial assistance is paid out to families in monthly installments
(Continued on page 2)

Post-Secondary Students Stand to Benefit from Budget 2006

Constituency Office
Edmonton

Student life seems almost synonymous with the idea of penny-pinching. As students enter post-secondary institutions this semester they should be aware of a number of measures Canada’s New Government introduced in Budget 2006, which were designed to aid with student finances.

Providing a New Textbook Tax Credit

A new, non-refundable tax credit will be put in place effective for 2006 and subsequent taxation years. For example, a full-time student enrolled for eight months will qualify for a textbook tax credit amount of \$520 for the year—representing a tax reduction of about \$80.

Exempting All Post-Secondary Scholarship and Bursary Income From Tax

Prior to this budget year, only the first \$3,000 in scholarship, fellowship and bursary income received by a post-secondary student was not taxed. To help foster academic excellence and to encourage the pursuit of higher studies, Budget 2006 has fully exempted these sources of income from tax.

Improving the Canada Student Loans Program

The Government of Canada is committed to making it easier for families to send their children to university or college. By expanding eligibility for Canada Student Loans, it is estimated that an additional 30,000 students will be able to gain access to student assistance.

Taking the Bus to School?

Remember to save your bus pass receipts! Our government is providing a 15.5% tax credit for the cost of transit passes.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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of \$100 per child under the age of six. Most Canadian families will receive the Universal Child Care Benefit automatically, if they are currently registered for the Canada Child Tax Benefit. Eligible families who are not yet receiving the Universal Child Care Benefit should submit a Canada Child Tax Benefit application to the Canada Revenue Agency. They will have up to 11 months to apply to obtain payments retroactive to July 2006.

In addition to establishing the Universal Child Care Benefit, the new Conservative Government is committed to supporting the creation of new child care spaces. The government recognizes the growing demand on the child care system and is working with provincial and territorial governments, businesses, communities and non-profit organizations to ensure a focused and informed approach is undertaken. As proposed in Budget 2006, the new Child Care Spaces Initiative will result in the creation of up to 25,000 new child care spaces each year, beginning in 2007.

To learn more about the Universal Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Spaces Initiative please see the information listed below, or contact Mike through the contact information listed on the back page of this publication.

Want to learn more about the Universal Child Care Benefit?

Please visit www.universalchildcare.ca

To apply, contact the Canada Revenue Agency.

On the web: www.cra.arc.gc.ca

By telephone: 1.800.959.2221

Improving Security for all Canadians

House of Commons
Ottawa

Security at home, on our streets, in our communities and abroad, is an issue that impacts all Canadians. Through new spending and new legislation, the new Conservative Government is making the security of Canadians a priority. This priority was made clear early in Parliament’s first session through measures such as the introduction of legislation to raise the Age of Consent from 14 to 16 to protect our children from adult predators; the introduction of a new Criminal Code offence for street racing; and an emphasis upon lengthening and toughening sentences to keep violent criminals & repeat offenders off our streets.



In late August, Prime Minister Harper announced an upgrade to the RCMP training academy and the hiring of 1,000 new RCMP personnel.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has also made a number of significant announcements recently. At the end of August, he announced an upgrade to the RCMP Training Academy and the hiring of 1,000 new RCMP personnel - an investment of nearly \$200 million over the next two years. “Our government is delivering on its commitment to get tough on crime and give our law enforcement agencies the resources they need to help keep Canadians and their communities safe and secure,” said Prime Minister Harper. The investment includes \$37 million to expand and refurbish the Training Academy so it can accommodate the new recruits. A further \$161 million will allow the RCMP to expand its total strength by more than 600 full-time officers and nearly 400 civilian support staff.

On the heels of the RCMP announcement, the Prime Minister announced initiatives to improve Canada’s border security. Canada’s New Government has committed to hire, train and equip 400 new permanent Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers, to ensure posts are properly staffed. As well, 4,400 CBSA officers at land and marine Ports of Entry, as well as officers who perform enforcement functions inland, will be trained and equipped with side-arms.

Commenting on these new measures, Prime Minister Harper noted that, “a safe, secure and efficient border is important for Canada, and for all Canadians. It is vital to our country’s economy, and will protect the safety and security of all of our local communities.”

Understanding the Federal Accountability Act: Changing the way Government works

House of Commons
Ottawa

Intrinsic to a well-functioning, democratic government is the idea that a certain level of trust is placed with government officials and that, with this trust, officials have an obligation to act responsibly and to be held to account for their actions. Over the past couple of years these concepts of responsibility and accountability

“You deserve a public service of the highest integrity, and Members of Parliament who value your concerns more than those of highly-paid lobbyists. You deserve clean, honest government.”

have been challenged by the revelation of the sponsorship scandal. Canadians from coast to coast were justifiably outraged as they learned of the details behind this manipulation. After all was said and done, nearly \$100 million of taxpayers’ money went to firms with cosy ties to the previous Liberal government. Auditor General Sheila Fraser claimed that public officials “broke just about every rule in the book,” when it came to awarding public contracts, while Justice Gomery spoke of an “elaborate kickback scheme” funded by taxpaying citizens.

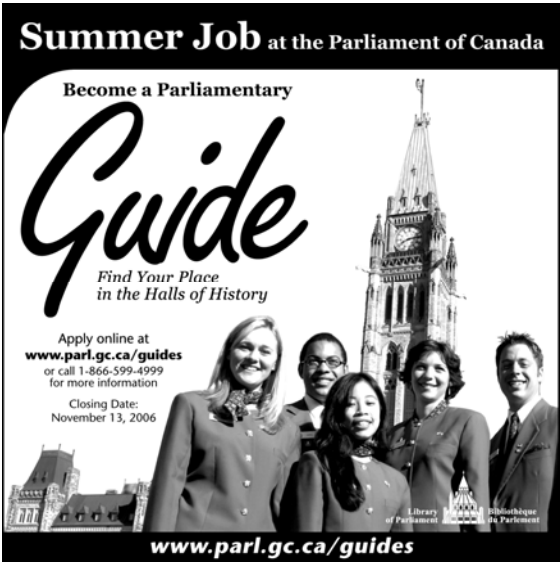
The last federal election was fought on the issue of honesty in government, and the Conservative Party promised to bring real accountability to Ottawa. True to its word, Canada’s New Government introduced the *Federal Accountability Act* and Action Plan on April 11, 2006. It was one of the very first pieces of legislation we brought to Parliament.

The Federal Accountability Act and Action Plan will:

- Reduce the opportunity to exert influence with money by banning corporate and union political donations, and limiting individual donations to \$1,000 (down from \$5,000) per year.
- Ban secret donations to political candidates by prohibiting riding associations and parties from transferring money to their candidates from trust funds.
- Give Canadians confidence that lobbying is done ethically by prohibiting contingency fees, and by imposing a five-year lobbying ban on former Ministers, their aides, and senior public servants.
- Ensure that people who see problems in government know they can speak up by providing real protection for whistleblowers.
- Strengthen auditing and accountability within departments by clarifying the managerial responsibilities of deputy heads within the framework of ministerial responsibility, and by bolstering the internal audit function within departments and Crown corporations.
- Make qualified government appointments by introducing a uniform process for appointing Agents and Officers of Parliament and ensuring that public appointments are based on merit.
- Enhance the powers of both the Ethics Commissioner and the Auditor General to examine possible conflicts of interest, and to “follow the money.”
- Clean up the procurement of government contracts, polling and advertising.
- Empower a new Director of Public Prosecutions to conduct criminal investigations under federal law.
- Strengthen the Access to Information Act by extending it to include Crown corporations, Agents of Parliament, and foundations created under federal statute, while balancing legitimate requirements for personal privacy, commercial confidentiality, and national security.
- Toughen the Lobbyists Registration Act and establish a Commissioner of Lobbying to investigate violations of the Act; and
- Ensure truth in budgeting with a Parliamentary Budget Authority.

The Federal Accountability Act is far-reaching legislation, and these are major reforms. The Act will close the revolving door between public service and private interests, and take the money out of political life. It will streamline operations and provide effective, open government for all Canadians.

You work hard for the money you pay in taxes every year. You deserve to know how and where your tax-dollars are used. You deserve a public service of the highest integrity, and Members of Parliament who value your concerns more than those of highly-paid lobbyists. You deserve clean, honest government.



Sunny Saturday Pancake Breakfast Brings Minister of Immigration to Mill Woods

Constituency Office
Edmonton



Minister Solberg brings remarks to the crowd, as Mike’s son Jaden looks on.

On Saturday, August 26, Mike hosted a charity pancake breakfast with the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. The weather was spectacular, the breakfast was very well-attended and in the end a total of \$3,590 was raised for the Autism Society of Edmonton Area.

In addition to Mike and Minister Solberg, several other local political figures were at the event, including fellow MPs Laurie Hawn and Rahim Jaffer; Mill Woods MLAs Bharat Agnihotri and Weslyn Mather; Edmonton City Councillor Mike Nickel; and General Manager for the Town of Beaumont, Pat Vincent.

Mike and his office staff would like to thank everyone who took the time out of their busy summer schedules to volunteer for the event, making it a tremendous success. As well, thank you to our many sponsors who provided equipment, food, and finances to enable us to maximize the benefit for the Autism Society. And of course, special thanks to all of you who were able to come out, meet some new friends and help out an organization that is close to Mike’s heart.

Please see the back page for more pictures from the breakfast!

What is Autism?

Constituency Office
Edmonton

In recent months, autism has gained greater attention across Canada. Mike has had numerous opportunities to share his own family’s experience with autism (son, Jaden, now almost eleven, was diagnosed with autism at age two) with a national audience. Mike has done interviews on the CTV National News with Canada AM and in the National Post, in addition to radio talk shows across the country.

Many people, however, still have misconceptions about this disorder, its prevalence and its various forms. One of Mike’s goals is to become a bridge-builder for communities—not only with autism in particular, but more generally reaching out to all of the many unique groups within the constituency to help build a greater sense of community. The first step in fulfilling that role is to facilitate understanding. That is the purpose and intent of this article, which will outline in brief what characterizes autism.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) include Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s Syndrome, and Pervasive Development Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDDNOS). Diagnosis of the above disorders is based on behavioral observation and the noting of the presence or absence of particular behaviors.

Typically those diagnosed with an ASD exhibit:

- Impairment in many nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body posture and verbal communication;
- Impairment in social skills and relationships;
- An adherence to specific, non-functional routines or rituals;
- Repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g. hand motions, finger twisting, or whole body motions)

Autistic Disorder is differentiated from Asperger’s Syndrome usually by a delay in language or cognitive development. As a result of this, sometimes Asperger’s Syndrome is labeled as a high-functioning version of autism.

The last category— PDDNOS, is used to describe children who may have an impairment in the same

abilities that characterize the other disorders, but for which some of the traits are not present. For instance, because Asperger children usually are difficult to diagnose before being exposed to social environments, like pre-school and kindergarten, sometimes they are classified under PDDNOS until a clearer diagnosis can be made.

Facts about Autism Spectrum Disorders:

- ASDs are 3 to 4 times more common among boys than girls.
- To date the cause of autism is not yet known, although it is generally thought that there is a connection between the structure and function of the brain, and the disorder.
- Not everyone with autism exhibits identical characteristics. People with ASDs are unique individuals facing different challenges and possessing different abilities.

There is some disagreement as to the prevalence of ASDs in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, the number of “persons with autism or any other developmental disorder” was just above 69,000, or about 1 in 450 Canadians. However, the Autism Society of Canada states that “the current prevalence of ASDs nationwide is estimated to be more than 1 in 200.” Regardless of the source, the general consensus is that ASD prevalence is on the rise.

Thank you to the Library of Parliament and to the Autism Society of Edmonton Area for the information provided in this article. To learn more please see the websites below.



Jaden shows Dad and Minister Solberg how to flip a world-class flapjack.

WIN LUNCH WITH MIKE!

Simply complete the survey at the bottom of the page to enter.

We value your feedback and want to hear your thoughts on the progress of your new government. Please take the time to complete and return the form at the bottom of the page and you’ll automatically be entered in our draw.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON AUTISM

If you would like to learn more about autism, please see the websites below.

Autism Society Canada
<http://www.autismsocietycanada.ca>

Autism Society of Edmonton Area
<http://www.edmontonautismsociety.org>

Family Services for Children with Disabilities (Alberta Government)
<http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/whatwedo/fscd/page.cfm?pg=index>

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

How are we doing?

Rate the overall performance of your new Conservative Government:

Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐

Rate the performance of Prime Minister Stephen Harper:

Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐

Rate the performance of Mike 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: _____

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Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

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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, Governor-General and Her Majesty the Queen
- Help with Immigration questions and issues
- 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.

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



Under 19 Cricket Canada Cup

Mike celebrates with participants of the Under 19 Cricket Canada Cup, along with Edmonton - Ellerslie MLA Bharat Agnihotri on August 11.



India's Independence Day

Mike addresses the crowd at a celebration held by the Council of India Societies for India's Independence Day on August 15.



Boys Will Be Boys

Mike and Ontario MP Patrick Brown work over Prime Minister Harper's son, Ben as Manitoba MP Steven Fletcher tends the goal.



Capital Ex Parade

Mike and his son, Jaden participate in the Capital Ex Parade with fellow Edmonton and Area Members of Parliament.



Mike and Minister Solberg At Work For the Autism Society

Mike and Minister Solberg flip pancakes at our First Annual Pancake Breakfast. See page three for details on the breakfast and for more information about autism.



A Successful Event!

Mike presents the Autism Society of Edmonton Area with a cheque for \$3,590. Thank you to everyone who came out to show support and to all of those who made donations to the event.



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